



**Meadowside Primary School**

**Attendance Policy**

**Reviewed: November 2023**

**Next Review: November 2025**

# Attendance Policy

## Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Allow us to provide a calm, orderly, supportive and safe environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn;
- Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that the attendance of all pupils allows them to have full and equal access to the curriculum;
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

This policy has been devised in consultation with Staff and Governors and shared with all our school families.

## Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment, ensuring the future success of our children. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. We also work with Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Any absences should be explained on the first day of absence and on each consecutive days to the school office before 8.45am verbally or in writing, with, if possible, the predicted date of return. It is our practice to contact home as soon as possible after registration if a child does not arrive in school, to establish whether the parent/carer is aware of the absence and to confirm the reason for this.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These

documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school **daily before 8.45 am** to inform us of absence whenever their child is unable to attend school. The answer machine/email service is available out of school hours.
- Discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance, proactively engaging with support offered.

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually, arriving by 8 45 a.m.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day

### **We expect that the governing body will:**

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

**We expect that the headteacher will:**

- Monitor school-level absence data and report it to governors
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Request the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

**The class teacher/ teaching teams will:**

- Record attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submit the information to the school office as soon as possible after the register is completed

**The school administration team will:**

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Provide class teams with information regarding the attendance of their pupils
- Keep accurate and up to date records of calls and communications with parents pertaining to attendance on the school CPOMs system

Schools have a duty in law to refer any unauthorised absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/carer/child or have general concerns about the absence, to the Local Authority. School will be particularly vigilant where there may be an FGM or Safeguarding concern.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, 8.45 am and 1.00pm (EYFS/KS1) or 1.30pm (KS2), and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required either verbally or in writing. The registration codes are listed below.

**Registration Code**

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

L

**Reason**

Approved educational activity off-site.

Other circumstances agreed by the Headteacher

Dual registration (at another educational establishment part-time)

Excluded

Extended Family Holiday (for which leave has been granted).

Family Holiday (not agreed or days in excess).

Family Holiday (for which leave has been granted).

Illness

Late (before register closed)

M	Medical and dental appointments, confirmed illness.
N	No reason provided
P	Approved sporting activity (participation in/attendance at).
R	Day of religious observance for the religious body to which the parents belong.
T	Traveller child travelling.
U	Late after register closed
V	Educational visit or trip (UK/overseas).

### **Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given.

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Holidays that have not been agreed by the Headteacher
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way and other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, we encourage parents to contact Gloucestershire's Education Inclusion Service on 01452 427274 or [attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk) .

Taking unauthorised leave may result in the Local Authority (LA) taking legal action against the parents. This could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice or £60 per child per parent- rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days. If not paid within 28 days, the LA can decide to prosecute- there is no right of appeal against a fixed penalty notice. All schools are asked to notify their Local Authority if a child takes unauthorised leave from school.

### **Planned Absence**

The Attendance Regulations dictate that schools are not permitted to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school considers each term-time application individually, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding the request. However, the Government dictates that holidays are not exceptional circumstances, so permission should not be granted.

Under these regulations, Exceptional Circumstances are:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Return of parent from active service (Forces)

- Death or serious illness of a parent, step-parent or sibling
- Young Carers
- Disability or respite leave
- Approved public performances (with clear supporting evidence)
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes
- All other exceptional circumstances must be discussed with the headteacher

There may be times when children need to attend a medical appointment. We encourage parents to make routine appointments out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, it should be for the minimum amount of time necessary. Any absences for medical appointments should be requested as far in advance as possible, so they may be authorised by the headteacher.

## **Lateness**

Learning at Meadowside begins at 8.45. If a child arrives after the whistle has blown, they are late and it means their class has already left them behind and is already in class, learning.

The school gates open at 8.35 a.m. and all children are required to be in the playground ready for the whistle to be blown at 8.45am.

Registration for the morning takes place at 8.45 a.m and closes at 9.00am.

Parents or representatives are requested to sign in the child with a time of arrival and reason for lateness via the school office reception, after 8.45 a.m.

Lateness is monitored and persistent lateness is referred to the Local Authority, which may result in a Penalty Notice, as detailed above.

## **Reporting, Monitoring and analysing**

At Meadowside we are committed to the aims of this policy. Attendance is always included on the end of year school report. Good attendance is celebrated and acknowledged by staff and poor attendance (when the threshold drops below 95% County average) is challenged by staff, who will call or meet with the parents/carers.

We hold attendance assemblies at the start of every year to deliver positive messages and encourage attendance. We also send out an Attendance booklet every September, both to share key messages with parents and children and to remind everyone of the positive benefits of good attendance and punctuality.

Our Home/School Agreement, signed by all parents, pupils and the school when children start at Meadowside, reinforces our commitment to high expectations and positive learning attitudes.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each half term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. This is published alongside national statistics. The school compare this data and share this with the governing body.

This data will be used to establish any trends and to identify any pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance. It will also be used to look at historic and emerging patterns and trends in order to develop strategies to address these.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.