




# Meadowside Community Primary & Nursery School

A Member of The Challenge Academy Trust

## Attendance Policy

<b>Policy Written By</b>	Stuart Wright
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<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr S Wright 
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Mr P Calrow

*'Where Learners Grow'*

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## 1. Contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
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## 2. Policy and Legislation

This policy is based on the following related policy and legislation, The Education Act 2002, DfE 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' May 2022 and Meadowside Community Primary & Nursery School Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

## 3. Rationale

The staff and governors of Meadowside CP and Nursery School believe that all pupils benefit from, and are entitled to, regular and punctual daily attendance at school. This helps ensure that all pupils have the best chance to achieve their full potential. As part of this aspiration, we will monitor and respond to any instances of poor and/or irregular attendance and/or punctuality and adopt a fair, consistent and even-handed approach. We will work closely with parents/carers, their families and all relevant support agencies to promote this.

The policy is as result of consultation with the wider school community and an analysis of existing attendance data to establish current absence trends. These trends showed that:

- In the last full year before the Covid-19 pandemic, the whole school attendance was 95.6%(all) and 95.8% (mainstream), broadly in line with the 2018/19 national average of 96%.  
Persistent Absenteeism was 10.3% (all) and 9.2% (mainstream), just above the national average of 8.2%.
- However in 2021/22 school attendance fell to 93.6% (all) and 93.9% (mainstream), which was just below the national average for Autumn Term 2021 of 94.3%.  
Persistent Absenteeism had increased significantly to 23.5% (all) and 21.9% (mainstream), compared to the national average for Autumn Term of 19.5%.

**Closer analysis of this increase in Persistent Absenteeism (PA) told us the following:**

- PA was highest in the Designated Provision classes (Buttercups & Redwoods).
- There is also a high % of Male Persistent Absenteeism across school...
  - Male persistent absence substantially higher than Female. This is also the case when only considering mainstream Male PA (27.66%).
  - SEND Male PA was 29.27% compared to SEND Female at 19.05%
  - Pupil Premium Male PA was 30.3% compared to Pupil Premium Female PA at 14.55%

This information is reported to the Department for Education and forms part of our Ofsted inspection. It aims to ensure the enjoyment and achievement for all pupils at Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School.

#### 4. Attendance and Safeguarding

We believe that children are safest when they are in school. Where a child is not in school the Attendance Protocols will be followed to ensure that the pupil is safe. With regards to Safeguarding the protocols ensure that:

- Where a pupil is Dual Registered the school will contact the provider daily to ensure that the pupil is present. **If they have not been marked present the pupil will be referred to the school's DDSL and Inclusion Officer for follow up.**
- Where a pupil is a Looked After Child (LAC), the school will inform the caring authority of the child's attendance as requested by them.
- Where a pupil is subject to a Child Protection Plan, follow up of absence will be given priority. **If an explanation of absence is not established, then the absence will be referred to the DSL and DDSL.**
- Where a pupil is EHCP and or part of the school's Designated Provision, **the school's SENCO will work alongside the DDSL and Inclusion Officer** to improve the attendance. Should there be no improvements, a review of the plan will be put in place.

#### 5. Principles

The Governors, Headteacher and staff wish to ensure every child has the opportunity to:

1. Fully participate in school life
2. Enjoy and achieve
3. Feel a valued member of the school community

#### 6. Aims

- To reduce persistent absence to be at least in line with the national average
- To improve attendance to be at least in line with the primary school national average
- To ensure there is a whole school, graduated response to improving punctuality and attendance
- To identify groups of pupils and individuals whose absence causes concern
- To identify pupils persistently absent from school
- To identify main causes of absence and take action to address them

#### 7. Categorisation of Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Parents must provide an explanation for any period of absence from school, it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.

School will **usually** authorise absences where a pupil is:

- Unable to attend school due to illness. This will be coded 'I'. However, school reserves the right to require medical evidence before authorising an absence for illness if there are on-going concerns about a child's attendance.
- Requires emergency dental/medical appointments. Wherever possible routine dental/medical appointments should be made after school or during school holidays. This will be coded 'M'.
- Absent due to 'special' circumstances. This will be coded as a 'C' code and an example of this may be to attend a funeral of a close family member, to visit a close family member who is seriously ill or there has been a death or significant trauma in the family.
- Leave of absence for a holiday will only be authorised for children in exceptional circumstances, such as those whose parents are in the Armed Forces and are either going or returning from tour including breaks of leave during tours. This will be coded 'H'.

#### **School will not authorise absence for:**

- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Days out
- Looking after brothers/sisters
- Holidays

If a holiday in term time is not agreed by the school, but the pupil is absent on the requested dates, the absence will be recorded as 'G' (family holiday not agreed), this will mean that the absence has been recorded on the school attendance register as unauthorised.

#### **8. Late Children**

A pupil arriving after **8.50am** (late but before the close of register) will be marked late (Code **L** - Late arrival before the register has closed).

Pupils arriving after the close of register (**9.20am**) will be marked **U** (arrived in school after registration closed).

Parents of children persistently arriving after **8.50am** will be sent a letter explaining that the Local Authority Attendance Officer will monitor their child's attendance and punctuality. Parents will be made aware of how much learning time their children are missing. **If this persists, they will be invited into school to discuss the lateness and seek a resolution\***. Where school action fails to bring about an improvement, the matter will be discussed with Local Authority Attendance Officer and consideration given to prosecution. Please see below for **School Protocol**.

\*School will notify and discuss persistent lateness with parents of children who travel to school via LA transport, so that parents can address the matter with the transport providers.

#### **9. Parent Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance and Legal Background**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

**Parents should be aware of the following key points:**

- Parents must contact school on each day of absence to provide a reason for non-attendance
- Parents must work with the school and any other agency to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance
- Any absence should be considered unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. Unauthorised absence at any level is considered unacceptable by both the school and local authority.
- School may request medical verification where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. Please see below for **School Protocol**.
- **Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on your child's attendance records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.**
- Warrington Local Authority will instigate Fast Track prosecutions once school has exhausted their strategies to improve attendance for a child and attendance continues to be low without supporting medical evidence to say that the child has been unable to attend school. **Meadowside Community Primary School has a Service Level Agreement with the Local Authority and we will seek Fast Track Prosecution once we have exhausted strategies to get the pupils attendance to a good level.**

### **Taking a child out of school for a family holiday**

Headteachers cannot and will not authorise school absence for the reason of a family holiday. If you feel you have an exceptional circumstance you must speak to your headteacher prior to making any arrangements or taking any absence.

## **10. School Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance**

The Welfare Co-ordinator is the school attendance leader. **With the support of the Inclusion Officer and School Administration Team**, she will ensure:

- Registers are accurately marked and maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- A whole school approach to reinforce good attendance, encouraging all pupils to attend and achieve
- Individuals or group attendance targets are set and understood by staff, parents and pupils
- **The school works relentlessly to tackle persistent absenteeism; engaging with parents, the LA Attendance Officer and any other agencies to keep children consistently in school.**
- **Good attendance is celebrated across school in a high profile manner, through celebration assemblies, individual and class rewards.**

## **11. School Protocol for Monitoring Attendance**

1. Attendance will be checked weekly and parents of any unauthorised absences will receive a 'Reason for Absence/Lateness' form. (Appendix 1)
2. **Attendance will be checked on the last Friday of every month by the Welfare Co-ordinator and Inclusion Officer.** All children below 96% will be monitored.
3. Where attendance is causing a concern, school will send out letters as shown in Appendix 1, 2 and 3.
4. Parents of children who are on course to be classified as a 'persistent absentee' may be asked to provide medical evidence in the event of further absences through illness. See Appendix 4.
5. Parents/ carers of any child who continues to be off school without sufficient medical evidence will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer for further investigation and may be prosecuted. See Appendix 5.

## 12. School Systems for Promoting Regular Attendance

### School will:

- Provide free Breakfast snack provided to all children arriving in time for registration.
- Contact parents on each day of a pupil's absence, first day contact, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer by 9.30am to ensure the safety of the pupil
- Analyse individual attendance pupil data to identify patterns of absence causing concern
- Contact parents by letter when pupil's attendance falls below 96% to highlight concerns
- Invite parents in to school for a discussion when a pupil's attendance is below 90% and is therefore classified as a 'persistent absentee'.

*(Please see Appendices for protocol and for examples of letters which will be sent out if attendance is causing a concern.)*

If attendance does not improve a referral will be made to a Local Authority Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer from the Local Authority will be in contact with parents and may consider a prosecution.

The following are examples of the support which school can offer to increase a pupil's attendance:

- Use Individual Attendance Support Plans for pupils with attendance difficulties
- In partnership with the Local Authority use a full range of strategies, including legal interventions, to support improvement to attendance
- Provide appropriate support to pupils to ensure successful reintegration following long term absence
- Complete a Early Help referral where complex and significant factors requiring a multi-agency response is identified
- Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school attendance, through parent evenings, pupil reviews and home-school agreements
- Make parents aware of the impact of poor attendance on attainment

## 13. Celebrating good attendance and punctuality:

### School will:

- Acknowledge and celebrate the class with the highest average weekly attendance in weekly **Monday assemblies. The winning class will receive the Attendance Cup. They and those classes higher than 98% receive an extra breaktime that week.**
- Termly whole school awards for children with 100% attendance for the term.
- Acknowledge, praise and reward, in an end of year assembly, those children who have had 100% attendance all year and name them on Class Dojo announcements to families.
- Encourage and praise those children who have made successful efforts to improve their attendance.

## 14. Registration

### Morning Registration

- School doors open at **8.40am**. Parents should ensure pupils are in school for this time.
- The morning register will be taken at **8.50am**.
- In **Reception Elm Class**, the register will be taken at **8.45am** to support families with children in classes located at the back of school.
- The school nursery classes, **Daisies & Sunflowers**, will register the children at **8.40am**

**Children arriving at 8.40am will be provided with a free breakfast snack.**

### **Afternoon Registration**

A pupil arriving after the following times will be marked as late for afternoon registration:

Daisies Nursery	12.30pm
Sunflowers Nursery	12.30pm
Reception	12.15pm
Buttercups	12.45pm
Y1	12.35pm
Y2	12.45pm
Y3	12.55pm
Y4	13.00pm
Giant Redwoods	13.15pm
Y5	13.05pm
Y6	13.10pm

### **15. Review of Policy**

- This policy will be formally reviewed every year
- The principles of this policy will be raised by the Welfare Co-ordinator and the Inclusion Officer on Class Dojo and our social media accounts regularly throughout the year
- Any complaints arising from the implementation of this policy should be addressed to the Headteacher in the first instance



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 @MeadowsideCPSch  MeadowsideCPSch

Headteacher: Mr S.Wright, BA (HONS), PGCE, NPQH



## Appendix 1

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

### School Attendance Letter of Concern- No Response

Name .....

DOB .....

Each day of your child's absence from school, we must receive a phone call letting us know the reason for absence. We operate a 'First Day Response' system which will send a text message or voice message to parents if we have not already received a reason by 9.30am for absence on that day.

Unfortunately on ..... your child was absent from school and we have not received notification for their absence. Unless we receive notification, their absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where children have a number of unauthorised absences the case may be referred to the Local Authority School Attendance Service who check our school registers on a regular basis.

Please contact the school as soon as possible to notify us of your child's recent absence. If you are having difficulty getting your child into school I would welcome the opportunity to support you.

Yours sincerely,



## Appendix 2

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

School Attendance Letter of Concern- Below 95%

Name.....

DOB .....

Attendance in Warrington schools is monitored very closely and any pupils with less than 95% may be challenged as regular school attendance is crucial if pupils are to achieve positive outcomes. The Government outlines that any pupil with an attendance level of under 90% will be classed as a 'persistent absentee'. This means that any pupil whose attendance drops below 90%, their attendance will be discussed and scrutinised on a regular basis.

At present ..... 's attendance is only.....% (see attached attendance certificate). It is essential this improves as research has found poor school attendance does have a detrimental effect on a child's academic progress and I hope, with your cooperation, we will see an improvement.

Please note under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. If you are having difficulty getting your child into school I would welcome the opportunity to support you.

Yours sincerely,



## Appendix 3

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

### School Attendance Letter of Concern- Invitation to Meeting

Name.....

DOB .....

As I am sure you are aware, regular attendance and being punctual at school is important so that young people can maximise their educational opportunities. The Government have decreed that any pupil with an attendance level of under 90% will be classed as a 'persistent absentee' and this may trigger legal involvement from the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Following my letter dated ....., ..... 's attendance is still a cause for concern and is only.....%. This level of attendance is now well below average and your child will not be achieving their targets. Absence may include times when your child has been ill and may therefore have been authorised by the school. However all school absence, whatever the reason, can prevent your child from achieving their full potential.

I would therefore ask for your co-operation in ensuring a sustained improvement in your child's overall school attendance. To discuss this further I would like to invite you to attend a meeting at the school on..... If you are unable to meet with me on this date will you please either let me so we can re-arrange. Please note if we do not meet to discuss your child's attendance we will consider passing our concerns on to the Local Authority's Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely,



## Appendix 4

Dear Parent/Carer

### School Attendance Letter of Concern- Medical Evidence

Name.....

DOB .....

Following my previous letters and the meeting arranged for .....,  
.....'s attendance is still a cause for concern and is only.....%. Under  
Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, you are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance  
and punctuality of your child at school.

Due to the significant number of absences you are requested to provide medical evidence to  
support the reasons if you decide in future that your child is too ill to attend school. This evidence  
may take the form of either a letter from your GP or an appointment card, date stamped and signed  
by staff at your GP's surgery as proof that your child has attended for treatment. It may also  
include a copy of a prescription or medication that has the child's name and date on it. This decision  
has not been taken lightly and it has been made following advice given from the Local Authority  
Attendance Service. If your child is now absent from school and medical evidence has not been  
provided their absence will be classed as unauthorised; an accumulation of unauthorised  
attendance could lead to legal action being taken against you.

We would appreciate your support in this matter and hope ..... 's attendance improves to  
help them achieve their potential. If you are having difficulty getting your child into school I would  
welcome the opportunity to support you.

Yours sincerely,



## Appendix 5

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

### School Attendance Letter of Concern- Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service

Name.....

DOB .....

Following my previous letters and contacts with you .....’s attendance remains a cause for concern and is only.....%.

As his/her attendance has not significantly improved, I have no further option other than to refer the case to the Local Authority. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, you are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance and punctuality of your child at school. The Government have decreed that any pupil with an attendance level of under 90% will be classed as a ‘persistent absentee’.

Unfortunately your child is on track to becoming a persistent absentee and they will be falling behind in their learning.

An Attendance Officer from the Local Authority will be in contact with you and may consider a prosecution. May I take this opportunity to remind you that the outcome of their involvement will be influenced by an improvement in your child’s attendance at school. I would urge you to ensure your child attends school regularly from now on. If they are absent for any reason it is still a requirement that you must provide medical evidence to support their absence.

As always I am willing to discuss this matter with you further either in person or by phone. Thank you in anticipation for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

