

# The Mead Infant and Nursery School

## Attendance Policy



## Proud to Belong

This policy was first presented to The Governing Body in the Summer Term 2012 and is reviewed annually.

**Reviewed by:** T. Creasey – Headteacher and Governing Body in Autumn Term 2020

**Next Review:** Autumn Term 2021

# The Mead Infant and Nursery School Attendance Policy

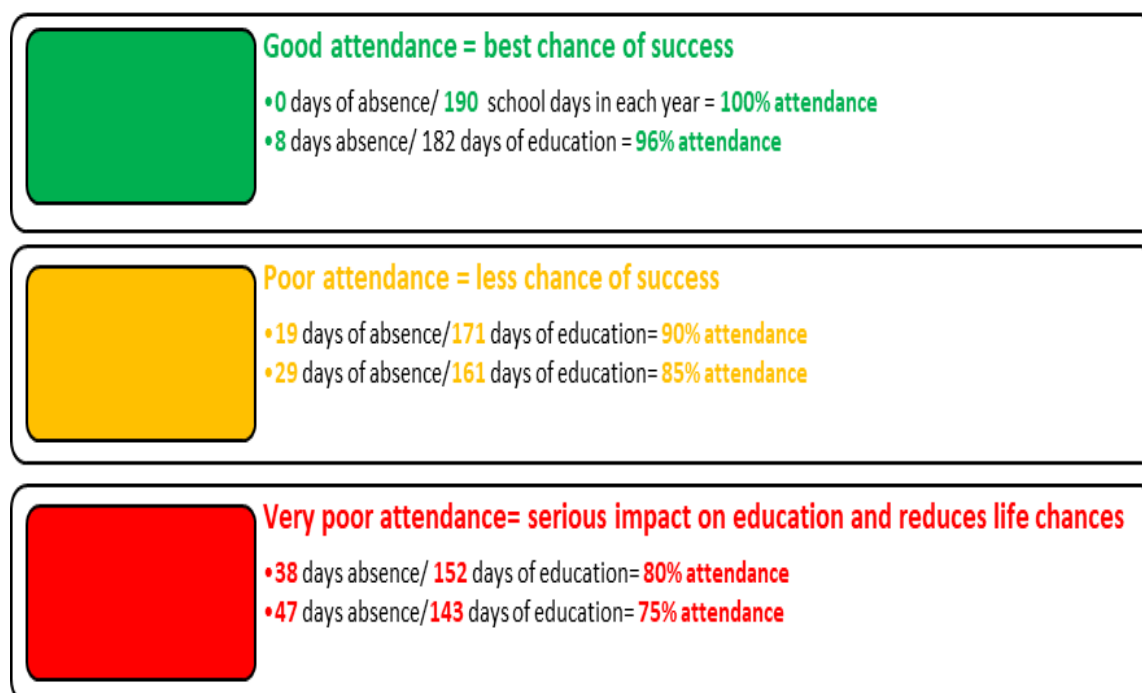
## Introduction

The Mead Infant and Nursery School, along with other local schools and Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do, all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so, they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

## Why is attendance important?

- Good attendance ensures that children have the best possible chances in life This means that they can achieve well both academically and socially
- Children who have poor attendance may have gaps in their learning and find it difficult to catch up
- Statistics show that children who have poor attendance early on in their education are more likely to underachieve at secondary school
- Friendships can be affected by persistent absence too; it can be hard for a child who misses lots of school to form relationships with their classmates



## **Parent Responsibility and the Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable- [a] to his age, ability and aptitude and [b] to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes, the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

## **Registers**

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school].

Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

## **Reporting Absences**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school if a child will be absent for any reason.

Absences should be reported to the school office (via the answer phone) or via email to [office@mead.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:office@mead.surrey.sch.uk) before 9am on the first day of absence and thereafter on a daily basis.

## **Lateness**

The school day begins at 8.50 a.m. and it is expected that children will arrive on time. (Please refer to Appendix 2 for information regarding changes in times due to the pandemic)

Any child arriving after the doors have closed at 9 a.m. should be taken to the school office to receive a late sticker before joining their class. We ask parents to sign the late arrival register giving a brief description of the reason for their lateness.

Morning registration will take place at 9 a.m. The registers will remain open for 20 minutes and any child who arrives after the register has been taken but during the 20 minutes will be marked as late (L).

Any pupil who arrives after the registers close at 9.20 a.m. will be marked as 'late after close of registers' (U), which statistically counts as an unauthorised absence. If

a reason is given for the late arrival, for example, attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. (See Appendix 1)

In cases of persistent late arrivals to school, along with advice from the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) parents will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher. We will work together to put strategies in place to improve promptness. This may include setting targets, follow up calls and further meetings.

### **Dental and medical treatments**

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day.

When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school.

Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

### **Responding to Non-Attendance**

When a child does not attend school, we will respond by doing one or more of the following

- If no telephone call or email is received from the parent or carer by 9:00, the school will contact the parent or carer or the other emergency contacts held by the school until we get a response and know that the child is safe
- If there is no response from any of the contacts held by the school, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed and this will result in a home visit to ascertain that the child is safe
- If there is no response from a home visit, all efforts will be made to establish the safety and well-being of the child/ren. This may involve working with other agencies e.g. children services and the police
- For any child whose family are known, by the school, to be currently working in partnership with Children's Services an additional phone call to the named Social Worker/Family Support Worker will also be made. Equally, for any children where the school has significant concerns, that are not currently working in partnership with Children's Services, an additional phone call into C-SPAR may be made. The School may also seek further advice from the Educational Welfare team and/or any other professional service they feel is appropriate.
- In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 consecutive days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority, although the school discuss such an absence sooner with their EWO if the absence is unauthorised, parents/carers cannot be contacted or there are other concerns. Schools are required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the DFE and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

## **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

Any absence of this nature has an impact on a child's educational achievement and we need parents' full support and co-operation to address and improve attendance.

The School monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority. The class teacher will initially inform the parent if their child has been highlighted as having PA. If attendance does not improve parents will be invited into school for a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss how we can work together to improve your child's attendance.

The DfE and the Local Authority monitor the levels of persistent absence in all schools.

## **Exceptional Leave of Absence**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off during school term-time to go on holiday. Any financial savings that parents/carers think may be made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to their child's education.

**All holiday requests will be considered to be unauthorised leave of absence. Any appeal will be heard by the Governing Body, whose decision will be final.**

If a holiday is taken without authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, the Inclusion Service will be notified and the parent may be liable to a Penalty Notice.

All other requests for absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher and must be exceptional circumstances e.g. compassionate reasons. Again, in the case of an appeal, the decision of the Governing Body will be final.

Even in cases where "exceptional circumstances" do apply, authorisation will be considered within the context of the child's previous attendance and that the request does not exceed 10 school days in any one academic year. Exceptional Circumstances will not be applied where the absence would result in the child's missing 10% or more schooling across the year as this would classify them as a Persistent Absentee. Exceptional Circumstances alone do not guarantee authorisation.

If a family needs to request a leave of absence in term-time, then an absence request form must be submitted to the Headteacher and preferably with at least two weeks' notice. All adults with parental responsibility must be aware of the request being submitted.

## **Penalty Notices**

As of June 2016, the issuing of a Penalty Notice for poor attendance may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Unauthorised absences OR late arrival after the close of registration, on 7 occasions in any six week period (not including school closures) where the pupil's

attendance falls below 90%. The lateness will be recorded in accordance with the 'Registration and Lateness' section of this policy

- Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days/10 sessions or more within a 3 month period – these do not need to be consecutive) without the authorisation of the school.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time EXCEPT where an application has been made in ADVANCE AND the circumstances are deemed exceptional. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school IF leave is granted.

- The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

- Parents/carers who fail to secure their child's regular school attendance and fail to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer. This will be considered if the attendance is below 90% and there are 10 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 6 school weeks, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration.

- If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance. If you have any questions or require further support to achieve an improvement, please contact the school or the Inclusion Officer.

## **Improving Attendance**

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful if parents/carers cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) meets with school staff on a regular basis to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents by:

1. A phone call to the parent/carer by Class Teacher and issues discussed with student within school
2. A letter sent to the parent/carers stating concerns
3. Meeting at school with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss how we can work together to improve attendance

4. If this the school is unsuccessful in resolving any attendance issues the school will refer families to the Education Welfare Officer for support

## **Rewards**

Certificates will be awarded to children who have had for 100% attendance at the end of each term

## **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Welfare Service is provided by the Local Education Authority and supports schools, parents and young people and deals with non-attendance. The aim of Education Welfare is for every child to have an equal opportunity to access educational provision and ensure parents meet their parental responsibilities under the various Education Acts. Education Welfare monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by the school, then the school will make a referral to Education Welfare. The EWO will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed and unauthorised absence persists, the EWO can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution or consider an Education Supervision Order.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

## **Local Education Authority Truancy Patrols**

When a family comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol either via the Education Welfare Officers or through local patrols, the child's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parents/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carer.

The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

All staff should encourage good attendance and punctuality through:

- Providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
- Reporting late and attendance information to parents/carers on parents' evening and in the annual school report.
- Raising any concerns regarding attendance of lateness to a member of the SLT
- By celebrating regular attendance every term.
- Regular communication with parents/carers and children.

- Ensuring accurate and punctual completion of registers.
- Attend meetings between the EWO and Head Teacher if necessary

Attendance Officer:

- Ensures morning and afternoon registers are taken and are up to date.
- Contacts parents and requests reasons for absence.
- Collates daily attendance records and, together with the attendance lead, puts in place agreed procedures to monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Attend regular meetings between the EWO and Head Teacher

Headteacher:

- Monitors and reviews the attendance policy on an annual basis.
- Monitors and reviews the attendance procedures and works with the Attendance office and Education Welfare to ensure reasons for absence are identified and interventions are put in place.
- Identifies and monitors attendance of PA students.
- Promotes the attendance policy within the school and ensures that it is implemented effectively.
- Reports attendance to the Governing body through HT reports

Parents:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework they have been given
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

Children:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day



## Appendix 1 – Categorisation of absence and attendance codes

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

### 1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Any absence which has not been explained by the parent or carer by the close of registers

### 2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed valid under the Education Act 1996.

### 3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed present for attendance returns purposes.**

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

All students must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)	Approved Education Activity

<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## APPENDIX 2 Changes due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Staggered start and finishes					
EYFS			KS1		
8.40	2.40	Emperor 30 hr	8.40	2.30	Badgers
8.50	11.50	Rock hoppers Am	8.50	2.40	Hedgehogs
9	2.50	Jellyfish	9	2.50	Squirrels
9.10	3	Starfish	9.10	3	Bears
9.20	3.10	Turtles	9.20	3.10	Monkeys
			9.30	3.20	Leopards

Attendance at school from the start of Autumn Term 2020 is mandatory and it is parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly.

Revised timings for the school day in order for staff to manage social distancing on the playground, timings for school pick up and collection are staggered as follows:

### Medical appointments

The school asks that medical appointments can be arranged out of school hours. However, if this is not possible, either at the beginning or end of the school day. If the appointment is in school hours, the child should go home and change their school uniform before returning to school.

### Not attending due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

- **Pupils required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)** should follow the guidance for households

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home%20guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

- **Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate AND get a test.** If the test is negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms relating to COVID19 they can stop self-isolating and return to school

- **Pupils who have symptoms, take a test and test POSITIVE** should continue to self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of their symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.

- **If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.** If the member of the household tests **NEGATIVE**, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school.

- **If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.** If the member of the household tests **POSITIVE**, the pupil should continue to self-isolate for the full 14 days from when the member of the household first had symptoms.

## **IN ALL CASES OF SELF-ISOLATION, PARENTS SHOULD INFORM THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY OF THE RESULTS.**

- Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) should follow the guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with%20possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

And NHS test and trace.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#people-who-have-had-close-contact-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus>

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves, but the guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested POSITIVE.

In the event of a confirmed case of coronavirus with the school community, further guidance will be given by the local health protection team.

- **Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine** should follow the guidance below when travelling to the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks, allowing for the possibility of having to quarantine on return to the UK.

- **Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario** should follow the guidance below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Shielding advice for adults and children paused on 1st August 2020. This means that any pupil (or those with a family member) who remains on the shielded patient list can return to school.

If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) still on the shielding list in that area will receive a letter stating that they are required to shield again. This letter should be provided to the school office. Once measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, parents will be contacted by The Mead Infant and Nursery School to set out the expectation that the pupil can return to school.

- **Local lockdown**

If rates of the disease rise locally, the school may need to prevent some pupils from attending. The Mead Infant and Nursery School will follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in this event.

### **Remote Education**

If a child is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID19), please refer to our Remote Contingency Plan on our website under Parents/ Home Learning