Attendance Policy

Meadowfield

To inspire and motivate all pupils and staff who learn and work together to aspire to endless possibilities.

Statement of Intent

Meadowfield School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience and the school will ensure that every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

As part of our school values each pupil is welcomed, valued, respected and encouraged to respect themselves and others. The school aims to empower all pupils to gain the essential skills both academic and social that will equip them for the future.

Meadowfield School believes that by working together we can improve attendance. Through the school values we promote a positive, strong ethos to attendance – every day counts! We have our attendance expectation poster displayed in public areas alongside our safeguarding poster.

All our procedures and monitoring protocols are designed to ensure that – every child and their family matters.

The Governors, Principal, Senor Attendance Champion and Staff in partnership with parents and outside agencies have a duty to promote good attendance at Meadowfield School and offer the necessary support and guidance for families to remove any barrier to school attendance.

We believe that education is essential for all. To achieve their full potential pupils need to attend regularly and punctually. The school will follow its attendance and monitoring protocols to reduce absence, including persistent, severe absence and lateness.

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

EXPECT
Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

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MONITOR
Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

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LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND
When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

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FACILITATE SUPPORT
Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

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FORMALISE SUPPORT
Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

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ENFORCE
Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

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

Roles and Responsibilities

At Meadowfield School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

- Liz Hymus, Deputy Principal/Lead DSL is the School's Senior Attendance Champion
- Ginny Cosstick, Office Manager/PA to Leadership is the School's Attendance Support
- Emma Parrish, Attendance Officer – Main Site and Satellites
- Kathryn Plowman/Jo Budgen, Office Support (6th Form)

Emma, Kathryn and Jo are the school's daily attendance contacts.

Liz Hymus has overall responsibility for attendance including monitoring and analysing attendance, working with the Pathway Principals to support families and improve attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present and leave blank those missing from the classroom at the time the register was taken and submitted. The attendance team will follow up missing marks and follow the school's first day calling procedures and update the register with appropriate codes.

It is the responsibility of any staff member to report any attendance concerns to Liz Hymus and/or Ginny Cosstick/Emma Parish/Kathryn Plowman or Jo Budgen.

The Department for Education (DfE) reads the school's registers to collect attendance data and other information about pupils on a daily basis via electronic data sharing with the DfE.

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the principal to account for the implementation of this policy

The governor linked to attendance is Ralph Hawes The link governor will meet with the Senior Attendance Champion to review attendance and procedures and repot to the governors termly.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data
- Supporting Senior Attendance Champion with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Senior Attendance Champion responsible for attendance

The designated Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school and demonstrate how school follows the school's Attendance Policy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data and sharing with the Principal
- Meet termly with Assistant Principals to review analysed data and agree on action to be taken following the school's agreed stages of action to improve attendance or put support strategies in place to improve pupil attendance.
- Liaise with Attendance Support/Attendance Officer on the outcome of Assistant Principal meetings to follow up on actions to be taken.
- Work with KCC Attendance Service to tackle persistent/sever absence
- Reporting to governors
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Senior Attendance Champion, who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for attendance is Liz Hymus who can be contacted via the school office, 01795 477788 or email, office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk.

The Attendance Support & Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Support and Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Maintaining daily registers and first day calling procedures
- Issue Registration Certificates twice yearly
- Issue Attendance Certificates bi-termly
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data in preparation for the Senior Attendance Champion and Assistant Principals to meet termly
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues as requested by the Senior Attendance Champion or Assistant Principal for the specified Pathway
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion responsible for attendance
- Support working with KCC Attendance Service to tackle persistent/sever absence
- Liaise with Principal on holiday and term time leave requests
- Liaise with Senior Attendance Champion and Principal regarding the issuing of fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Support is Ginny Cosstick and the Attendance Officer is Emma Parrish and they can be contacted via the school office, tel 01795 477788 or email office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk

6th Form attendance is managed on a daily basis by Kathryn Plowman and Jo Budgen, monitored by the Senior Attendance Champion and Assistant Principal.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis and submitting this information to the school office. The register is taken morning and afternoon.

Class teachers or class staff will forward any messages relating to attendance that have been provided verbally or in the Contact Book by parents/carers.

School Office Staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Record accurate messages to be forwarded to the appropriate staff

Parents/Carers

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress, emotional and social development and, sometimes, puts pupils at safeguarding risks.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the first day of the absence. If the pupil is to be absent for more than 1-day parents are requested to contact the school regularly and provide an update on the pupil's condition 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
- Contact the school to discuss any concerns or issues to enable the school to investigate, speak/meet with families to resolve concerns/issues

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Engage with staff and other pupils
- Seek assistance from staff if they are worried or concerned, to give the school the opportunity to support the pupil to resolve the issue and break down any barriers to attending school

Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

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

We will take an 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

We will also record:

- For pupils of statutory school age 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

All attendance data is stored on our MI system, SIMS using the statutory codes, shown in Appendix 1.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

The School day is:

Meadowfield School Main Site & Sunny Bank Satellite		**Meadowfield 6th Form Centre**		**Meadowfield Fulston Satellite**	
Day	**Time**	**Day**	**Time**	**Day**	**Time**
Monday – Thursday	9.00am – 3.00pm	Monday – Thursday	9.00am – 3.10pm	Monday – Thursday	9.00am – 3.00pm
Friday	9.00.am – 1.30pm	Friday	9.00.am – 1.30pm	Friday	9.00.am – 1.15pm

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office telephone 01795 477788 (6th Form ring 01795 342147), using the school's home/school communication system – Weduc or emailing the school office, office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

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. Contact can be via the Contact Book or the School Office.

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 in writing for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Requesting Absence from School, Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Only the Principal can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Principal is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

Any request for absence needs to be made in writing with an explanation of why the absence is being requested, the start and end dates and the reason for the absence. The school considers

each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

The Principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 School Attendance Regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close family member.
- To attend a funeral of a person close to the family.
- To attend the wedding of a close family member. This does not include weddings abroad where 1 day travel and 1 day for the wedding will be authorised but the remainder of the time will be unauthorised.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Sanctions

Meadowfield School may make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below, to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty Notices

Adhering to the Department for Education 's statutory guidance on 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024), the Principal (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent/carer who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent/carer must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a Notice to Improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to Improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L code)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U code)
- Punctuality is monitored within our monitoring procedures, see Recording and Monitoring

Following up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- 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 text or email the parent/carer.
- 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 the KCC Attendance Service, carry out a home visit or contact the police for a welfare check
- A letter will be sent home requesting the parent/carer to contact the school or return the reply slip on the pupil's return.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Principal and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate them.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Children out of School for Long Periods due to Ill-health or mental health

When a child is absent for long periods of time, the school with maintain regular contact with the family to offer support and dependant on the child's health:

- Provide printed work packs
- If possible, provide other support requested by the family

A return to school meeting will be arranged once the child is well enough to return to school. At this meeting a plan of action and support package will be agreed with the parents/carers and the school, together with the nursing team, if appropriate.

Reporting to Parents

The school will provide a copy of pupil Attendance Registrations twice per year to parents/carers. The following percentages indicate where a pupil's attendance sits and this will also be included in the accompanying letter:

- +96% – Excellent/Good
- 95% - 90% - Monitor
- Below 90% – Improvement required classed as persistent absence
- Below 50% – Improvement required classed as severe absence

This will give parents/carers a visual understanding of their child's attendance.

Celebrating and Rewarding Achievement

Due to the nature of the cohort and that many pupils have complex medical conditions and, in some cases, degenerative conditions, the school is mindful that some pupil's attendance will always be a challenge both for the pupil and their families due to these complex and severe needs.

However, the school will celebrate and reward all improvements and excellence in attendance and although the school holds regular celebration assemblies, attendance will not be included in these assemblies as they are to be inclusive to all pupils and for some pupils improving their attendance is simply not possible due the nature of their medical conditions and therefore, we do not wish to highlight their challenges or make them feel excluded. As a consequence of this decision, the school will send post cards home highlighting and rewarding improvements and excellent attendance to all pupils on a bi-termly bases.

There are two types of postcards:

- Excellent – this is for excellent attendance where the percentage meets the expected level
- Improved – this is where attendance has improved from the previous bi-monthly analysis. However, the overall level may still be below the expected level

The post cards will be sent in a private and confidential envelope and will be addressed to the whole family to try and encourage both pupil and parental engagement.

Monitoring, Recording and Action Procedures

As a special school, we have a responsibility to ensure that we are fulfilling our duties under the Equality Act, 2010, when monitoring the attendance of our students.

We benchmark ourselves against national and local special school attendance data and set ourselves targets to be above these percentages.

The school has robust monitoring procedures in place;

- Daily recording of attendance on SIMS and in tracker logs
- Dedicated Attendance line for absence reporting via both telephone and our home/school communication system, Weduc. The office email is provided to all parents/carers and absence can be reported on this email
- First day contact with parents/carers where a pupil is not in school and there has been no contact with the family
- Contact letters where communication has not been possible over the telephone, text or email
- Termly attendance is reviewed with the Senior Attendance Champion and Assistant Principals for all pupils but particularly those below 95%.
- Where pupils are below 95% attendance, depending on the reason for the fall in attendance, the following procedures may be implemented:

    - **Stage 1** – A letter may be sent home alerting parents/carers that the pupil has fallen below the expected level together with an invitation to contact the school to discuss the level of attendance and any support that may be needed.
    - **Stage 2** - If there has been no improvement in attendance a second letter is sent home advising that medical evidence is required for all further absences. The letter will include an invitation to discuss the level of attendance and any support that may be needed.
    - **Stage 3** – The Assistant Principal will telephone the family to discuss attendance and expectations and offer any support necessary to facilitate better attendance.
    - **Stage 4** – Parents/carers are sent a letter requesting their attendance at a meeting with the Assistant Principal.
    - **Stage 5** – Parents/carers are sent a letter requesting their attendance at a meeting with the Senior Attendance Champion and Assistant Principal. The LA Attendance Service will be included, if appropriate.
    - **Stage 6** – Either referral to Early Help or LA Attendance Service, depending on the reason why attendance has not improved.

In addition to attendance, punctuality is also monitored under the same procedures above.

At all these stages, the school will work with and support families and pupils to ensure that help, support and guidance are being offered to facilitate school attendance. Depending on the reasons why attendance is below the expected level or is not improving, the stages of attendance action protocols can be changed or reordered to benefit the pupil.

For persistent absence pupils, those below 90% or severally absent pupils, those below 50% we will work with families, school staff and the KCC Attendance Service to remove barriers for attendance at school.

We understand that some pupils have complex medical conditions and these will always be taken into consideration with regards to attendance.

The school will send out its Attendance leaflet every seasonal term (Term 1, 3 & 5) to ensure that attendance remains a visibly seen priority and is actively being encouraged, whilst providing families with the information necessary to seek assistance or support wherever required.

Our link governor meets with the Senior Attendance Champion termly to review attendance and procedures and reports back to the Governing Body.

The Senior Attendance Champion will provide a report to the Governors twice per year, Term 3 and 6, summarising the school's overall attendance.

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.

Meadowfield School believes that by working together we can improve attendance and all monitoring, recording and action procedures are designed to put strategies and support in place to ensure we are proactive in maintaining, encouraging and reducing persistent and severe absence. Through the school values we promote a positive, strong ethos to attendance – every day counts!

All our procedures and monitoring protocols are designed to ensure that – every child and their family matters!

6th Form Centre

Although 6th Form students are non-statutory school age, the school continues to monitor, analyse and follow up attendance using the same principles of support and expectation as those used for our statutory school age pupils.

Encouraging good attendance and punctuality forms part of our Preparation for Adulthood and can have an impact on college placement applications.

The 6th Form Centre use the following procedures to monitor and improve attendance:

- First day calling
- Follow up contact where communication has not been successful on first day via telephone, letter or home visit
- Analyse attendance termly – the Assistant Principal is provided with attendance data and will review the levels.
- Actions – where there is a concern, the Assistant Principal will contact the family via telephone to discuss any barriers to attendance or support the school can put in place. If there is no improvement to attendance the family will be sent a letter inviting them to a meeting with the Assistant Principal. The third stage, would be to invite families to attend a meeting with the Assistant Principal and Senior Attendance Champion.

Analysing Attendance to improve attendance and support pupils returning to school

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils 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
- The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system, SIMS, so that data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis that require additional support
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with families, and to the governing board and school leaders
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

Review Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Liz Hymus, Senior Attendance Champion. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Board and Senior Leadership Team.

Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Statutory Policy Approved by Leadership & Governors

Policy Adopted	Date: September 2025
Policy Approved	Date: June 2026
Next Review	Date: Academic year 2026/27

Appendix 1 Attendance Codes

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Appendix 12 School Expectation Attendance Poster displayed in public areas

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable

C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law

Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2 - Attendance Letter 1 – Stage 1

Mr & Mrs XX
Address

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs XX

Re: Pupil Name

Following the continuous reviews of pupil attendance, (Pupil Name) has been absent for XXX days of school and their attendance percentage is XX%.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell and that's the right thing to do for them and other pupils. Medical advice is clear however, that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend school, for example if they have a cough or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance, *Is My Child Too Ill For School* is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness. https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

We know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Meadowfield School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on (Pupil Name)'s absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that (Pupil Name) comes to school every day so that (he/she/they) can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this, please call or come in and meet me if there is anything we can do to support you and your child to attend school. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have on-going concerns about your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Principal Name
Assistant Principal for XXX Pathway

Appendix 3 - Attendance Letter 2 – Stage 2

Mr & Mrs XX
Address

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs XX

Re: Pupil Name

Following the continuous reviews of pupil attendance, (Pupil Name) has been absent for XXX days of school and their attendance percentage is XX%.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell and that's the right thing to do for them and other pupils. Medical advice is clear however, that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend school, for example if they have a cough or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance, *Is My Child Too Ill For School* is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness. https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Meadowfield School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on (Pupil Name)'s absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that (Pupil Name) comes to school every day so that (he/she/they) can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this, please call or come in and meet me, if there is anything we can do to support you and your child to attend school. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

Yours child's attendance is below the expected level and is now classed as (persistent/severe) absence. High levels of absence or poor punctuality can result in a referral to KCC Attendance Service or other agencies which have a duty to investigate your child's attendance and could result in a Penalty Notice being issued .

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you and KCC if we have on-ging concerns about your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Principal Name
Assistant Principal for XXX Pathway

Appendix 4 - Attendance Letter Meeting 1 – Stage 4

Mr & Mrs XX
Address

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs XX

Re: Pupil Name

Further to our previous letters regarding (Pupil Name), we have highlighted concern that your child's attendance at school is below the expected level. (Pupil Name)'s attendance at school is currently «percentage_attendance»% which means «he_she» has missed X number of days education. This will have an impact on your child's education, friendship groups, social and emotional development.

I would like to invite you to a meeting with myself on XXX to look at ways we can support you and your family and it is important that you attend this meeting, which can be via TEAMS if this is more convenient.

At the meeting we can explore the issues and any barriers to your child's attendance and put a plan in place to support you and (Pupil Name) to improve (Pupil Name)'s attendance and their enjoyment of school.

Please can you confirm your attendance to Emma Parrish, Attendance Officer, via the school office and advise if you would like to attend in person or TEAMS.

Thank you for your co-operation and I look forward to meeting with you so that we can explore ways to support (Pupil Name).

Yours sincerely

Assistant Principal Name
Assistant Principal for XXX Pathway

Appendix 5 - Attendance Letter Meeting 2 – Stage 5

Mr & Mrs XX
Address

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs XX

Re: Pupil Name

Further to our previous letters regarding (Pupil Name), we have highlighted concern that your child's attendance at school is below the expected level. (Pupil Name)'s attendance at school is currently «percentage_attendance»% which means «he_she» has missed X number of days education. This will have an impact on your child's education, friendship groups, social and emotional development.

I understand that (Assistant Principal's Name) invited to you a meeting to explore any barriers to your child attending school but that you did not attend this meeting. I would like to invite you to a meeting with myself and (Assistant Principal's Name) on XXX and it is important that you attend this meeting, which can be via TEAMS if this is more convenient, so that we can explore ways to support you and your family.

At the meeting we can explore the issues and any barriers to your child's attendance and put a plan in place to support you and (Pupil Name) to improve (Pupil Name)'s attendance and their enjoyment of school.

At this stage, I must advise you that if you do not contact the school to confirm your attendance or arrange another more convenient date, it will be necessary to for the school to refer to KCC Attendance Service.

Please can you confirm your attendance to Emma Parrish, Attendance Officer, via the school office and advise if you would like to attend in person or TEAMS.

Thank you for your co-operation and I look forward to meeting with you so that we can explore ways to support (Pupil Name).

Yours sincerely

Liz Hymus
Deputy Principal & Safeguard Lead

Appendix 6 – Punctuality Letter 1 – Stage 1

Mr & Mrs XX
Address

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs XX

Re: Pupil Name

We have noticed that (Pupil Name) is often late/absent in the mornings. We know that mornings can be difficult for some pupils and we are keen to help to improve (Pupil Name)'s attendance. (Pupil Name) has been late for school XXX times last term, which has resulted in XXX hours of lost learning.

School starts at 9:00am and pupils who arrive after 9:15am will be recorded as late, L code in the register. Any pupil who arrives after 9:30am will be recorded as an unauthorised late, U code as the register closes at 9:30am.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when you are unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions, please make sure that you advise the office as this will need to be recorded in the register.

We would love to talk to you to discuss avenues for support to help (Pupil Name) attend school well and on time. Please can you contact myself, via Emma Parrish in the school office to make an appointment for a telephone conversation or a meeting, in person or via TEAMS.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Principal Name
Assistant Principal for XXX Pathway

Appendix 7 – Punctuality Letter 2 – Stage 2

Mr & Mrs XX
Address

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs XX

Re: Pupil Name

We have noticed that (Pupil Name) is often late/absent in the mornings. We know that mornings can be difficult for some pupils and we are keen to help to improve (Pupil Name)'s attendance. (Pupil Name) has been late for school XXX times last term, which has resulted in XXX hours of lost learning.

School starts at 9:00am and pupils who arrive after 9:15am will be recorded as late, L code in the register. Any pupil who arrives after 9:30am will be recorded as an unauthorised late, U code as the register closes at 9:30am.

The school day starts with class communal time which includes the option for breakfast. Children who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and the beginning of lessons. This means that they are often unsettled and the interruption of late pupils causes disruption to the whole class and can have a serious impact on everyone which affects your child's own learning and that of others.

Yours child's attendance is below the expected level and is now classed as (persistent/severe) absence. High levels of absence or poor punctuality can result in a referral to KCC Attendance Service or other agencies which have a duty to investigate your child's attendance and could result in a Penalty Notice being issued .

We understand that there may be rare occasions when you are unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions, please make sure that you advise the office as this will need to be recorded in the register.

We would love to talk to you to discuss avenues for support to help (Pupil Name) attend school well and on time. Please can you contact myself, via Emma Parrish in the school office to make an appointment for a telephone conversation or a meeting, in person or via TEAMS.

Yours sincerely

Liz Hymus
Deputy Principal & Safeguard Lead

Appendix 8 – Punctuality Letter Meeting 1 – Stage 4

Mr & Mrs XX
Address

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs XX

Re: Pupil Name

Further to our previous letters regarding (Pupil Name), we have highlighted concern that your child's attendance at school is below the expected level. (Pupil Name)'s attendance at school is currently «percentage_attendance»% which means «he_she» has missed X number of days education. This will have an impact on your child's education, friendship groups, social and emotional development.

I would like to invite you to a meeting with myself on XXX to look at ways we can support you and your family and it is important that you attend this meeting, which can be via TEAMS if this is more convenient.

At the meeting we can explore the issues and any barriers to your child's attendance and put a plan in place to support you and (Pupil Name) to improve (Pupil Name)'s attendance and their enjoyment of school.

Please can you confirm your attendance to Emma Parrish, Attendance Officer, via the school office and advise if you would like to attend in person or TEAMS.

Thank you for your co-operation and I look forward to meeting with you so that we can explore ways to support (Pupil Name).

Yours sincerely

Assistant Principal Name
Assistant Principal for XXX Pathway

Appendix 9 – Punctuality Letter Meeting 2 – Stage 5

Mr & Mrs XX
Address

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs XX

Re: Pupil Name

Further to our previous letters regarding (Pupil Name), we have highlighted concern that your child's attendance at school is below the expected level. (Pupil Name)'s attendance at school is currently «percentage_attendance»% which means «he_she» has missed X number of days education. This will have an impact on your child's education, friendship groups, social and emotional development.

I understand that (Assistant Principal's Name) invited to you a meeting to explore any barriers to your child attending school but that you did not attend this meeting. I would like to invite you to a meeting with myself and (Assistant Principal's Name) on XXX and it is important that you attend this meeting, which can be via TEAMS if this is more convenient, so that we can explore ways to support you and your family.

At the meeting we can explore the issues and any barriers to your child's attendance and put a plan in place to support you and (Pupil Name) to improve (Pupil Name)'s attendance and their enjoyment of school.

At this stage, I must advise you that if you do not contact the school to confirm your attendance or arrange another more convenient date, it will be necessary to for the school to refer to KCC Attendance Service.

Please can you confirm your attendance to Emma Parrish, Attendance Officer, via the school office and advise if you would like to attend in person or TEAMS.

Thank you for your co-operation and I look forward to meeting with you so that we can explore ways to support (Pupil Name).

Yours sincerely

Liz Hymus
Deputy Principal & Safeguard Lead

Appendix 10 – Unexplained Absence Letter 1

Pupil's Name: _____

Class:_____

Unexplained Absence

Your child was absent from school on .
We have tried to contact you by telephone without success.

Please complete the slip below and return to the school office explaining the reason for this absence. Any unexplained absences have to be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Please ensure you phone the school or enter the reason using WEDUC Absence on the first day of your child's absence. If this is not possible, please put a note in your child's Contact Book on their return.
Thank you.

✂----------*Please cut along the dotted line and return to the school office* ----------

Meadowfield School - Unexplained Absence

My child _____ was absent from school on _____

Due to:

_____

_____

Parent/Carer Name:_____

Signed_____ Dated_____

(Please return to the office as soon as possible)

Appendix 11 – Unexplained Absence Letter 2

Pupil's Name:_____

Class:_____

Unexplained Absence

A previous letter has been sent to you regarding the absence of your child on the date(s) below and we do not appear to have received a reply.

As this absence is unexplained it is recorded as unauthorised and as such must be entered on the Attendance Return and will go on the child's record as such.

If there was a reason for the absence, please enter it on the form and return it to school as soon as possible so that we can update the records accordingly.

Please ensure you phone the school or enter the reason using WEDUC Absence on the first day of your child's absence. If this is not possible, please put a note in your child's Contact Book on their return.

Thank you.

✂ ----------*Please cut along the dotted line and return to the school office* ----------

Meadowfield School - Unexplained Absence

My child _____ was absent from school on _____

Due to:

_____

_____

Parent/Carer Name:_____

Signed_____ Dated_____

(Please return to the office as soon as possible)

Appendix 12 – Attendance Matters Poster

MEADOWFIELD SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE EXPECTATION

Pupils are expected to attend every day that the school is open

Attendance Matters

Every day counts, every child & their family matter!