



MEADOW PARK SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Approved by: Suzanne Uprichard (Chair IEB) Date: 27th March 2020

Last reviewed on: 28th March 2020 (SMO)

Next review due by: Spring 2023

Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. School procedures	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	4
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	5
6. Attendance monitoring	5
7. Roles and responsibilities	8
8. Monitoring arrangements	9
9. Links with other policies	9
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	10

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly (above 95%), and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils should arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.10pm and will be kept open until 2.25pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers can notify the school of an unplanned absence by contacting the school via telephone and pressing '1' when prompted through the automated service to report student absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences with evidence.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and evidence of appointments shown.

Parents/carers will need to contact the school's office and leave a message on the absence line.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they miss the opportunity to work with their teacher, cause disruption to the lesson for others and it can be embarrassing for them to go into the classroom. All registers are taken within the first 10 minutes of the start of every lesson. Students who arrive after 8.50am will be set a C3 for lateness resulting in a 15 minutes DT. Your child may be placed on a monitoring report card for persistent issues with punctuality.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Where the school hasn't received any communication from a parent/carer regarding a pupil's absence, a text will be sent to parent/carer each morning of absence. On the third or fourth day of absence without any communication from parents/carer, the school will try to speak to a parent/carer via the telephone and if unsuccessful, a home visit will be organised. If home visits are unsuccessful on the third/fourth day of absence, the school will start child missing in education procedures (MISPER) in accordance with local authority guidance. See section on children missing in education for further information

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will receive their child's attendance record via data sheets sent home. Where the school has concerns regarding a child's attendance during the school year, the parent will be written to, and may be invited to attend a school based attendance meeting to discuss their child's attendance record.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Acting Principal may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Acting Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained previously in the document.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Whitley Academy does not authorise any holiday in term time. We appreciate the fact that parents may inform us of a planned absence from school; however, holidays in term time will affect the student's progress in school. There is a strong relationship between good attendance and success in examinations.

5 days holiday absence does not appear significant, but it reduces attendance by 2.5%. If we add further potential non-attendance due to illness, it can quickly become significant. Once attendance falls below 95%, then progress really begins to suffer. It is vital that parents ensure their child attends regularly.

Parents/Carers should consider any request for a holiday during term very carefully and where possible attempt to make alternative arrangements. Unauthorised absence due to a holiday in term

time or further significant periods of absence from school will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice with a fine attached or formal involvement of the Home School Liaison Officer if attendance falls below that expected.

- Study leave will not be granted to anyone in KS3 or KS4 and at the discretion of the Acting Principal for pupils in KS5.
- Flexi-schooling requests must be in writing to the Acting Principal and justifying reasons for the request with additional evidence to support the reason like Educational Psychologist report, or report from CAMHs.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Acting Principal in consultation with the Home School Liaison Officer, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent/carer or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is part of the reward system at Whitley Academy, refer to Behaviour for Learning and Reward Policy. Improvements in attendance will be recognised and home will be contacted by tutors or the Home School Liaison Officer.

First instance of absence:

On first day: Text home if no reason provided

On return: Tutor speaks to student to check – any concerns followed up

Second instance of absence:

On first day: Text home if no reason provided

On return: Tutor speaks to student to check – any concerns followed up.

If attendance is 96% or below: Student placed on attendance report for 2 weeks to Form Tutor to monitor. Phone call home to inform parents / carer. If no further incidents of absence, student removed from report.

Third instance of absence:

On first day: Text home if no reason provided

On return: Tutor speaks to student to check – any concerns followed up.

Meeting with parents. Student placed on attendance report for 4 weeks to Form tutor (*dependent on %*) with clear attendance targets based on a pro rata for the 4 weeks e.g. 95% or above over set 4week period.

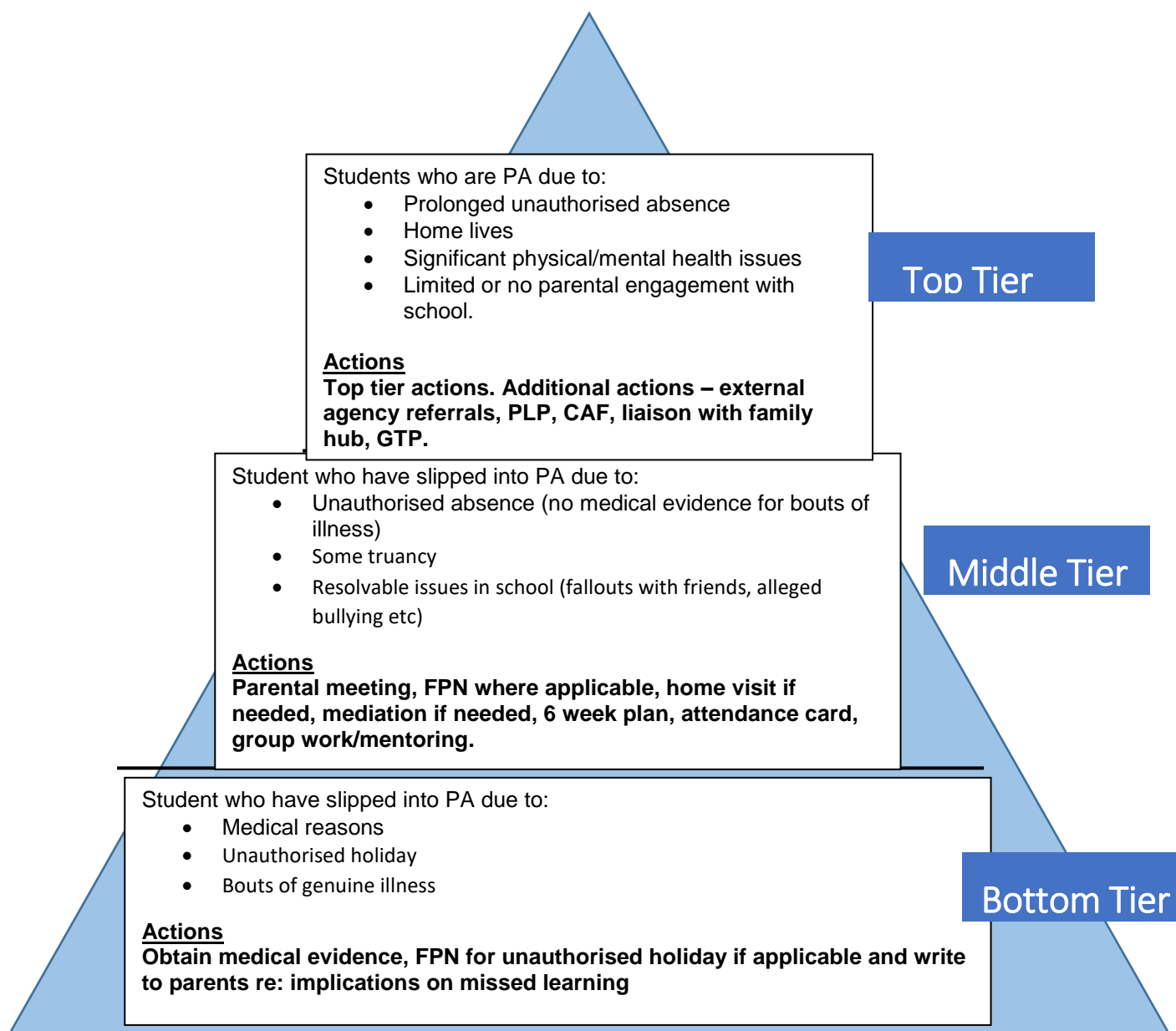
Remove from report if attendance target is met.

If attendance is 92 – 94% student placed on attendance report to Progress manager with clear attendance targets based on pro rata for 4 weeks e.g. 95% or above over set 4week period. Review. Remove from report if attendance target is met.

Actions:

- Weekly attendance report run for Form Tutor's (they may be able to do this themselves through SIMs)
- Weekly targets for Form groups – reviewed with Progress manager and Home School Liaison Officer
- Positive rewards for attendance
- Progress Managers review attendance weekly
- Raise focus % to anyone on 95% attendance and below, rather than 92%
- Monthly face to face meetings in staff morning briefing for tutors to be in year groups and discuss attendance

Tiers of intervention relating to persistent absence



6. Attendance monitoring

The Home School Liaison Officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill or inform the school of how many consecutive days of absence will follow.

If a pupil's absence goes beyond 2 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this via telephone (unless the child is on a safeguarding plan, in which case we will contact the parent/carer and the relevant external professional via telephone on the first day of absence).

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider home visits and attendance plans overseen by the Home School Liaison Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with the interim executive board.

Whitley Academy collects and stores attendance data which is used for internal purposes – for example, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support. The data is used to apply the right help at the right time for students/groups of students whom attendance is causing a concern. Information around attendance will be provided to external professionals including Children's Services, the police and or the local authority as and when it is requested.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Interim Executive Board

The IEB is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Acting Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The linked IEB member for safeguarding is Mrs Suzanne Uprichard, and she meets with the DSL to discuss attendance and pupil absence each half term.

7.2 The Acting Principal

The Acting Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the IEB.

The Acting Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Home School Liaison Officer

The home school liaison officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the senior leader overseeing attendance.
- Works with tutors and pastoral support and progress managers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carer to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Acting Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Implements, monitors and reviews 6-week improvement plans regarding attendance

7.4 The Pastoral support and Progress Managers

The pastoral support and progress managers are:

- To liaise with the Home School Liaison Officer in all matters related to attendance.
- To attend a weekly meeting with the Home School Liaison Officer.

- To keep an overview of individual student attendance in their year group and to respond to any trends, discrepancies or individual needs that may arise from this.
- To send text messages daily to parents/carers regarding any absence from school that has not been communicated to reception.
- To phone parents/carer, conduct home visits, send attendance related letters and lead on school based attendance meetings where appropriate.
- To mentor/provide group support to identified students where attendance is a concern.

7.5 Form Tutors and Subject Teachers

Form tutors and subject teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.6 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the senior leader responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the IEB.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour for learning and rewards policy

10. Children Missing in Education (5 day absence)

If a child is absent and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers/contacts, after five days of absence the school is required to start *child missing in education* procedures as set out in Local Authority guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family or a home visit. We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 5 consecutive days. In this case, the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of being missing*. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to help locate the child. It is crucial that parents/carers make sure that we always have an up-to-date contact details/numbers.

For further information about children missing in education please refer to our Safeguarding Policy and the additional DfE guidance which can be found here (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day