



MEADOW PARK SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Approved by:

Bernadette Pettman

Date: June 2024

Next review due by:

September 2024 (Trust wide policy)

Contents

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

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- › Pauline Parkes, Safeguarding Link Governor

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Stephen Darby and can be contacted via email: s.darby@meadoparkschool.com.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Emma Keogh and can be contacted via email: e.keogh@meadowparkschool.com or through the attendance mobile phone: 07742763044.

3.5 Form tutors/Class teachers

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via School Synergy or through SIMS. Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance to all lessons, usually via School Synergy or SIMS. Class teachers and form tutors are instructed to do this in a timely manner, and to follow attendance processes if a child is missing from a lesson.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:15am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend every timetabled session on time

4. School procedures

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school **before** 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken in Form time at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken during Period 4 at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 2.15pm.

4.2 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 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/Carers should report a student absence using the dedicated absence phonenumber **024 7630 2580** **using Option 1**. Parents may also report absence using the School Synergy app, through the one to one contact module.

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, or if the illness extends beyond 5 school days, the school may ask parents/carers 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Parents/Carers will be notified of any unexplained absence through the School Synergy app. Please see section 4.5 for further details.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/Carers should notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment by emailing the attendance officer, Mrs. Emma Keogh on e.keogh@meadowparkschool.com.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a pupil is late to school after 8:45am, they will be registered through the Late Gate. Students will then leave a personal item, including mobile phones, and will receive a break time detention, where they can collect their belongings. Continued and persistent lateness may escalate the sanction to an after-school detention, where they will be able to collect their belongings at 3:30pm. If lateness continues parents will be invited into school for a meeting with their Head of House/Form tutor.

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and to all lessons. The start of school/lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work. If a child is late he/she can miss work, time with the class teacher/tutor giving vital information and cause disruption to the lesson for others. Sanctions will be issued in line with the behaviour policy for students who are repeatedly late to lessons. Please refer to the behaviour policy for more details.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. 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 any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- › Send an attendance alert through School Synergy (via the app, email and text message) on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- › If the school does not get a response, they will call the pupil's parent/carer.
- › If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may refer to local agencies or the police
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- › Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

Third Day of Absence

- › Any child who has not been seen and where contact has not been established with any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence, the school is required to start a Child Missing in Education procedure. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, and wider family. The form tutor, Admin Attendance Team, Attendance Officer, Deputy Head of House or Head of House will try to establish contact. The school will conduct a home visit, if all no contact is made.
- › If contact is unsuccessful the school will follow Local Authority or DfE guidance.

Tenth Day of Absence

- › We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child has not been seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing' their education. Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure their contact details are up to date.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Attendance is reported to parents/carers with each progress check and in the annual academic report. In addition, parents/carers can view their child's attendance using the School Synergy app.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.

Any requests to take your child out of school during term time must be provided in writing to the Headteacher via Mrs Emma Keogh or by submitting a leave of absence request form from the School Office. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. 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 headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › 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
- › Traveler 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 traveler 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

Examples of unauthorised absence:

- › parents/carers giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- › Truancy before or during the school day
- › Absences which have not been authorized

Study leave: We believe that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period therefore, and students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. A bespoke timetable will be provided for the Year 11,12 and 13 students to ensure they get the most from this revision period for their Summer GCSE examinations. Study leave will only be granted to Year 11 students during the time of the GCSE examination period. Year 12 and 13 students will also receive study leave during the weeks of their mocks and official A-Level exams at the end of year 13. Should any students wish to attend school (or should their parents wish them to) on the days and at times when they are not sitting examinations, arrangements will be made for them to do so. The school will work within the following legal requirements:

- › Study leave should only be granted to Year 11,12 and 13 students and never to those in other year groups
- › It should never exceed 15 school days in a year and is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself, i.e. not before the beginning of that period
- › It should always be granted sparingly, taking account of an individual student's/ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study
- › Any student has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent has the right to insist he/she does so

Any sessions given to students as study leave are classified as authorised absence (coded S as it is not an 'approved educational activity') and should be recorded and reported on by the school as such.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The 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 or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Students whose attendance is above 96% will receive celebratory rewards, events, certificates, house points and praise. The school may use additional strategies to promote attendance which may include prize draws. This may be focused around a specific time of the year where attendance has historically fallen.

The school will work closely with parents/carers to support regular attendance – for example, communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, indicating a named contact in school, etc. The Attendance Officer will work closely with families to support an improvement in attendance, which may include Attendance Support Plans, mentoring/counselling referrals, reduced timetable implementation, ESNAPP referrals, Early Help Assessment, Team around the family meetings, Social care referrals, SEND support.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance team monitors student absence on a daily basis. Alongside the responsive work, the attendance team works proactively, analyzing data, reporting to Team Around the Child meetings (internal multi-disciplinary panel), and working quickly with families where attendance becomes a concern.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Stephen Darby, Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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