# Meadowhead School Academy Trust

# **Attendance Policy**



This is a policy of Meadowhead School Academy Trust. Meadowhead School is a Foundation School and a member of the Meadowhead Community Learning Trust

'Engage, Enjoy and Aspire'

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## Policy Statement

Meadowhead School seeks to ensure that all of its students receive a full-time education which will maximise the opportunities for each student to realise their true potential. **We expect every student to be in school every day school is open**. There is a clear link between attendance and achievement alongside the development of social, emotional and personal skills.

We recognise that attendance is 'everyone's business', all of the time and this policy should be viewed alongside the safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and SEND policies. We will work with families to identify the barriers for poor attendance and try to resolve any issues.

#### Why is regular attendance so important?

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, where each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. School staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school every day and on time, unless the reason is unavoidable.

Good attendance supports students to become resilient, confident and competent individuals.

Failure to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding issue.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping, and will challenge students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. To meet these objectives, Meadowhead School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

### Whole-school approach to school attendance

Meadowhead School aims to:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers, support staff and governors.
- Building strong relationships with families, listen to and address any barriers to attendance.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Promote the link between attendance, educational outcomes and student wellbeing.
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data.
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- Promote effective partnerships with external services and agencies.
- Recognise the needs and support of the individual person when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

# The Law

The 1996 Education Act requires that:

- all pupils of compulsory school age receive suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school.
- the Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school.
- the school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- the school must report to the Local Authority pupils who fail to attend regularly or are absent for more than ten days without explanation.
- the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.

# Core principles as directed by DFE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance- April 2023'.

- We have high standards of expected attendance for students.
- We monitor all students by rigorously using attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible so that all parties work together to resolve issues before they become entrenched.
- We will not tolerate low attendance but we will listen, understand, empathise and support our students.
- We are relentless in our pursuit of identifying the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance.
- We have clear processes as to when attendance should be unauthorised and we have a keen focus on such absence.
- Where barriers to attendance are due to external reasons beyond our control, we will facilitate support by working with external agencies to establish the right support at the right time.
- We may formalise support through the use of parenting contracts agreed by students, parents and school. These will set out the consequences clearly and ensure support is in place.
- Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support has not been successful or families do not engage, we will work with the Local Authority (LA) to enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the student's right to an education.
- We will share information and work in collaboration with other schools in the local area and other partners when absence becomes a concern.

### What parents/carers and students can expect from school

- A broad, balanced education that is dependent upon regular attendance at school.
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and rewards.
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of absence.
- First-day contact with parents/carers when absence is unexplained.
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified.
- Liaison with officers from the Local Authority to assist and support families where needed.
- Regular communication with parents/carers.

# **Roles and Responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities of everyone who has a responsibility to secure good attendance of pupils are set out in the table below.

Students	<ul> <li>To attend every day school is open.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Be prepared for the day with appropriate equipment e.g. PE kit, pen, pencil,ruler, calculator, and in full school uniform.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Be punctual to registration and all lessons.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Sign in using the inventory if arriving after the first bell.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>To get permission from school prior to leaving the school site during school hours.</li> </ul>
Parents and Carers	To ensure their child attends every day and on time.
	Read Meadowhead School's Attendance Policy
	<ul> <li>Contact staff if there is an issue which is preventing your child attending.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Provide reason for each day's absence before 8:30am and every day they continue to be absent.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Book routine appointments after school and at weekends.</li> </ul>
	Provide medical evidence if required.
	<ul> <li>Aim to ensure your child does not miss more than half a day to attend an unavoidable appointment.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Contact Pastoral manager/Head of Year to arrange a reintegration package when returning after a long-term absence.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Ensure that no holidays are booked during term time.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Ensure your child is equipped and ready to learn.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Ensure the school has up to date contact details for all parents/carers.</li> </ul>
Form Tutors	<ul> <li>Take official electronic (ClassCharts) register within the first 5 minutes of form time.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Report attendance concerns to relevant school staff including the attendance team.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Promote the importance of attending every day.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Welcome students on return to school following absence.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Provide a positive learning environment.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Promote and get involved with attendance competitions.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Identify emerging patterns of student absence within their own form groups.</li> </ul>
	• Have a first contact/discussion with the pupil about their absence.
	<ul> <li>Discuss all absences with students using weekly RAG rated attendance data.</li> </ul>
Class Teacher	<ul> <li>The class teacher has a statutory duty to take the official register within the first 5 minutes of the lesson starting.</li> </ul>

	Report attendance concerns to relevant school staff.
	<ul> <li>Maintain accurate attendance records by recording students</li> </ul>
	arriving late lesson.
	<ul> <li>Alert relevant staff (on call) of any students absent from lesson but marked present on previous registers.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Promote the importance of good attendance.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Welcome students on return to school following absence.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Provide a positive learning environment that ensures equality of access for all.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Put strategies in place, as advised by the SEND and pastoral teams to ensure specific needs are met.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Promote and get involved with attendance rewards.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Identify emerging patterns of attendance issues within own class groups and work to remove any barriers identified.</li> </ul>
	Encourage students to come to school daily.
	Discuss attendance at parental events.
	Refer attendance concerns to the attendance team
Attendance Team	<ul> <li>Promote the Meadowhead School Attendance Policy.</li> </ul>
	Maintain accurate attendance records.
	<ul> <li>Contact parents/carers who have not notified their child's reason for absence on the same day.</li> </ul>
	Welcome students on return to school following absence.
	Conduct safe and well visits.
	<ul> <li>Make home visits to persistently absent students or those at risk of being PA.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Provide advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Track attendance and identify emerging trends and patterns at individual and cohort level.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Have responsibility for investigating and, where necessary, reporting incidents of children who are Missing from Education to the local authority</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Liaise with the local authority regarding requests from parents/carers to electively home educate their child/ren.</li> </ul>
	Evaluate and share attendance data.
	<ul> <li>Meet with Pastoral Managers to discuss individual students whose attendance is of concern and agree action as necessary.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Liaise with school staff and external professionals regarding attendance and punctuality of identified students, agree interventions and support,</li> </ul>
	Make contact with parents/carers where concern is raised

	reporting a child's attendance
	regarding a child's attendance
	<ul> <li>Discuss issues affecting attendance and punctuality with parents/carers and clearly outline their legal responsibilities and requirements</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Record and maintain accurate student records following contact (SIMS).</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Feedback to school staff within the agreed timescale.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Work with school staff, parents/carers and students to promote good attendance.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Take part in initiatives to promote attendance and punctuality e.g. parent's evenings.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Meet half-termly with the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion specialist to discuss cases for legal action, prepare and submit legal paperwork/case profiles where necessary.</li> </ul>
	Process term time leave requests.
	<ul> <li>Termly meeting with feeder school attendance leads to share good practice and identify attendance concerns.</li> </ul>
	Attend the LEA's networking/best practice information sessions.
Pastoral Managers	Promote the Meadowhead Attendance policy.
	<ul> <li>Have an oversight of attendance across their year group.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Monitor registers and update SIMS on a weekly basis.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Meet five weekly with the Attendance Team to discuss individual pupils whose attendance is of concern and agree action as necessary.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Track attendance and identify emerging trends and patterns at individual and cohort level.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Attend meetings with the attendance team and other professionals as necessary.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Provide certificates and other rewards for students in their year group who attend well.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Update registers as required when children are placed elsewhere in school.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Welcome students on return to school following absence.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Keep SIMS up to date with reasons for absence, details of phone calls home, interventions and additional support – including monitoring the impact of such support.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Work with external agencies where necessary to support the child/family.</li> </ul>
	Attendance is a standing item at every meeting.
Safeguarding Team	Promote the Meadowhead Attendance Policy
	Have an overview of student attendance.
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	<ul> <li>Assisting with parent/carer meetings where safeguarding is a factor.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Inform allocated social workers of student absence/attendance on a daily/weekly basis.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Attendance is a standing item at every meeting (TAF/CIN/CP/LAC Review).</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Meet weekly with the attendance team to discuss individual students whose attendance is of concern and agree action as necessary.</li> </ul>
Behaviour Managers/ISR/Pupil services	<ul> <li>Update registers as interventions are agreed (e.g. placed in ISR/Office).</li> </ul>
Heads of Year and Assistant Heads of Year.	<ul> <li>Liaise with the Deputy Head (Inclusion/Support) and their pastoral manager regarding attendance and punctuality.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Lead developments to improve attendance.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Oversee the procedures undertaken to improve attendance and punctuality within their year group.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Identify appropriate target groups using attendance data.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Attend meetings with the attendance team as necessary.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Develop systems of rewards for good attendance and punctuality.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Ensure that all students recognise the links between good attendance and attainment.</li> </ul>
Deputy	Lead and promote whole school attendance.
Headteacher - Inclusion	<ul> <li>Provide advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Implement targets, review statistics and amend policy as necessary.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Hold regular meeting with the attendance manager.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Ensure that school is fully compliant with national attendance regulations, guidelines and legislation.</li> </ul>
Headteacher	Have overall responsibility for attendance within school.
Governors	To provide strategic challenge and support to school leaders.
	<ul> <li>Ensure that school is fully compliant with national attendance regulations, guidelines and legislation.</li> <li>Monitor implementation of the Meadowhead School's attendance policy.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Maintain an overview of attendance through reports provided by the senior leadership team.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Attend school attendance meetings if required.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Review and approve the school attendance policy.</li> </ul>

# Being Notified that a Child has a Medical Condition

Some children have a medical condition which may prevent them from attending school regularly. When the school is notified that a student has a medical condition, the process outlined below will be followed to decide whether the student requires an Individual Health Plan (IHP). If a student does not have an IHP then the school will consult with the local authority and consider using the GP Protocol.

If an IHP is in place, the school will make every effort to ensure the arrangements are put in place as soon as practicable.

Parents will be asked to:

- Provide the school with sufficient and up to date information about their child's medical needs. This could be a hospital or GP letter.
- Be involved in the development and review of their child's IHP.
- Carry out any action they have agreed to as part of the implementation of the IHP, e.g. provide medicine and equipment, and ensure they or another nominated adult are contactable at all times.

Students with medical conditions are often best placed to provide information about how their condition affects them. Students should be fully involved in discussions about their medical needs and contribute as much as possible to the development of their IHPs. Students are expected to comply with their IHP at all times.

### School Procedures

Attendance Register	By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.
	All students should be on site by 8:30am and in their form rooms for an 8:35am registration on the class charts system. They should not leave the school site before 2:45pm unless they have specific written permission (given by the head of year or pastoral manager in response to a written request by parents/carers).
	Throughout the day students will be registered on five other occasions, by each subject teacher. Period 4 acts as afternoon registration.
	Registers will mark (for example) whether a student is:
	<ul> <li>Present</li> <li>Attending an approved off-site educational activity</li> <li>Absent</li> <li>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances</li> </ul>
	See DFE attendance codes for the full range of codes. Any student who has not arrived in a lesson will initially be deemed as truanting and a phone call will be made home to inform parents/carers.

Unplanned and unauthorised absence	Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am.
	Parents/carers can contact school on 0114 237 2723 or email <u>attendance@meadowhead.sheffield.sch.uk</u> and should continue to call each day that a child remains absent.
	Unauthorised absences are those that the school do not consider reasonable or for which no "leave" has been given.
	When a student has more than 8 days absence in any academic year or following an unusual pattern of attendance, parents/carers may be asked to provide additional medical evidence to help explain any illness absence.
	Additional medical evidence may include a doctor's appointment text or photocopy of a pharmacy prescription with medical details erased.
	The purpose of parents/carers providing additional medical evidence is to help school make fair and objective decisions over which absences are genuine and which are non-genuine illness.
	If the school has requested that the parent/carer provides such additional medical evidence and none is provided, then the absence will be classified as unauthorised.
	Unauthorised absence can lead to the issuing of fixed penalty notices and /or prosecution.
	Unauthorised absences include:
	Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
	• Truancy (missing lessons – whether the student stays on the school site or not)
	Absences which are not properly explained.
	Students who arrive to school after registers have closed.
	• Students absent from school for unacceptable reasons such as shopping, looking after other children or because it is their birthday.
	• Day trips or holidays during term time which are not agreed by school.
Planned Absence	Illness and emergency medical/dental appointments
	<b>Other authorised circumstances</b> – this refers to the very rare occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example an immediate family bereavement, or for a short period a reduced timetable.
	<b>Religious Holidays</b> – Meadowhead School acknowledges and celebrates the multi-faith nature of our community. We understand on some occasions; religious festivals may fall outside school

	holiday periods or weekends.			
	We will authorise no more than 2 days for a religious celebration and a maximum of 3 days in any academic year will be granted for religious observance.			
Following up absence	Following up absence			
	Where any student we expect to attend school, does not attend, or stops attending, the school will: -			
	<ul> <li>Send a text or call on the day of absence if we have not had any contact from parents/carers.</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>Follow up on an absence with parents/carers to ascertain the reasons. This will be done on a daily basis, usually by telephone.</li> </ul>			
	• If we have been unable to make contact after 2 days, we will conduct a home visit to ascertain the reason for absence.			
	• The school has a duty to ensure that appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary. This may include asking SY Police to conduct a safe and well visit if we are unable to make contact via the telephone or a home visit.			
Missing from Education	A child will be reported as missing to the Local Authority (Children Missing from Education) team, if no contact has been made after a period of 10 school days. This may result in the child being removed from the school roll.			
Lates	If a student arrives between 8:35am and 9:00 am, they will be greeted at the main reception by a member of the attendance team and asked to sign in using the inventory.			
	If a student arrives after 9:00am, they will also be expected to sign in using the inventory and give their name and form to reception staff. Arrival after 9:00 am is classed as significantly late and it is therefore likely that parent/carers may have been contacted via text message to inform them that their child is absent from school.			
	Ensuring a child arrives to school on time is the responsibility of the parent/carer and while they are supposed to be in school a student's safeguarding is a school priority. We therefore reserve the right to contact parents daily if their child is not attending school on time.			
	Any student who is late to school or lessons on 3 or more occasions will receive a next day 30-minute C3 detention.			
Leaving school early	If a student has to leave school during the school day they should bring written notification of this from home and present it to their pastoral manager who will issue them with a duplicated Out of School' slip completed with date, time and reason. The student should present this to their appropriate subject teacher			

who will let them leave the lesson at the correct time. The student should then take the slip to the student services reception.         Student services will take one copy of the slip, letting the child keep the other copy. This should be handed back in if they return to school during that same day.         If a student is ill in school, parents/carers will be contacted by the student services office and then cared for until they can be collected. The student services officer will update the register.         Truancy       Truancy occurs when:         • a student misses school without permission, or         • a student registers and then does not attend lessons         If a student is caught truanting, parents/carers will be informed and the student may be placed on an attendance report which will need to be signed by subject teachers each and every lesson.         This will be monitored by the year team and parents/carers. They will also serve a C3 detention.
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Term time holidayGovernment legislation does not permit parents/carers to take their child/ren out of school during term time as this can have a detrimental effect on their academic progress.
Holidays <u>will not be authorised</u> in school time. Parents/carers wishing to take their children out of school during term time must complete a <i>Request for Exceptional Term Time Leave</i> form at least 20 school days prior to the absence and give this to the child's pastoral manager. Upon receipt of a <i>Request for</i> <i>Exceptional Term Time Leave</i> a decision will be made, (the Headteachers decision is final), and parents will be notified only if leave is to be granted. If the request is not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the parent/carer may receivea Holiday Penalty Notice (fine) from the Local Authority.
A copy of this form can be downloaded on the Meadowhead School website, or by contacting the year group pastoral manger or attendance team.
Rewards         Students who attend regularly should be rewarded:
<ul> <li>half-termly - certificates for 95% or higher attendance and SIV vouchers</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>yearly - certificates and a letter of commendation for 100% attendance</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>attendance on rewards trips</li> </ul>
weekly prize draws for 100% attendance in a school week

# **Legal Sanctions**

It is an offense for a parent to fail to ensure their child attends school regularly under Section 4 of the Education Act 1996. Parents who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly could face a Penalty Notice Fine and/or a court summons.

We will be working with the Local Authority and pursue legal interventions if a parent/carer fails to engage with school to support their child's attendance.

# Children Looked After

Children Looked After will be monitored closely by both the school and the Local Authority team. Students who cause particular concern will be monitored daily by the attendance team and supported to return to school when appropriate.

# Appendix 1: Escalation of Support

Meadowhead School will follow the escalation of support as outlined by the DFE 2022- Working together to improve school attendance.

<b>Provention</b> of poor		VOLUNTARY SUPPORT
Prevention of poor attendance through	ALL STUDENTS developing	
whole school	good attendance patterns through effective whole school	Helping parents to access services of their own accord and/or a voluntary early help
attendance	approach to attendance	plan to tackle the barriers to attendance.
	(including leadership, ethos,	This will follow the Asses, Plan, Do and
management.	systems and processes).	Review Model.
	STUDENTS AT RISK OF POOR	
	ATTENDANCE. Using data	Severely absent students (50% or less).
	analysis to support students with	As these children face more barriers to
	increasing levels of absence,	being in school, the child and parents will
	arriving at school late or taking	be supported a multi-agency team.
	leave in term time without	be supported a main agency team.
	permission before it becomes a	
	regular pattern.	
EARLY	STUDENTS WITH POOR	FORMAL SUPPORT (VOLUNTARY)
INTERVENTION to	ATTENDANCE. Intervening as	A formal parenting contract (3-12 months)
reduce absence before	early as possible and agreeing	as agreed by the student, parent, school
it becomes habitual.	an action plan for students with	and local authority. Parenting contracts
	high levels of absence and those	are voluntary and not legally binding. They
	demonstrating growing	are to be used when a voluntary early help
	disengagement from school.	plan has not worked or is not deemed
		appropriate.
		AND/OR FIXED PENALTY NOTICE – A
		Fixed Penalty Warning Notice and then a
		Fixed Penalty Fine (£60 per parent) may
		be issued to each parent for irregular
		attendance. This will be served if a
		parenting contract is refused or fails to
		have the impact on the child's attendance.
Targeted	PERSISTENTLY AND	FORMAL SUPPORT with the local
reengagement of	SEVERYLY ABSENT	authority.
persistent and severely	STUDENTS.	Progressing to a legally binding Education
absent students.	Put additional targeted support in	Supervision Order in the Family Court if
	place, where necessary working	there is non-engagement and deemed
	with partners, and agree a joint	necessary.
	approach with the local authority	$\downarrow$
	for all severely absent pupils.	STATUTORY SOCIAL CARE
	Effective school attendance	INVOLVEMENT
	improvement and management.	Where there are safeguarding concerns
		and an Education Supervision Order is not
		appropriate or has not been successful the
		case should be considered for S.17 or
		S.47 statutory social care involvement.

# Appendix 2:

# Persistent Absence Support Plan (90% attendance or below)

Details of the reason preventing the child attending school regularly:		
Needs of the child across Educa	ation, Health and Care:	
Education: Health:		
Care:		
Child's voice:		
Gathered by:	on (date):	
Actions already in place prior to	this meeting:	
What support does the child req	uire to improve their attendance?	
what interventions may be requi	ired to improve the child's attendance?	
What further assessments may b	be required?	

DO	REVIEW
	DO

Next steps to be taken:					
School / Action(s	Agency S)	Who?	When?	Intended outcome:	RAG:
1					
2					
3					
4					
Parent / carer Action(s)		Who?	When?	Intended outcome:	RAG:
1					
2					
3					
4					
Pupil Action(s)		Who?	When?	Intended outcome:	RAG:
1					
2					
3					
4					

|--|

	- <b>A</b>	
-		



The actions listed in the PLAN out in full	section have been	carried Yes		No		
If 'No" list the action points	not carried out wit	th reasons:				
ASSESS	PLAN	DO	F	REVIE	W	
RAG rate the actions in the plan section:	RED = no impac	t AMBER = so impact		REEN = npact	high	
Child & family voice: Do the has gone? What are they pr				t few we	eks	
Has there been movement to can be big steps): Attendance at start of this plan					nents %	
%	. Au	endance at end c	n this plan	I.	70	
Attending school for some sessions day	Improved attendance	Attending full time	No nauthorised absence	every	nding day on me	
Comments: Insert general review comments here						
What is working well?		nat are we worrie	ed about?			
Should we continue with another cycle in the graduated approach or is a more punitive route required?						
Next meeting in graduated approach:						