

# Meadowfield Primary



ATTENDANCE Protocol

Updated February 2024

## **Introduction**

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day that the school is open. We understand that children are sometimes ill or unhappy about attending school. Families can go through unsettled times that make regular attendance difficult. Any problems regarding regular attendance are best sorted out between school, parents and the child at an early stage. It is not in the child's best interests to cover up children's absences or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending without good reason. This will give children the impression that school attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an effective full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs they may have. We have a legal responsibility to follow up all absences and our attendance team will do this consistently. We do recognise that in certain cases, some parents may require support to get their SEND child to school on time. If this is the case, it will be mentioned in the child's Health Care Plan that they may arrive late to school and will not incur a late mark because of this.

Meadowfield is part of the Red Kite Learning Trust, a trust committed to improving the learning and achievement of all children. Red Kite Learning Trust have a shared attendance policy which should be read in conjunction with this protocol from Meadowfield Primary School.

## **Aims**

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of high attendance by:

- Ensuring that schools, parents/carers and pupils work together to attain high levels of attendance and performance
- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum to inspire learning and ambition
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements in all areas of the curriculum and linked to their personal talents
- Raising the awareness and importance of good attendance and prepare children for the next phase of their education
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absence are recorded and dealt with promptly and consistently

## **Expectations**

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

We expect our pupils:

- To respect themselves and others
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and on time
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel they are being bullied
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging which uphold the Meadowfield values

- To be happy and encourage others to be happy, healthy and safe

Parents/Carers play a key role in ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time, this is also a legal responsibility. Failure to do this could result in a prosecution under the 1996 Education Act. A child who is in care of the local authority will be supported by close co-operation between the school, foster carers and social care should their attendance become a concern.

We expect our parents/carers:

- To provide school with at least 2 up to date contact numbers so we can get in contact with someone if, for example they are not in school when expected. **This is part of our duty to keep children safe**
- To keep requests for their child's absence to a minimum. Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time wherever possible. A 'present' mark can be awarded if the child attends school for as much of the session as they can. Parents/carers will need to provide medical evidence of the appointment so that it can be authorised
- To ensure the child arrives on time, in the correct uniform and with the right equipment, offering a reason for any lateness. In exceptional cases agreed by the school, a child's Health Care Plan may accept them being late to school without getting a late mark and this will be in the child's Health Care Plan.
- To work closely with the school's Attendance Team to resolve any problems that may be impacting on the child's attendance
- To support their child and celebrate their successes and achievement

The school will provide an environment that is conducive to learning for every individual pupil based on their academic and social/emotional needs. School attendance will be positively supported and co-operation between all partners will be paramount. The school has a statutory duty to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of all pupils. Absences which are authorised or unauthorised will be coded appropriately.

Pupils and Parents/Carers can expect school:

- To create an environment, based on the school values, that the pupils want to be part of
- To meet the legal requirements as set out by the Government
- To give high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To continue to develop and have in place effective monitoring/tracking procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parental condoned absence
- To continue to develop an effective range of strategies to follow up absenteeism and to promote good attendance, including the use of community partners as part of an attendance reward system
- To encourage open communication between home and school. Communication is key when finding out the source of the problem.
- To support procedures for the reintegration of long-term absentees

- To continue to develop and have in place effective Stage 1 procedures leading to a referral to the Cluster Attendance Manager
- To continue to develop the curriculum and extra-curricular activities to engage pupils positively in their learning experiences
- To celebrate good and improving attendance
- Regularly and consistently communicating with our parents/carers and children our high expectations of attendance and how good attendance will have a positive effect on academic achievement and help raise ambition in our pupils

### **Routines and Record Keeping**

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. This adds up to missing almost half a term each year. These are called 'persistent absentees' by the Government, whatever the reason is for their absence, including authorised absence.

**Authorised absences** are mornings and/or afternoons away from school for a reason like genuine illness or other unavoidable causes where permission has been given. School can authorise the absence based on what the parent/carer tell us. School may ask for medical proof in order to authorise illnesses.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which staff do not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- Keeping children off without good reason
- Truancy before register has been marked
- Absences which have never properly been explained
- Taking holidays within school time. School will not authorise any holidays during term time. Exceptional Circumstances Leave may be granted but arrangements should not be made without school's agreement in advance. Taking leave without permission is unauthorised absence and may be subject to a Penalty Fine Notice. Absence due to visiting family abroad will be deemed to be a holiday and such visits need to be taken during the school holidays

### **Persistent Absentees - less than 90% attendance**

Meadowfield Attendance Team will efficiently collect and analyse attendance data to ensure we start early intervention for families who need extra support in improving their child's attendance. Frequently analysing data helps us to identify and tackle persistent absentees from the start of the school year. Our attendance team will analyse this data weekly and decide on a strategy which will aim to improve the attendance of each persistent absentee. School will need support from parents to tackle persistent absences, as it is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child attends school. School will offer support and guidance to pupils and parents to improve the attendance figures of persistent absentees.

### **Daily Procedures**

- The classroom doors open at 8.45am and the teacher takes the register, recording who is present and absent at 8.55am. All registers are taken electronically and information is then checked by the attendance team to begin initial contact with any child who is absent without authorisation.
- Pupils who are late after 8.55am report to the Daisy Gate where reasons for the lateness are recorded by the Attendance Team and will be challenged. Pupils who are late disrupt the class and miss vital teaching time. It can also make them feel embarrassed, so please arrive on time.
- Pupils arriving after 9.10am enter school via the main entrance and any pupil arriving after this time is coded according to the reason given for the lateness. Appointment cards/letters must be brought in for any medical appointments to be verified
- Pupils arriving after 9:30am without an authorised reason will miss the morning register and will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Members of Senior Leadership, Teachers and the Pastoral/Attendance Team can be found every morning and afternoon in the playground to ensure parents' and pupils' first interaction of the school day is a positive one. At Meadowfield we believe communication is key and being present in the playground to greet and welcome parents and children at the beginning of the school day is important to us.

Promoting good attendance is everybody's job in Meadowfield. Meadowfield believe in using the right people at the right time to have these conversations about attendance and this may be your teacher, a pastoral member, the attendance team, the senior leadership team or a staff member who already has a good relationship with the family. This staff member will support the family with help from the attendance team, so support is consistent and constant.

School leaders play an important role in monitoring and improving attendance as they support the attendance team by challenging and supporting families when needed. School leaders will ensure attendance is given a high profile at every opportunity and promoted on a daily basis, which will help enable a strong culture of attendance, safeguarding and support. A strong culture of attendance will be achieved by setting clear standards and expectations built on a no excuses approach with support underpinning this so children's barriers to good attendance are removed. School leaders will also provide budgetary support to help celebrate our good attenders and improving attenders and whenever else needed.

### **Safeguarding**

- The Pastoral Team meet daily to monitor and track **all** pupils' attendance
- Staff report any concerns over a child's absence to the school's Attendance Team/Pastoral Team and appropriate action is taken
- First day contact is made by phone for all pupils absent on the morning register without authorisation.
- Second day contact is made by phone and email for all pupils absent for a second day
- Home visits are carried out on the third day (or earlier if there is a concern) by the Attendance Team. If there has been no response by phone or email, home visits will take place and may be carried out sooner if the Attendance/Pastoral team are aware of any on-going family concerns; this can be escalated if approaching a school holiday for safeguarding purposes

- The Pastoral Team will seek advice from the police if there is no answer on two home visits and if we have had no contact from all contact numbers
- First day contact is made for Early Years, Nursery and Primary setting
- The Pastoral Team can help support parents and pupils in the school or they may seek advice from external agencies such as the TNCP, Mindmate, Outreach, Engage to ensure the best appropriate support available is offered to the family.

### **Moving schools**

- It is important that Parents/Carers provide school with all necessary information when moving schools e.g. future address or details of new school. Any information will be passed to the relevant local authorities as required. If this information is not known and the whereabouts of the child are unknown this then becomes a safeguarding issue, and your child will be referred to the local authority as a child missing in education (CME).

### **Weekly procedures**

- The Attendance Team (ACT) meet on a weekly basis to monitor and track **all** pupils. Concerns are recorded and actioned appropriately.
- Stage 1 procedures (within school) are documented and evidenced. Stage 1 procedures include attendance letters and family meetings.
- Home visits if applicable by the Pastoral Team

### **Other actions**

- Regular family meetings are held and targets for improvement set as part of the Stage 1 procedure including fast track procedure.
- Referral to TNCP Cluster (Guidance and Support) requesting support and intervention from the Cluster Attendance Managers for 1:1 casework.
- Regular meetings with cluster Attendance Manager to discuss individual cases.
- Meet as part of a cluster team to discuss policies, examine data and action plans.
- Unauthorised leave may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice under the provision of the Education Act 1996.

### **Strategies used to promote good attendance**

- Parental information leaflet issued to parents annually. It will also be issued via email every term.
- Application of the Tier system:

<b>Tiers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>100% - 95%</b>	No attendance issues. Attendance above 95% (we adjust this benchmark as the school averages/targets change). Monitored/praise by class teacher/teaching assistant. Pushed for 100% attendance.

<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>94.99% - 92%</b>	Attendance between 92-95% or below that but an atypical authorised absence. For example, a holiday which has been fined for a usually perfect attender, a illness/operation that was genuinely serious, a known serious medical condition. This tier is for moderate attenders who could improve or for one off big absences, in an otherwise perfect attending student. Monitored/praised by class teacher/teaching assistant. Push for otherwise 100% attendance.
<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>91.99% - 88%</b>	Attendance between 88-92% due to broken weeks and low key frequent absences. <b>Persistent Absence Prevent approach – discussed in weekly ACT meeting</b>
<b>Tier 4</b>	<b>87.99% - 80%</b>	Attendance between 80-88 due to broken weeks and low key frequent absences. <b>PA Recover approach – discussed in weekly ACT meeting</b>
<b>Tier 5</b>	<b>79.99% - 60%</b>	Attendance between 60-80%. <b>PA Active group. Referral to cluster</b>
<b>Tier 6</b>	<b>59.99% - 40%</b>	Attendance below 60%. <b>Severe Absence; Entrenched PA Group- work with cluster</b>
<b>Tier 7</b>	<b>39.99% - 10%</b>	Deeply entrenched absentees/school refusers but are engaging with cluster or other support mechanisms. <b>Severe Absence; Entrenched PA Recovery</b>
<b>Tier 8</b>	<b>9.99% - 0%</b>	Absolute school refusers. Severe Absence; Entrenched. No movement despite intervention. No engagement with offers of support. <b>School Refusal.</b>

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- Letters for initial concern, persistent absentee, not accepting illness, statutory age and amber warnings (less than 95%) are sent out to families as part of the stage one intervention process which is then followed by a family meeting if there is no or little improvement.
- Every half term, congratulation emails or Dojo's are sent to parents/carers whose children have achieved over 96%.
- Every week, thank you emails are sent to parents/carers whose children have achieved 100% the previous week.
- Every term, parents have the opportunity to be entered into a raffle to win a family hamper, if their children have outstanding attendance or if they have most improved attendance.
- The online Oasis Newsletter is updated weekly with attendance updates and information
- Every half term, an attendance assembly is held. Pupils who have achieved outstanding attendance and pupils who have the most improved attendance will receive a congratulations certificate and a prize. In this assembly the attendance mascot visits each class to deliver the certificates.
- At the end of the academic year certificates and an engraved medal are awarded to those pupils achieving outstanding attendance and the pupils who have the most improved attendance figures. The awards are presented during a special Attendance Assembly to which parents/carers are invited to attend.
- Every Friday in assembly, the Attendance Team award the class who have achieved the attendance target (95.5%) with a certificate and a non-school uniform day.
- An attendance board in school, where classes race to be the best attending class and win a healthy treat at the end of term.
- An attendance day trip in the summer term for pupils who have outstanding attendance and pupils who have the most improved attendance
- Personalised support for persistent absentees in the form of intervention groups and check ins with the attendance/pastoral team. The PA may also be paired with an attendance buddy.

- The Attendance Team are proactive and early intervention by them reduces the risk of these pupils becoming persistent absentees.
- Personalised support is offered to individual families where attendance is a barrier to their child's progress.

**Parents/carers can support the attendance team by**

- Developing good routines with regular bedtimes and wake up times on school days
- Prioritising school attendance and promoting this expectation with their child.
- Approaching school to seek help and advice if their child indicates that they do not want to attend school so that support can be offered early
- Take an active interest in school activities, the curriculum and gain day to day feedback from their child to promote a love of learning and school
- Speaking to the Pastoral/Attendance Team for support if they have any personal concerns or worries which may affect their ability to bring their child to school
- Ensuring your child is only absent for genuine illnesses and communicating this in a timely manner.