

# Meadows School

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## Attendance Policy

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### 1. Introduction:

Meadows School is committed to Barnardo's Basis and Values, which provides the framework within which we can engage in giving young people a better start in life.

- We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.
- We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued.
- We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.
- We understand that as a Special School we are working with some of the most vulnerable young people in the UK and therefore have a duty to ensure stringent procedures and training must be in place and available to all staff.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors and are consistent with those of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB).

2. Aims:	<p>We are committed to meeting the obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Promoting good attendance</li> <li>➤ Reducing absence, including responses to persistently absent children and severe absence</li> <li>➤ Ensuring staff do all they reasonable can to achieve the highest possible attendance</li> <li>➤ Ensuring every pupil has access to an education and curriculum that best suits their needs</li> <li>➤ Acting early to address patterns of absence</li> <li>➤ Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school</li> </ul> <p>We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.</p>
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3. Responsibilities:	<p><b>The Principal holds responsibility for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos</li> <li>➤ Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties</li> <li>➤ Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data</li> <li>➤ Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school</li> <li>➤ Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance</li> <li>➤ Holding the senior leaders to account for the implementation of this policy</li> </ul> <p><b>The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implementation of this policy at the school</li> <li>➤ Chairing of weekly attendance meetings.</li> <li>➤ Monitoring school-level absence data, analysing and reporting to the governors</li> <li>➤ Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils</li> <li>➤ Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies</li> <li>➤ Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence</li> </ul>
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**The Heads of Key Stages are responsible for:**

- Leading attendance across the school
- Attendance and contribution to Attendance Meetings
- 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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- 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

**Form Tutors are responsible for:**

- Recording attendance twice a day on the school MIS system
- Using the correct codes
- Reporting to Keyworkers if a reason for absence is unknown

**Keyworkers are responsible for:**

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact social care or the police (absence can be a safeguarding concern)
- 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

**Parents/Carers are responsible for:**

- Making sure their child attends every day
- Informing the school office as soon as possible if their child cannot attend
- Providing a reason for their child's absence
- Providing more than 1 emergency contact for their child
- Ensuring, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

<p>4. Recording Attendance:</p>	<p>We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.</p> <p>We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.</p> <p><b>It will mark whether every pupil is:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Present</li> <li>➤ Attending an approved off-site educational activity</li> <li>➤ Absent</li> <li>➤ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances</li> </ul> <p><b>Any amendment to the attendance register will include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The original entry</li> <li>➤ The amended entry</li> <li>➤ The reason for the amendment</li> <li>➤ The date on which the amendment was made</li> <li>➤ The name and position of the person who made the amendment</li> </ul> <p><b>See appendix A for the DfE attendance codes.</b></p> <p><b>We will also record:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Whether the absence is authorised or not</li> <li>➤ The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity</li> <li>➤ The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances</li> </ul> <p>We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.</p> <p>Students must arrive in school by 09:00 on each school day.</p> <p>The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00 and will be kept open until 09:25 The register for the second session will be taken at 13:30 and will be kept open until 13:35.</p> <p>Link workers will contact home and record communication by 10:00.</p>
<p>5. Unplanned Absence:</p>	<p>The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff.</p> <p>We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the student's parent/carer 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.</p> <p>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.</p>

6. Planned Absence:	<p>Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.</p> <p>Parent/carers should inform the school admin office or their child's keyworker via email of planned absence.</p> <p>However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.</p> <p>The student'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 8 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.</p>
7. Reporting to Parents/Carers:	<p>Your child's attendance report can be seen by accessing the Parent Portal App.</p> <p>Additionally, it is reported 3 times a year on the school reports, once a year at the annual review and for relevant students at PEP meetings.</p>
8. Approval for Term-Time Absence:	<p>The Principal 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.</p> <p>We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen and for which there was insufficient time to take the necessary action to resolve the situation arising from those circumstances.</p> <p>Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated.</p> <p>The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.</p>

8.	Approval for Term-Time Absence (continued):	<p>Valid reasons for <b>authorised absence</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)</li> <li>➤ Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart</li> <li>➤ 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</li> <li>➤ Study leave</li> <li>➤ Alternative timetables – as agreed by the Local Authority</li> <li>➤ Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where The Principal may grant term-time holiday</li> </ul>
9.	Legal Sanctions:	<p>Meadows School cannot issue fines for unauthorised absence but parent/carers should be aware that your child's local authority can and the school has a legal obligation to share your child's attendance record with their local authority.</p>
10.	Strategies for Promoting Attendance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Create Positive School Culture</li> <li>➤ Establish School-Wide expectations regarding the importance of attendance</li> <li>➤ Build Positive Staff – Student relationships</li> <li>➤ Rewards for attendance at school</li> <li>➤ Regular contact and engagement with parents and carers</li> <li>➤ Weekly attendance meetings with KS managers/SLT/Data Manager</li> <li>➤ Data driven analysis and action</li> </ul>

11.	Attendance Monitoring:	<p><b>Meadows School will:</b></p> <p><b>Monitor Attendance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level</li> <li>➤ Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern</li> </ul> <p><b>Analyse Attendance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 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</li> <li>➤ Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns</li> </ul> <p><b>Use Data to Improve Attendance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Keys Stages and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families</li> <li>➤ Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies</li> </ul> <p><b>Reduce Persistent and Severe Absence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence</li> <li>➤ Hold regular meetings with the parents 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</li> <li>➤ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance</li> </ul> <p>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.</p>
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12. Additional Information	
Copies of this policy may be obtained from:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share Point</li> <li>• School website</li> </ul>
This policy links with the following policies & Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DfE 'Working together to Improve School Attendance'</li> <li>• DfE 'School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures'</li> <li>• Part 6 of The Education Act 1996</li> <li>• Part 3 of The Education Act 2002</li> <li>• Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013</a></li> </ul>
Relevant statutory guidance, circulars, legislation & other sources of information are:	DfE guidance on School Census
The lead member of staff is:	The Principal
Appendices:	Appendix A – School attendance codes from the DfE



## Appendix A – Attendance Codes

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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day