



The Maria Montessori Training Organisation  
trading as  
The Maria Montessori Institute

## **School Attendance Policy** **(Incorporating drop-off, collection and absences)**

### **Introduction**

It is the aim of the Maria Montessori Institute (MMI) that children should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. The Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation, socialisation and attainment of children. Any absence from School affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence and / or regular late drop-off may seriously affect their learning. The Government expects the School to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, and to act early to address patterns of absence. Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and be punctual to their school sessions.

### **Aims**

The MMI aims to meet its obligations with regards to School attendance by promoting good attendance and acting early to address patterns of absence. This policy sets out the School's position on attendance and details the procedures to follow to report a child absent from school, with late arrival, or late collection. It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the School will encourage parents of children who are not yet compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the School is concerned about a child's attendance for any reason, the School's office will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance. The School will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly.

### **Procedure**

The School has a statutory duty, under the Registration Regulations 2006, to monitor children attendance through daily attendance records from the first day that the child is expected to attend school. If the child doesn't attend school, they will be recorded as absent – this can be authorised or unauthorised. If the School is not aware of the reason for absence, the School should carry out reasonable enquiries about the child's whereabouts. The School has a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.

Type of absences when children are not present in school:

- Leave of absence authorised by the school: Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The School should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Once children are of statutory school age (5 years) holidays



should not be taken during term times. If a holiday is unavoidable then permission must be granted by the Head of School for the absence. The application must be made in advance. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head of School's discretion.

- Illness: Parents should notify the School on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness and when the child is likely to return to school. If the School has genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness, the School can request parents to provide supporting medical evidence (in the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc). The School will record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. When a child suffers from a long-term condition, the certification should be provided by the responsible specialist.

- Medical or dental appointments: Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. The School, however, encourages parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

- Religious observance: The School will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance.

- Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Head of School: If the School does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

- Reason for absence not yet provided: The School should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a child's absence and carry out reasonable enquiries about the child's whereabouts. Whenever a child fails to attend school, prompt action needs to be taken to ensure the child's safety and enable them to return to school as soon as possible. On day 1 the School should contact parents to establish the reason for the absence and when the child is likely to return to school. If no acceptable reason is offered by the parents, this will be deemed as unauthorised absence.

If it is not possible to contact the parents or the School is not reassured that the child is safe and well and at home, it may be necessary to take specific steps to safeguard the child. The situation must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a risk assessment carried out to establish what action should be taken.

When the reason for the child's absence has been established the register should be amended. If no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, the absence will become an absence from school without authorisation.

- Absent from school without authorisation: If the School is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence, the School will record it as unauthorised.

If attendance does not improve the Head of School will contact the parents.



The School has to inform the Local Authority's education service of any child who is regularly absent from school, has irregular attendance, or has missed 10 school days or more without the school's permission.

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances: the school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the child's home is not within walking distance; or a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the child from attending school; or a government or local authority mandate on closing of schools.

### **Punctuality**

It is important that children arrive on time for school to support their feeling of security at school and facilitate the smooth running of the day. Lateness causes disruption to other children who have already started their day, as well as teachers supporting the working environments. The expected times of drop-off and pick-up are the following:

- Children's House Hampstead:
  - o Full day session: 8:45am – 3:30pm
  - o Morning session: 8:45am – 12:00pm
  - o Afternoon session: 1:45pm – 3:30pm
- Children's House off-sites:
  - o Full day session: 8:30am – 3:30pm (Friday 8:30am - 12:00pm)
  - o Morning session: 8:30am – 12:00pm
  - o Morning plus lunch session: 8:30am-1:30pm
  - o Afternoon session: 1:45pm – 3:30pm
- Elementary: 8:30am – 3:45pm

### Late arrival procedure:

If for any reason there is a delay, the School office must be notified so the teachers may be informed. If children arrive after a 15-minute window of the normal arrival time, they will be marked in late.

If there is a pattern of lateness the Head of School will contact the parents.

As part of their safeguarding duty the School will notify the Local Authority's education service of frequent late arrivals of a child.

The School staff reserves the right to not allow children to enter the School after 9:30am for children attending full day or morning sessions / 2:00pm for the afternoon session, other than in exceptional circumstances.

### **Collection from school**

During the admission to School process, parents complete a confidential information on the **Consent for collection form** providing contact details for themselves, any other person with parental responsibility and any other adult authorised by them to collect their child from School. The confidential form contains a footnote to the effect that the signatory/signatories confirm that they have informed and/or consulted any person with parental responsibility



for their child. The onus is on parents to liaise in the signing of the confidential form and also to inform the School of any changes.

Unless there has been a consent from the parent/carer for the child to walk alone to home or accompanied by older sibling, under no circumstances will a child be allowed out of school with anyone but their parent or regular carer without receiving written permission in advance which is then communicated to the teachers. If there is confusion at leaving time this can be very upsetting for the child and creates problems for the staff.

Parents are fully responsible for their child/children once they have been collected either at lunch or afternoon collection times. Parents are reminded that they should leave the premises quickly at the end of the day and that the children must be supervised for their own safety. We do not allow children to climb on the boundary wall at our Hampstead School.

In the event that an authorised adult does not collect a child, we put into practice the agreed procedures, unless agreement to walk home alone has been obtained.

#### Late collection procedure:

It is the responsibility of the School to ensure parents and carers are notified of the timing of the school session or after school activity and when those times are varied for a specific event or date. If for any reason the parents/carer are delayed in collecting their child, the School office must be notified so the teachers and the child may be informed.

In the event of a child not being collected at the end of the school session one member of staff must remain on the premises with the child. If the child is not collected after a 30-minute window of the normal departure time (or 15-minute window of the end of an after-school activity), the teacher should telephone the child's parents/carer. If parents cannot be contacted, the School will call emergency contact number/s on file to ensure that collection take place as soon as possible.

Where children are collected late, the School reserves the right to charge a late collection fee. Under Section 457 of the Education Act 1996 and relevant Regulations, the school governing body has the power to impose a charge on parents or carers who fail to collect their child from school within a reasonable time after the close of the school day or after school activity. The Board of Trustees has decided that, except in emergency situations (please note that traffic does not count as an emergency situation), where children are not collected from the school within 30 minutes after the school session (or 15 minutes following the end of the after school activity), then the School reserves the right to charge an additional fee. The School accepts that a variety of emergencies can arise due to unforeseen circumstances and will ensure that the charge is not imposed on the parent where there is a genuine unforeseen emergency. Notification must be given to the School as soon as the situation arises.

If a child has been collected late more than three times within one half term, a letter will be sent home with the child. If the collection does not improve the Head of School will contact the parents. As part of their safeguarding duty the School will notify the Local Council's Social Care team of frequent late collections of a child.



If the child has not been collected after one hour and a half from the end of the school day (or one hour from the end of an after school activity), the teacher will notify the Head of School, who will as a last resort contact the Local Authority's Social Services who will arrange for the child to be cared for. A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's confidential file.