

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date: May 2021

Introduction

At Meadowpark, we believe that regular attendance at school is essential for the effective education of all pupils. There is a clear link between good attendance and good progress. It is important that a high level of attendance is maintained. We do all we can to encourage all pupils to attend and believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes in school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all.

This policy has been developed in accordance with School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (August 2020)

The policy aims to make explicit the School's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures and to ensure that attendance concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of pupil's wellbeing.

Aims

- To maximise the attendance of all children thus supporting high levels of attainment and achievement.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those at the school.
- To support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly, through effective communication of the attendance policy and term dates.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely with, and make full use of the support from the wider community, including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams.

At Meadowpark, we believe that regular and punctual attendance at school gives children access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Children should be:

- At school on time and ready to learn
- In school every day that the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Good attendance at Meadowpark School is vital to:

- Ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are met
- Avoid underachievement
- Enable pupils to have maximum access to the curriculum
- Ensure continuity in learning
- Enable every child to feel a part of their school community

Admissions Register and Attendance Register

The law requires all schools, including independent schools, to have an admission register and with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers (School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities - August 2020).

Meadowpark maintains an Admissions Register and Attendance Register (School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities - August 2020).

The Admissions Register is maintained by the school office and contains the following information:

- Personal details of the pupil
- Date of admission or re-admission
- Details of the last school attended
- Information regarding parents/carers

The Attendance Register is taken twice a day by the class teacher. It will contain the following information regarding the child:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Not attending in relation to COVID

The school will follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are followed in the instance that concerns are raised or identified.

Attendance - The Daily Attendance register

Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and creates a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

The register is completed each day at 9.00am and 1.00pm (1.30pm where classes are on the additional later sitting for lunch, due to covid bubble restrictions) by the class teacher. Class teachers will use the codes outlined below when completing their register.

The DSL also keeps a daily record of whole school attendance, which details pupil's absence. This is to allow for patterns in absence, unknown reasons for absence and unauthorised absence to be followed up.

Attendance is regularly analysed by the Senior Leadership Team.

In the event of partial school closure, for example, during the Coronavirus pandemic, daily attendance procedures will continue and school attendance is also recorded on a spreadsheet, maintained by the school office.

Attendance codes used by Meadowpark School

Code / \: present mark - / = am \ = pm

Code L: Late arrival before The Daily Attendance Form has closed (9.00am)
Code B: Educated off-site (e.g at another school) - Authorised
Code C: Other - Authorised
Code D: Dual Registration - Authorised
Code E: Exclusion
Code F: Extended Family Holiday NOT agreed by the school - Unauthorised
Code G: Extended Family Holiday agreed by the school - Authorised
Code H: Family Holiday agreed by the school - Authorised
Code I: Illness - Authorised
Code J: Interview at another school - Authorised
Code L: Late (before registers close)
Code M: Medical/dental appointments - Authorised
Code N: No reason for absence yet provided - Unauthorised
Code P: Approved Sporting Activity - Authorised
Code R: Religious Observance - Authorised
Code S: Study Leave - Authorised
Code T: Traveller Absence - Authorised
Code U: Late after registers closed - Unauthorised
Code V: Educational Visit or Trip (Residential/School Journey) - Authorised
Code X: School Closed to pupils and therefore not counted in possible attendances

Definitions and types of absence

Authorised absence is an occasion when a pupil is absent from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification or evidence from the parent or carer.

Unauthorised absence is any occasion when a child is absent from school without the permission from the school. Unauthorised absences should be avoided and will be investigated by the school.

Lateness

- Pupils should arrive at school at 8.30 am for prep children and 8.45am for pre-prep. Registers close at 9am and the school gate is locked.
- Pupils arriving after the register has been closed will be considered as late. 'L' will be recorded.
- Pupils arriving after 9.00a.m. must enter the school via the front door and ring the bell for entry. A member of staff will open the door for them and report the pupil's arrival to the DSL. The class teacher will mark their attendance for the morning session as 'L'.
- This will also be recorded on the whole school attendance record.
- Pupils arriving after 9.30am. will be officially absent for the morning session. This will be considered an unauthorised absence, recorded as 'U', unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example a pre-notified or emergency doctor's appointment. The parent is expected to contact the school prior to the date to inform the school of any appointments made for during the school day.

Illness and unexpected absence

- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and to give an update on each subsequent day of absence.
- In the case of gastric illnesses, parents are asked to keep their child away from school until they have been clear of sickness/ diarrhea for a full 48 hours
- Office staff will contact parents on the first day of absence if a reason for absence has not been given.

- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the headteacher will be informed.

Medical (including dental) appointments

- Whenever possible, parents/carers are encouraged to make medical appointments out of school hours.
- Parents must inform the school when their child needs to attend a medical appointment. These absences will be authorised. Parents/carers may be requested to provide written confirmation or evidence of these appointments.
- When appointments must be in term time, parents are encouraged to ensure their child attends school for as much of the day as possible e.g. returning to school after the appointment. Parents will be required to complete an authority to collect a child during the school day form, this will state whether the child is expected to return to school that day (see appendix 1).

Holidays during term time

- Holidays should be taken during the school holiday periods.
- Schools must comply with DfE requirements and may authorise term time holidays only if there are exceptional circumstances which indicate that it is appropriate to do so. It is for the HeadTeacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.
- Applications to take a holiday or an occasional special day during term time will be considered on an individual basis and a request should be made in writing to the Headteacher.
- Other absences
- Other requests for absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made as to whether the absence can be authorised and which absence code is appropriate. All such requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher. Other absences which may be authorised, in cases where the school is notified in advance by the parent/ carer, include:
 - Days for religious observance
 - External examinations e.g. dancing
 - Educational events e.g. swimming in a gala
 - Visiting a new school
 - Significant family events such as funeral of close family member.

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that leave has been granted before taking a child out of school for a holiday or other absence. This is especially important where a request is made late, giving the school insufficient time to consider the request and respond in writing.

Parent/Carer action for communicating absences

Parents must inform the school by 8.30am on each day of absence. An answerphone message can be left for the school office. Parents must state the child's name, class and a short explanation. The school office will inform the relevant school staff of the absence. Where school staff have not been informed of an absence, they will contact the school office to establish if parents have informed the school office. Where the office have not been informed, office staff will then attempt to make contact with the parents.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

Meadowpark school promotes good attendance and will identify and address attendance concerns promptly and act early to address low attendance and/or patterns of absence.

It is expected that parents ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. Where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents will be informed by the Headteacher. This usually occurs once attendance drops below 95%. The Headteacher will invite the parents to attend a meeting to discuss attendance levels and see if the school can provide any support to help attendance levels increase.

Where a child is absent from school and no contact has been made to the school by the parent, the school will attempt to make contact with the parent (s) to ascertain a reason for the child's absence.

In the event that that the parents cannot be contacted by the school, the school will follow the procedures for CME, as detailed in the flowchart, appendix 2.

All staff have a responsibility to raise any concerns relating to a child's attendance with the Headteacher and DSL.

The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that children with low attendance are identified early and that this is monitored and appropriate action is taken in conjunction with any other concerns that staff may have raised about the child. If the school is concerned that the child is vulnerable and at risk of harm, we will refer straight to MASH.

Persistent absenteeism

Attendance rates are continuously monitored and analysed. Meadowpark considers attendance between 90 and 95% to be irregular attendance. We recognise that a child is classed as being a persistent absentee when their attendance falls below 90%. Where there are concerns that a child is at risk of becoming a persistent absentee we will arrange for a joint problem solving meeting to be held with the head teacher and parents/carers.

Children missing education

The school has regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We will respond appropriately and in a timely manner when children are missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions.

We recognise that 'Child missing from education' and 'Child missing from home or care' have been added to the list of specific safeguarding issues schools must be vigilant about.

At Meadowpark we will fulfill our duty to inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been admitted to another school and is going to be deleted from our admission register, who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent for a period of 10 school days or more.

If a Looked After Child or a child subject to a Child Protection plan goes missing, we will refer them to social services within 48 hours.

We will also consider making a referral for any children being withdrawn from school with the intent to be electively home educated where there are safeguarding concerns.

Promoting Good Attendance at Meadowpark

Attendance at Meadowpark falls into one of three groups:

- Attendance target for all our children is 100%
- Good attendance at Meadowpark School is 95% to 100%.
- Poor attendance at Meadowpark School is below 95%

Pupils are rewarded at the end of the academic year for achieving 100% attendance.

Approval and Review

The policy was approved by the Headteacher on 12th May 2021.
The renewal date is annually or earlier if there is a change in legislation.



Authority to collect a child in the school day

Date		Time collected	
Name of child			
Name of person collecting		Relationship to child	
If needed has password been provided?			
Reason for absence			
Will child be returning to school on the same day?		Time returned to school	

Wiltshire Council CME1 Process

