



MEADOWS FIRST SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Head Teacher: S Hewitt

Chair of Governors: J Barrow

MEADOWS FIRST SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

At Meadows First School, we recognise that regular attendance is extremely important. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to get the most from the educational opportunities provided within our school and achieve maximum progress. Absence can lead to educational disadvantage for a pupil and even place them at risk. In order to maximise rates of attendance, which is one of our underlying aims, we must, as a staff, remain vigilant and be prepared to react positively and without delay. The issues are complex, since pupils may be failing to attend regularly for a variety of reasons, some of which may be outside the school's immediate control, but nevertheless we must actively pursue the goal of regular attendance. To this end, we will investigate absences rigorously and will applaud and commend regular attendance.

We will ensure, through the newsletter and other communications that parents are made aware of the school's policy on attendance; namely that individual absences will be carefully investigated and that unjustified absence will not be tolerated.

The law is quite definite that it is the legal responsibility of a parent to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education whether by regular school attendance or otherwise. They are responsible for ensuring that children attend school and stay at school. Furthermore, parents are not only under a legal duty to send their children to school regularly, but also to ensure that they arrive on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn. However, as with other aspects of education, regular attendance can only be implemented with the support of parents and school. The school and its parents must work together and maintain close links to achieve success in this and all other policies. However, whilst it is only right that we recognise the problems of individual pupils and families, the aim must always be to expect regular attendance.

The following guidelines are designed to aid staff in carrying out effective procedures concerned with attendance and to aid parents' understanding of this process.

AIMS

- To develop attitudes and behaviour that enable children to take an active and responsible role in the adult world.
- Recognition by staff, pupils, parents/carers of the importance of attendance to the overall achievement of pupils in the school environment.
- To promote a positive attitude towards attendance and good time keeping with pupils and parents/carers.
- To communicate clearly to parents/carers the school's policy for attendance and good time keeping.
- To support pupils who are having difficulties attending and arriving on time.
- To create an expectation which gives attendance a high profile and ensures that absence is kept to a minimum.
- To ensure that non-attendance and poor punctuality are effectively monitored and absences are followed up

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Class Teachers will maintain records of attendance for their class, following registration procedures.
- If a pupil is absent, without explanation, our attendance officer will, wherever possible, contact the parents on the first day of absence. Details of calls made will be recorded
- Any pupil giving cause for concern will be referred to the Head Teacher to check trends in absence.
- The attendance officer will monitor registers on a regular basis. Problems are to be followed up by the Head Teacher and the school's attendance officer.
- The Head Teacher will ensure that individual members of staff are following guidelines on completing registers.

- The Head Teacher must ensure that parents/carers are aware of the times for the beginning of each session and the procedures related to lateness and absence, school term dates and other additional days when a pupil is not expected to attend School.

PARENTS/CARERS

- Have legal duties to ensure their child attends school or receives an appropriate education if attendance is impossible.
- Will provide the Head Teacher/attendance officer as soon as possible with reasons for absence – preferably before 9.00am on the first day of absence - and keep the school informed if the absence will continue.
- Must inform the school when their child will be returning to school following a period of absence, preferably prior to their child's return.
- Must complete a "Request for Leave during term time" form, available from the School Office, if they wish to take their child out of School during term time.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days.

The Local Authority provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns

The Attendance Officer and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should work closely to manage risks and to ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement, where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

This is a vital link in the chain of home/school liaison so essential in the maintenance of high levels of attendance. The Head Teacher will, at all times, work closely with the school's Attendance Officer, who will be advised and consulted regarding attendance and welfare problems.

The Attendance Officer will be contacted by the Head Teacher to:-

- Be responsible for first day calling for absentees
- Investigate causes of absenteeism;
- Develop links between home and school;
- Make referrals to the Education Investigation Service in cases of unauthorised absence;
- Attend meetings when necessary.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

The register is a document required by law and we must recognise that we are under a statutory obligation to mark it with care and accuracy. The Education Regulations 1991 relating to Pupil's Attendance Records require that registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. Registers will be consulted together with the authorisation of absences in the case of legal proceedings.

Registers are kept electronically through SIMS (Schools' Information Management System), which is hosted and stored off-site by IBS Schools. Class Teachers access this through their School Computer, which transfers the data to SIMS. The School's Attendance officer checks the registers against her own records of phone calls and messages following their completion.

Registers will be called twice daily and recorded electronically at the commencement of morning and afternoon school.

- The correct codes to authorise absence must be used when completing registers. These are displayed on the electronic system used.
- If a pupil is late to registration but arrives before the register officially closes count as present. In such cases, amendments will be made by the School's Attendance Officer as the child arrives via the secure door next to the School Office.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Only the School, within the context of the law, can approve absence. The fact that a note has been offered by the parent/carer does not mean that the school will authorise it if the School does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason.

Examples of unauthorised absence may include family holidays shopping, birthdays.

Authorisation for absence cannot be given retrospectively.

REQUESTING LEAVE DURING TERM TIME

Should a parent wish to request leave during term time, they should first complete the form "Request for Leave during Term Time" This is available from the School Office.

Parents will then receive, from the School, either:

- A letter that explains that the request has not been approved and a reminder that, if taken, this leave will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine
- A letter that explains that the request has been approved because there are exceptional circumstances

Parents should be mindful of the fact that, as a result of amendments to the Education Regulations 2006, Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. As a general guide, Head Teachers have been informed that, although each application should be considered on its individual merits, any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time should not be authorised during the school term. Should Head Teachers require it, further advice is available from the Education Investigation Service.

Once the Head Teacher becomes aware of the fact that an unauthorised absence has been taken, whether parents have informed the school or not, he or she must inform the Education Investigation Service, who will decide whether to apply a Penalty Notice Fine.

Although the Head Teacher may sympathise with parents who, for different circumstances, feel they need to take holidays during term time, it has been made very clear that the Leadership of Schools will be subject to severe criticism if Head Teachers do not follow the processes described above.

Should parents decide to take unauthorised holiday absence during term time, please do not ask your child to deceive their teachers and friends as we would still prefer that the children have the opportunity to share their experiences.

Further information about the processes outlined above can be found in the following documents from Worcestershire County Council's Education Investigation Service –
 "Education Penalty Notice - Code of Conduct"
 "Leave in Term Time – Absence Policy"

EXCLUSIONS (DFE Guidance 1994)

- Where a pupil has been temporarily excluded treat as authorised absence.
- Permanent exclusion – treat as authorised absence until confirmed, then remove from the School roll.

REWARDING ATTENDANCE

We announce the class with the highest attendance each week on the weekly newsletter.

At the end of the year, we will celebrate those children who have achieved 100% attendance for the entire year.

PUNCTUALITY

As well as attending school every day, we also believe in the importance of attending on time. Being punctual is an important aspect of life and therefore it is vital to ensure that all of our children arrive at school on time. If a child arrives at school 10 minutes after their dedicated arrival time, they will be marked late. If a child arrives late they must go to the main office and sign in, as they will have missed registration in their class. The school Attendance Officer will monitor this closely and will contact families if this occurs frequently. If your child is late, they are missing out on valuable school time.

ATTENDANCE TARGET

We have set ourselves the following challenging Attendance Target: **97%**