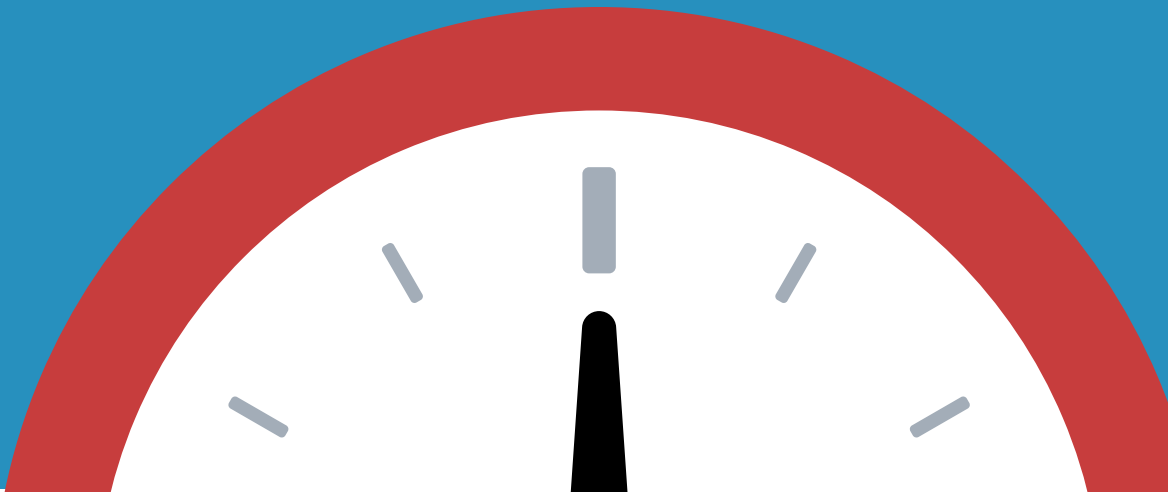




Meadowdale
Academy

Attendance & punctuality

Parent/carer guide



Introduction

At Meadowdale Academy, we prioritise school attendance and value its vital role in supporting pupils' wellbeing, personal development and academic achievement.

We aspire to high standards of attendance and punctuality from all pupils and work to build a culture where all pupils want to be in school and want to learn.

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community.

In schools, attendance and punctuality is seen as 'everyone's responsibility'.

This leaflet has been written following the **Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance** and **School attendance parental responsibility measures**.

This booklet should be read alongside Meadowdale Academy's **Attendance Policy**.

The law

The law requires every child of school age to receive a full-time education suitable for their age, ability, and any special needs. As a parent or carer you are legally responsible for ensuring your child gets this education, so you must ensure they attend school.

Your child must attend every school day unless they are ill or have permission for an absence in advance.

As per the law, we do not authorise holidays during term time. You can only request leave in exceptional circumstances by completing a 'Leave of absence' form and writing to the headteacher.

Unauthorised term time holidays will be reported to the Education Welfare Service.

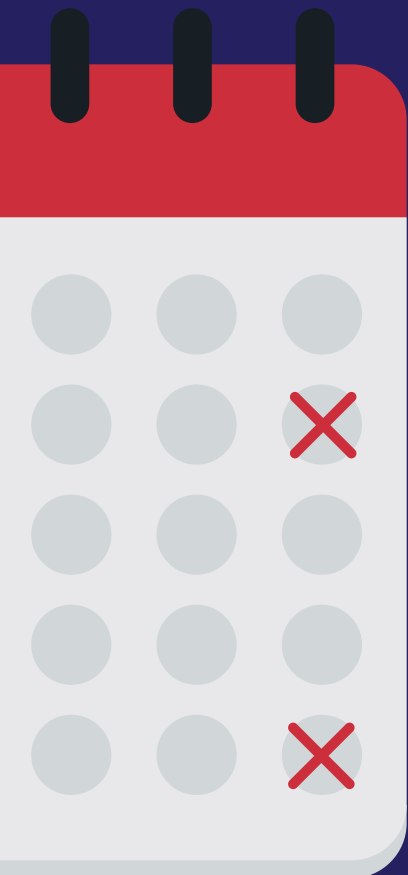
Starting August 2024, schools must consider referring to the Local Authority for a penalty notice if a child misses 10 or more sessions for unauthorised reasons within 10 school weeks. Unauthorised absences can include:

- Holiday taken during term time.
- Arriving late after the register closes.

The 10 sessions can:

- be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week).
- be non-consecutive (e.g. 6 sessions in one week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).
- span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions in Summer Term and 8 in Autumn Term).

Please be assured, we consider all cases individually as directed by the Department for Education.



Types of absence

Each absence is classed as 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

Absences are coded as 'authorised' where reasons are considered valid and 'unauthorised' where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Reasons, where absence will be unauthorised include (but are not limited to):

- shopping visits
- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- parental illness

Absence for medical appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible.

Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day, it is important that parents inform the school office - please let us know in advance whether your child will be returning for their midday meal.

Punctuality

Punctuality (being on time) forms part of attendance. Where pupils are late for school, they miss vital learning and social opportunities with their friends. Teaching and learning begins upon arrival in the classroom, so minutes late are recorded and monitored as part of our school procedures.

Where punctuality becomes a concern, parents/carers will receive a letter to ensure they are aware of the lost learning time. Where punctuality continues to be a concern, parents/carers will be invited to attend an attendance management meeting where support will be offered. Please see our attendance policy for further information.

Meadowdale Academy's attendance and punctuality procedure:

- If your child is unable to attend school through illness, you should inform us by telephone, email or text message on the first day of absence before 8:30am. Please do not pass messages of absence onto staff on the yard – you must inform the attendance officer in the school office.
- If your child is absent for three days or more, proof of the absence will be required. If you do not supply us with this information, we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of your child's whereabouts.
- If your child is absent and no communication from a parent/carer has been received, we will contact guardians via text, telephone or email.
- Where there has been no response from a parent/carer, school staff may choose to complete a home visit as part of our safeguarding procedures.

Attendance intervention

Where attendance or punctuality become a concern, school staff will monitor to identify patterns of poor attendance/punctuality.

Parents/carers will be invited to discuss and resolve barriers to attendance/punctuality, possibly involving family support services.

If concerns persist and voluntary support is ineffective, a formal attendance/punctuality contract or education supervision order may be implemented.

If all other efforts fail, Meadowdale Academy will enforce attendance through statutory measures, such as a penalty notice or prosecution, to ensure the pupil's right to education.

Our attendance ladder

Persistent absence: Pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more per fortnight across a school year).

Severe absence: Pupils are absent more than 50% of the time. This will involve intensive support through statutory children's social care.

Attendance intervention steps:

- At 95% attendance, parents/carers receive Letter 1.
- After 6 more absences, Letter 2 is sent.
- Further absences after Letter 2 will lead to an attendance management meeting to offer support.

For more details, refer to our **Attendance Policy**.

Attendance ladder



Useful links:

School attendance and absence

(Gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

How to Improve your child's attendance and where to get support

(Gov.uk)

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/01/03/improving-school-attendance/>

[Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)

[School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) (DfE)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80ce9740f0b623026959aa/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf

