



Meadows First School

Attendance Policy and Procedures

Family Friendly Version

Head teacher	Leigh Satchwell
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Chair of Governors:	Jane Barrow

Key Contacts

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At Meadows First School we want all students to aim for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every day that school is open unless they are too unwell to attend. This is really important so we can give your children the best education we can, and the education that they are entitled to.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and any relevant partners to remove any barriers getting in the way of pupils attending regularly. Pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance will be fully supported by our school, in partnership, where necessary, with any health or external professionals. Promoting and supporting excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive school where all pupils want to be is important to us. We will work together with you as parents to explore and support any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly.

Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?

Excellent attendance is important for pupils to feel part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This supports each pupil's all-round development, mental health, and well-being.

If attendance over the school year is:	...a pupil will miss this many days:	...and this many lessons:
100%	0	0
95%	10	50
90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	39	195
75%	49	245
70%	58	290

If your child is unable to attend school for whatever reason parents must call the school between 8am and 9am on 01527 872 508 pressing option 2 to leave a message for the attendance officer with the reason for absence.

If we do not have a message from the parent/carer before 9am as to why their child is absent then our attendance officer will call the first contact provided to gain a reason for absence. If we do not have an answer we will leave a message and then try calling contact number 2.

Absence Requests

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take a child out of school during term time for any reason, including a holiday.

Only in very, very exceptional circumstances will absence requests be authorised.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school office and on the website. The request should be submitted as soon as it is

anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.**

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

Please note, with effect from 19th August 2024 the Government has made changes to penalty notice fines for school non attendance. As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Worcestershire County Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine, per parent, per child of £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for a first time absence.

If a second period of unauthorised absence occurs within a 3 year timescale, this is subject to a penalty notice fine, per parent, per child, of £160 to be paid within 28 days. Failure to make payment of penalty notices issued may lead to court proceedings.

The third period of unauthorised leave of absence incurred within 3 years of the first penalty notice issued; a further penalty notice will **not** be issued. If suitable, the matter will be presented to the Magistrates' Court under S4441 Education Act 1996. Cases found guilty in the magistrates Court could result in a fine up to £1,000 per parent, per child, and will also hold a criminal record for failing to secure regular attendance.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence will be unauthorised if your child is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst as parents you can provide explanations for absence, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips, errands
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless in very, very exceptional circumstances as agreed in advance by the school)
- If a pupil is kept away from school longer than has been agreed -any additional absence will be unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in the use of penalty notices or prosecution.

Support for School Attendance

Sometimes your child may not want to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reasons for absence. If your child does not want to attend school, it is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to let your child stay at home. This can give the impression to your child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why your child may not want to attend school so we can support you and your child in the best way possible.

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing should contact your child's teacher in the first instance for further information on the support available.

For pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance we will fully support each pupil to be able to attend as much as possible. Our school will use an individual health plan and will work alongside other relevant professionals such as health colleagues, and yourselves, to best support this.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with you as parents, we may refer to the Local Authority. We will only ever do this if everything else has failed. We hope as parents you will work with us to best support your child so this does not need to happen.

If our school has any safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary to ensure a child's safety and well-being.

Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

We will acknowledge any improvement in attendance on a personalised basis – this may include a conversation/ telephone call/ email to the parents or carers. We may personalise acknowledgement of improved attendance on an individual basis – such as a daily attendance sticker chart and rewards (time in hive etc.) We will also reward 100% attendance on a termly basis with a sticker to the children and at the end of the year children with 100% attendance will receive a Meadows' badge.

Appendix 1: Attendance procedures and monitoring at Meadows First School

