



Meade Hill School



## Pupil Attendance Policy

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**Review Period**

*Every 3 years*

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 Governance

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for Meade Hill School and Castlefield Campus on at least a termly basis. It also holds each headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Pupil attendance is a standing item on the Performance and Improvement Committee, where Headteachers have to report the figures and action taken.

### 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
- > Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary as part of statutory action for attendance.
- > Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- > Works with One Education caseworker to tackle persistent absence
- > Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- > Advises when to issue fixed-penalty notices in line with the Distributed Leadership Model (DLM).

### 3.3 School admin staff

School admin staff are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and they are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school monitoring system, ARBOR.

### 3.4 Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- Call the school to report on their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, 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
- Engage with school support aimed at improving school attendance
- Seek support, where necessary, to maintain good attendance by contacting the school office

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

An attendance register is kept and maintained , all pupils are recorded on this register.

The attendance register is taken 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.

Every entry on the attendance register, will be kept for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers can phone, text or email the reasons for their child's absence.

Absence due to illness will be marked as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 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.

Parents/carers can phone, text or email the reasons for their child's absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. 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.

#### **4.4 Following up absence**

Where any child expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting the parent after 3 days
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

## 4.5 Reporting to parents

The school reports to parents on pupil attendance annually during the annual review process.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as something which relates to protected characteristics or severe family circumstances.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- > Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- > Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- > Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- > Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday
- > Study leave
- > Making reasonable adjustments to support a child's mental health needs. Where a flexible curriculum is put in place, to support a child, it must be agreed by parent/carer and reviewed regularly. The Headteacher will ensure that accurate records are kept, of which pupils have a flexible curriculum and the date of each review.
  - Criteria for using disaggregated register for individual pupils
    - Receiving regular medical intervention
    - Where a pupil is unable to attend in a specific period due to emotional/mental health needs

### 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Where a pupil is identified as being at risk of persistent absence, the school will:

- Identify a key member of staff to be pupil's key contact in school (DSL/ SLT/ Pupil Well Being)
- Monitor the attendance weekly and maintain contact with parents/carers
- Provide extra support for child if needed
- Set up an attendance panel meeting

- Offer an Early Help referral
- Make an attendance agreement with parent/carer

### **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 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
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

### **5.3 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents 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 must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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 consider:

- > The number of unauthorised absences occurring within 3 rolling academic years starting from Sept 2024
- > 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.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

- Pupils with 100% attendance are celebrated weekly during the Good Work Assembly
- Pupils are rewarded with a trip at the end of each half term, if they have 100% attendance
- Form tutors have access to Arbor and regularly update pupils about their attendance
- Parents have access to their child's attendance via the Arbor App
- School offer targeted support with transport, if parents are struggling with their child's attendance

- School initiates an Early Help Assessment and/or referral to appropriate agencies such as M Thrive or Early Help Hubs
- School use pupil voice activities
- School use Emotional Barriers to School Attendance Pathway (EBSA)
- School use trauma-informed approaches
- School can use time limited flexible curriculums
- School use the Inclusion Strategy Toolkit
- Pupils are supported with reintegration packages

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

The Headteacher monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning, if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we encourage a GP visit or other medical support.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

All attendance data is stored on the school system, called Arbor and is used for the following reasons:

- > Track the attendance of individual pupils
- > Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- > Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support

## **8. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- > Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- > Behaviour Policy
- > Curriculum Policy

## **9. Senior Mental Health Lead are placed in each school**

A Senior Mental Health Lead is responsible for:

- Strategic oversight for setting a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young people in school

The identified member of staff is:

Castlefield Campus –Keryl Casey (Assistant Head)

Meade Hill School – Johanna de Leeuw van Weenen (Deputy Head)

### Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code   | Definition  | Scenario   |
|--|---|--|
| /  | Present (am)  | Pupil is present at morning registration   |
| \  | Present (pm)  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration   |
| L  | Late arrival  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed  |
| <b>Attending a place other than the school</b> |   |  |
| K  | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V  | Attending an educational visit or trip                        | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school  |
| P  | Participating in a sporting activity                          | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school  |
| W  | Attending work experience                                     | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement  |
| B  | Attending any other approved educational activity             | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience                     |
| D  | Dual registered   | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered   |



| <b>Absent – leave of absence</b>         |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>C1</b>                                | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school                  |
| <b>M</b>                                 | Medical/dental appointment  | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment   |
| <b>J1</b>                                | Interview   | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment                                  |
| <b>S</b>                                 | Study leave   | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination                                     |
| <b>X</b>                                 | Not required to be in school  | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend  |
| <b>C2</b>                                | Part-time timetable   | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable  |
| <b>C</b>                                 | Exceptional circumstances   | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances                                    |
| <b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b> |   |   |
| <b>T</b>                                 | Parent travelling for occupational purposes   | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes |
| <b>R</b>                                 | Religious observance  | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance   |
| <b>I</b>                                 | Illness (not medical or dental appointment)   | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)                        |

|  |                                       |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>E</b>   | Suspended or excluded                 | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made  |
| <b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b> |                                       |  |
| <b>Q</b>   | Lack of access arrangements           | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school   |
| <b>Y1</b>  | Transport not available               | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available   |
| <b>Y2</b>  | Widespread disruption to travel       | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency  |
| <b>Y3</b>  | Part of school premises closed        | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open  |
| <b>Y4</b>  | Whole school site unexpectedly closed | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)  |
| <b>Y5</b>  | Criminal justice detention            | <p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul> |
| <b>Y6</b>  | Public health guidance or law         | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law  |
| <b>Y7</b>  | Any other unavoidable cause           | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes  |

| <b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b> |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>G</b>                             | Holiday not granted by the school           | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school  |
| <b>N</b>                             | Reason for absence not yet established      | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes  |
| <b>O</b>                             | Absent in other or unknown circumstances    | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence |
| <b>U</b>                             | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session   |
| <b>Administrative codes</b>          |   |   |
| <b>Z</b>                             | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered   |
| <b>#</b>                             | Planned whole-school closure                | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays  |

## Appendix 2: Meade Hill School and Castlefield Campus Distributed Leadership Model (DLM)

