

# School Attendance Policy



<b>Approved by:</b>	Local Authority and School Governors
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## 1. Aims.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- ❖ Promoting good attendance.
- ❖ Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- ❖ Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- ❖ Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- ❖ Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. 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](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities.

### 3.1 The governing board.

The governing board is responsible for:

- ❖ Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- ❖ Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- ❖ Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- ❖ Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- ❖ Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- ❖ Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The governor responsible for Attendance is the Chair of governors – Joanne Mackey

### 3.2 The Headteacher.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- ❖ Implementation of this policy at the school.

- ❖ Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- ❖ Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- ❖ Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- ❖ Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance.**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- ❖ Leading attendance across the school.
- ❖ Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- ❖ Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- ❖ Having an oversight of data analysis.
- ❖ Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- ❖ Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- ❖ Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- ❖ Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior leader for Attendance is Miss Duckworth and can be contacted by calling school on 01254 209871 or email [l.duckworth@meadowheadjunior.blackburn.sch.uk](mailto:l.duckworth@meadowheadjunior.blackburn.sch.uk) or message via the school app – Arbor.

### **3.4 The Attendance Officer.**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- ❖ Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7).
- ❖ Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- ❖ Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher.
- ❖ Working with Inclusion Support officers to tackle persistent absence.
- ❖ Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The Attendance Officer is Mrs Ramsbottom and can be contacted by calling school on 01254 209871, email on [c.ramsbottom@meadowheadjunior.blackburn.sch.uk](mailto:c.ramsbottom@meadowheadjunior.blackburn.sch.uk) or message via the school app – Arbor.

### **3.5 Class teachers.**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9am. Teachers will promote attendance and punctuality each morning. Teachers will emphasise the importance of good attendance and punctuality at parent's evenings.

### **3.6 School office staff.**

School office staff will:

- ❖ Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- ❖ Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Headteacher/Attendance Lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

### **3.7 Parents/carers.**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ❖ Make sure their child attends every day and on time.
- ❖ Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence (unless covered by a doctor's note) and advise when they are expected to return.
- ❖ Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

- ❖ Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

### **3.8 Pupils.**

Pupils are expected to:

- ❖ Attend school every day and on time.

## **4. Recording attendance.**

### **4.1 Attendance register.**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- ❖ Present.
- ❖ Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- ❖ Absent.
- ❖ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- ❖ The original entry.
- ❖ The amended entry.
- ❖ The reason for the amendment.
- ❖ The date on which the amendment was made.
- ❖ The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- ❖ Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- ❖ The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- ❖ The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and sent to the office by 9am, the register is kept open until 9.20am – an 'L' code will be used. After this time, the school will record the mark as code U. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm.

### **4.2 Planned absence.**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. School will only authorise 1 session for a regular dental/medical appointment, all others should be made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **4. Lateness and punctuality.**

A pupil who arrives late:

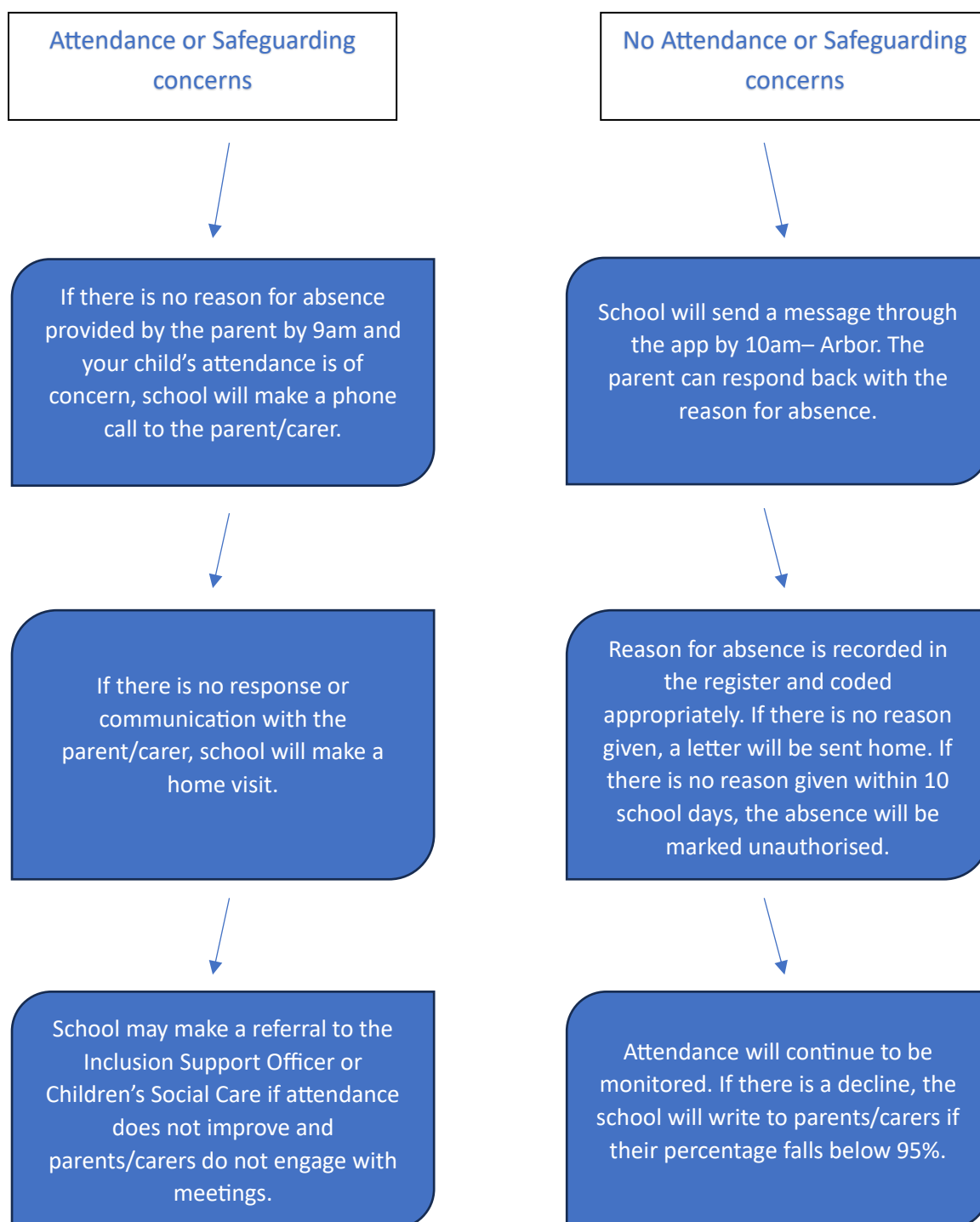
- ❖ Before the register has closed it will be marked as late, using the appropriate code L
- ❖ After the register has closed it will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code U

Punctuality is monitored weekly alongside attendance, letters are sent out accordingly, if necessary, a meeting will be arranged to offer support to the families for routines/issues with mornings.

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence.

### First day response for all absences

If your child is absent and you have not left a message on the absence line, school will:



## 4.6 CME

What is a CME in the UK?

- ❖ Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise (e.g. privately, electively home educated (EHE) or in alternative provision).

## 4.7 Reporting to parents/carers.

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance if it drops below standard of 95%. The school will inform parents of any further involvement from the local authority.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The school may also take into account the child's attendance at that time.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

### 5.2 Legal sanctions.

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine (or penalty notice) each parent/carer must pay £80 rising to £160 if not paid within 21 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. From August 2024 each parent can get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period. If you get a second fine within the 3 years it will be £160 with no discount, if this is not paid in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school.

If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- ❖ The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- ❖ One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- ❖ Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing an education without good reason. They can give you:

- ❖ A parenting order
- ❖ An Education Supervision Order
- ❖ A School Attendance Order
- ❖ A fine

You can be given one or more of these, but the council does not have to do before prosecuting you.

## 6. Sharing information.

### 6.1 Information sharing

- ❖ School can share information with other schools if pupils have siblings to establish areas of concern when the absences are at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- ❖ Sickness returns: providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.
- ❖ Attendance returns: providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). Local authorities must agree the frequency that attendance returns are to be provided with all schools in their area. This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month.

## 7. Strategies for promoting attendance.

Attendance is rewarded through Dojos with points achieved daily, these points contribute each pupil striving to become a Meadowhead Hero at the end of the week receiving certificates and prizes. A new class attendance weekly awards system has been implemented for those classes that has achieved 95% or more with extra time added at the end of the half term on behaviour treat for the class with the biggest attendance overall for the half term.

School also provides a number of supporting services for attendance and punctuality:

- ❖ 'A Walking Bus' for families having difficulty getting their children to school.
- ❖ Breakfast club available from 7.30am (bookable via the school app)
- ❖ The Safeguarding and Early Help Lead is available to offer advice and support to parents/carers.

## 8. Attendance monitoring.

### 8.1 Monitoring attendance.

The school will:

- ❖ Monitor attendance and absence data weekly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- ❖ Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

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

### 8.2 Analysing attendance.

The school will:

- ❖ Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- ❖ Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

### 8.3 Using data to improve attendance.

The school will:

- ❖ Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- ❖ Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

#### **8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence.**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- ❖ Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- ❖ Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- ❖ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

#### **9. Monitoring arrangements.**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the Headteacher/Chair of Governors. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

#### **10. Links with other policies.**

This policy links to the following policies:

- ❖ Child protection and safeguarding policy

## Appendix 1

<b>Attending the school</b>	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
<b>Absent – Leave of absence</b>	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes</b>	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances

U	Arrived in school after registration closed
<b>Administrative Codes</b>	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure