

Meadowside CP & Nursery School



Attendance Policy

Policy Updated	July 2016 March 2018 September 2018 January 2020
Reviewed & Agreed by Governors	September 2016 April 2018 October 2018 February 2020
Next Review	January 2021
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Wright
Chair of Governors	Mr Gareth Harris

Related Policy / Legislation	- Safeguarding Policy - 1996 Education Act - Section 7 & 444 - DfE 'School Attendance' July 2019
-------------------------------------	---

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The staff and governors of Meadowside CP and Nursery School believe that all pupils benefit from, and are entitled to, regular and punctual daily attendance at school. This helps ensure that all pupils have the best chance to achieve their full potential. As part of this aspiration we will monitor and respond to any instances of poor and/or irregular attendance and/or punctuality and adopt a fair, consistent and even-handed approach. We will work closely with parents/carers, their families and all relevant support agencies to promote this.

Rationale

The policy is as a result of consultation with the wider school community and an analysis of existing attendance data to establish current absence trends. This information is reported to the Department for Education and forms part of our Ofsted inspection. It aims to ensure the enjoyment and achievement for all pupils at Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School.

Principles

The Governors, Headteacher and staff wish to ensure every child has the opportunity to:

1. Fully participate in school life
2. Enjoy and achieve
3. Feel a valued member of the school community

Aims

- To reduce persistent absence (less than 90% absence) in line with the national average
- To improve attendance to be at least in line with the primary school national average of 96%
- To ensure there is a whole school, graduated response to improving punctuality and attendance
- To identify groups of pupils and individuals whose absence causes concern
- To identify pupils persistently absent from school
- To track pupils' attendance and monitor and evaluate progress
- To identify the main causes of absence and take action to address them

Legal Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs a child might have. This Attendance Policy has been drawn up with reference to the DfE 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' document, July 2019. From 1st September 2013 the new law by the DfE does not give any entitlement to allow parents to take their child on holiday during term time. A request for holidays in term time is not believed, by the current government, to be an 'exceptional circumstance'. Please refer to www.dfe.gov.uk.

Parental Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Parents must:

- Contact school on each day of absence to provide a reason for non-attendance before 9.15am
- Work with the school and any other agency to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance

School Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

The school attendance officer monitors attendance daily. As the attendance officer of the school, under guidance from the School Business Manager, she will ensure:

- Registers are accurately marked and maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- A whole school approach to reinforce good attendance, encouraging all pupils to attend and achieve
- Individuals or group attendance targets are set and understood by staff, parents and pupils

Registration

Morning Registration

School starts at **8.50am** except for Reception Class who start at **9.05am** and Daisies start at **8.30am**. Parents should ensure pupils are in school for this time. The register will be taken at **8.55am** (Reception Class **9.10am** & Daisies at **8.50am**) for morning registration.

A pupil arriving after that time (but before the close of register) will be marked late (Code **L** - Late arrival before the register has closed). Pupils arriving after the close of register (**9.20am**) will be marked **U** (arrived in school after registration closed).

Parents of children persistently arriving after registration will be invited into school to discuss the lateness and seek a resolution*. Where school action fails to bring about an improvement, the matter will be discussed with Local Authority Attendance Officer and consideration given to prosecution. Please see below for **School Protocol**.

**School will notify and discuss persistent lateness with parents of children who travel to school via LA transport, so that parents can address the matter with the transport providers.*

Afternoon Registration

A pupil arriving after the following times will be marked as late for afternoon registration:

Reception	12.45pm
Buttercups	12.45pm
Y1	12.45pm
Y2	12.45pm
Y3	13.30pm
Y4	13.30pm
Giant Redwoods	13.15pm
Y5	13.30pm
Y6	13.30pm

Categorisation of Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The parent must provide an explanation for any period of absence from school, it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.

School will **usually** authorise absences where a pupil is:

- Unable to attend school due to illness. This will be coded 'I'. However school reserves the right to require medical evidence before authorising an absence for illness if there are on-going concerns about a child's attendance.
- Requires emergency dental/medical appointments. Wherever possible routine dental/medical appointments should be made after school or during school holidays. This will be coded 'M'.
- Absent due to 'special' circumstances. This will be coded as a 'C' code and an example of this may be to attend a funeral of a close family member, to visit a close family member who is seriously ill or there has been a death or significant trauma in the family.
- Leave of absence for a holiday will only be authorised for children whose parents are in the Armed Forces and are either going or returning from tour including breaks of leave during tours. This will be coded 'H'.

School will not authorise absence for:

- Holidays
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Days out
- Looking after siblings

If the holiday in term time is not agreed by the school, but the pupil is absent on the requested dates, the absence will be recorded as 'G' (family holiday not agreed), this will mean that the absence has been recorded on the school attendance register as unauthorised. The Local Authority Attendance Officer will be notified and a prosecution may be considered

School may request medical verification where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. Please see below for **School Protocol**.

School Systems for Promoting Regular Attendance

School will:

- Contact parents on each day of a pupil's absence, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer by 9.15am to ensure the safety of the pupil
- Analyse individual attendance pupil data to identify patterns of absence causing concern
- Contact parents by letter when a pupil's attendance falls below 96% to highlight concerns
- Invite parents in to school for a discussion when a pupil's attendance is below 90% and is therefore classified as a 'persistent absentee'.
- Please see Appendices for protocol and for examples of letters which will be sent out if attendance is causing a concern.

If attendance does not improve a referral will be made to a Local Authority Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer from the Local Authority will be in contact with you and may consider a prosecution under the fast track prosecution process, a nine week process where targets are set to improve attendance levels.

The following are examples of the support which school can offer to increase a pupil's attendance:

- Use Individual Attendance Support Plans for pupils with attendance difficulties
- Use Parenting Contracts where exclusion of behavioural issues are affecting a pupil's attendance in school
- In partnership with the Local Authority use a full range of strategies, including legal interventions, to support improvement to attendance
- Provide appropriate support to pupils to ensure successful reintegration following long term absence
- Complete an Early Help referral where complex and significant factors requiring a multi-agency response is identified
- Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school

attendance, through parents evenings, pupil reviews and home-school agreements

- Make parents aware of the impact of poor attendance on attainment

Celebrating good attendance and punctuality:

We will:

- Acknowledge and celebrate the class with the highest average weekly attendance in weekly assembly.
- Termly awards and a raffle for children with 100% attendance for the term.
- Acknowledge, praise and reward, in an end of year assembly, those children who have had 100% attendance all year and name them in the school newsletter.
- Encourage and praise those children who have made successful efforts to improve their attendance.

Persons responsible for attendance in Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- Welfare Co-ordinator
- Inclusion Officer
- School Business Manager
- School Office Administrators

Review of Policy

- This policy will be formally reviewed every year
- The principles of this policy will be raised in the school newsletter regularly throughout the year
- Any complaints arising from the implementation of this policy should be addressed to the Headteacher in the first instance

School Protocol

How attendance at Meadowside Community Primary & Nursery School will be monitored

1. Attendance will be checked weekly and any unauthorised absences or any child who was late more than twice in a week will receive a 'Reason for Absence/Lateness' form. (Appendix 1)
2. Attendance will be checked on the last Friday of every month by the attendance officer and shared with the Headteacher and the Welfare Co-ordinator. All children below 96% will be monitored.
3. Where attendance is causing a concern, school will send out letters as shown in Appendix 1, 2 and 3.
4. Parents of children who are on course to be classified as a 'persistent absentee' may be asked to provide medical

evidence in the event of further absences through illness. See Appendix 4.

5. Parents/carers of any child who continues to be off school without sufficient medical evidence will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer for further investigation and may be prosecuted. See Appendix 5.

Late Children

Parents of children who are persistently late will be sent a letter explaining that the Local Authority Attendance Officer will monitor their child's attendance and punctuality. Parents will be made aware of how much learning time their children are missing.

Appendix 2

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

School Attendance Letter of Concern

Name

Class

As I am sure you are aware, regular attendance and being punctual at school is important so that young people can maximise their educational opportunities. The Government have decreed that any pupil with an attendance level of under 90% will be classed as a 'persistent absentee' and this may trigger legal involvement from the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Following my letter dated, NAME's attendance is still a cause for concern and is only.....%. This level of attendance is now well below average and your child will not be achieving their targets. Absence may include times when your child has been ill and may therefore have been authorised by the school. However all school absence, whatever the reason, can prevent your child from achieving their full potential.

I would therefore ask for your co-operation in ensuring a sustained improvement in your child's overall school attendance.

If you wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me on the schools number.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Stokes

Welfare Co-ordinator

Appendix 3

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

School Attendance Letter of Concern- Invitation to Meeting

Name.....

DOB

As I am sure you are aware, regular attendance and being punctual at school is important so that young people can maximise their educational opportunities. The Government have decreed that any pupil with an attendance level of under 90% will be classed as a 'persistent absentee' and this may trigger legal involvement from the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Following my letter dated,’s attendance is still a cause for concern and is only.....%. This level of attendance is now well below average and your child will not be achieving their targets. Absence may include times when your child has been ill and may therefore have been authorised by the school. However all school absence, whatever the reason, can prevent your child from achieving their full potential.

I would therefore ask for your co-operation in ensuring a sustained improvement in your child’s overall school attendance. To discuss this further I would like to invite you to attend a meeting at the school on..... If you are unable to meet with me on this date will you please either let me so we can rearrange. Please note if we do not meet to discuss your child’s attendance we will consider passing our concerns on to the Local Authority’s Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Stokes

Welfare Co-ordinator

Appendix 4

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Name

Class

Following my previous letters and the meeting arranged for,
.....'s attendance is still a cause for concern and is
only.....%. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, you are legally
responsible for ensuring regular attendance and punctuality of your child at school.

Due to the significant number of absences you are requested to provide medical
evidence to support the reasons if you decide in future that your child is too ill to
attend school. This evidence may take the form of either a letter from your GP or an
appointment card, date stamped and signed by staff at your GP's surgery as proof
that your child has attended for treatment. It may also include a copy of a
prescription or medication that has the child's name and date on it. This decision has
not been taken lightly and it has been made following advice given from the Local
Authority Attendance Service. If your child is now absent from school and medical
evidence has not been provided their absence will be classed as unauthorised; an
accumulation of unauthorised attendance could lead to legal action being taken
against you.

We would appreciate your support in this matter and we will see 's
attendance improves to help them achieve their potential. If you are having difficulty
getting your child into school I would welcome the opportunity to support you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Stokes

Welfare Co-ordinator

Appendix 5

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

School Attendance Letter of Concern- Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service

Name.....

DOB

Following my previous letters and contacts with you’s attendance remains a cause for concern and is only.....%.

As their attendance has not significantly improved, I have no further option other than to refer the case to the Local Authority. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, you are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance and punctuality of your child at school. The Government have decreed that any pupil with an attendance level of under 90% will be classed as a ‘persistent absentee’. Unfortunately your child is on track to becoming a persistent absentee and they will be falling behind in their learning.

An Attendance Officer from the Local Authority will be in contact with you and may consider a prosecution. May I take this opportunity to remind you that the outcome of their involvement will be influenced by an improvement in your child’s attendance at school. I would urge you to ensure your child attends school regularly from now on. If they are absent for any reason it is still a requirement that you must provide medical evidence to support their absence.

As always I am willing to discuss this matter with you further either in person or by phone.

Thank you in anticipation for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Stokes

Welfare Co-ordinator