

Manor Hall Academy



Attendance Policy

For The Meadows School

Building Relationships
Celebrating Success
Promoting Change

MANOR HALL ACADEMY TRUST

2022 - 2025

Statement of intent

The Meadows School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Students cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our students.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

1. Legal framework

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 (Student 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.

2. Definitions

The Meadows School defines “absence” as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

The Meadows School defines an “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.
- Other circumstances for authorised absence which are unique to each student’s situation.

The Meadows School defines an “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

The Meadows School defines:

- “Persistent absenteeism (PA)” as: Missing more than 10% of schooling across the year for any reason.
- “Severe absence (SA)” as: Missing 50% or more of school.

3. Key roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Academy Board

- The Local Academy Board has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of The Meadows School.
- The Local Academy Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- The Local Academy Board has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school’s Complaint Policy

3.2 The School Leadership Team

- The Executive Headteacher and Head of School are responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of The Meadows School. They are 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 students
 - Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

- The Head of School and DSL are responsible for:
 - Monitoring attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
 - Reporting concerns about attendance to the Executive Headteacher
 - Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
 - Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
 - Advising the Executive Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy, and for ensuring students do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- Designated members of staff will take the attendance register each day.
- The school will inform the LA of any student being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:
 - Are being educated from home.
 - No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
 - Have an authorised medical note.
 - Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
 - Have been permanently excluded.

Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children during term-time.

Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure that students attend school every day.

Students are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

All students are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

4. Absence procedures

4.1 Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence.

For every subsequent day of absence parents should call into school and report to the school office.

- A phone call/text message/email will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.

4.2 If a student has 10 unauthorised absences during a twelve-week period, a referral is made to Educational Welfare services for advice.

The Educational Welfare Officer will review the current situation; offer support and consider further action, which could be to recognise that attendance has improved or to follow more formal procedures where attendance has not improved. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent/carer receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Parent/carers who are subject to a Penalty Notice have 3 choices:

- pay the £60 fine within 21 days;
- pay £120 after 21 days but within 28 days;
- don't pay the fine. In this case, the Notice will be withdrawn and Magistrates Court proceedings will start. This could result in a fine of up to £1,000 for each student whose attendance is causing concern and for each parent/carer involved in the prosecution.

The School has a procedure in place for roll call in the events of an evacuation.

If student attendance drops below 90%, the DSL and Head of School will discuss the individual at a fortnightly Attendance meeting and may inform the Local Attendance Officer

The Meadows School will take advice from Educational Welfare about any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

5. Contact information

- Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

6. Recording attendance

6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students 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 student 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 keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 9.00a.m. on each school day.

School accepts that due to the distances students travel on taxis and for reasons which may be out of their control that arrival times may vary, therefore the period for registration is flexible.

6.2 Unplanned absence

The student'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 should do this by ringing the school office on 01538 225050, or via email to office@themeadows.manorhall.academy

We will mark absence due to illness 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 student'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.

6.3 Planned absence

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

Parents should do this by ringing the school office on 01538 225050, or via email to office@themeadows.manorhall.academy

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

6.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

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

Issues with punctuality will often relate to travel difficulties, so these may need addressing with the taxi company, driver or parents as necessary.

6.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect 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 telephone contact and/or a follow up text message or email.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

6.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will receive a message on their child's attendance when it drops into the Persistent Absence category and they will receive an annual report summarizing the whole school year. They will be updated on the relative RAG (Red-Amber-Green) rating for their child's to-date attendance percentages and information on how many days/weeks equivalent and lessons they have missed at that point in the year.

Students will be grouped into categories based on their percentage attendance as follows:

GREEN GROUP
93% - 100%
GOOD ATTENDANCE

AMBER GROUP
90% - 92.9%
LOW ATTENDANCE

RED GROUP
Less than 90%
PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Attendance during the school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which approximates to this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	95 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	190 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	285 lessons

The School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parent/carers and to promote good attendance. Equally, parent/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parent/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

7.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students 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 "a situation or circumstance where the student's absence cannot be clearly defined using another register code, or where there are limited controls or ability to allow the student to attend."

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), holidays during term time will NOT normally be authorised. The Local Academy Board have determined that:

- In exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for a holiday providing your child has a good attendance record over the previous three terms or parents/carers can evidence that the holiday is planned to advocate for the student's needs.
- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form should be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Head of school, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Letters or emails are acceptable alternatives, but should clearly state the reasons for the holiday being planned in term time. Consideration will then be given to the student's previous school attendance and that the time requested is not excessive.

- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision.

Other examples may be:

- Other possible ‘exceptional circumstances’ where the Executive headteacher/Head of School] may grant term-time holiday.
- Study leave.

7.2 Exceptional circumstances

When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the ‘Y’ code will be used on the attendance register.

Exceptional circumstances include when a student is unable to attend because:

- The school is fully or partially closed.
- Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the student’s home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the student from attending.
- The student is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

The use of the ‘Y’ code is collected in the school census for statistical purpose

A ‘C’ code may be applied, which is an ‘authorised absence’. This coding will be agreed by the Executive Headteacher, Head of School and Attendance Intervention Manager and based on the individual student’s circumstances at that point in time. Factors such as the following may influence the use of this coding:

- Family crisis or bereavement
- Missing episodes
- Significant change in domestic circumstance
- Agency intervention
- Emergency situation
- When a related risk assessment evidences the student would be unsafe to attend school

An explanatory note will be added to the register explaining the rationale and reasons for the use of this code.

7.3 Reducing persistent absence

The procedure below needs to be understood in the context of statutory action best practice for tackling persistent absenteeism and school refusal.

- The Head of School and DSL meet fortnightly to review attendance.
- The Head of School and DSL review each persistent absentee and low attendance student.
- A report is provided by the admin team which includes current attendance for the academic year, attendance for the full previous academic year, the reasons for absences.
- The Head of School and DSL will consider previous attendance and the reasons for absence when deciding upon any actions.
- The Head of School and DSL will also consider any improvement in attendance since the previous meeting when deciding upon any further action.
- Actions form a graduated response and take into account individual needs and the circumstances of students and families.
- Actions may include:
 - A text message or letter to parents/carers advising that their son/daughter has attendance below 90% and is now categorized as a persistent absentee. Informing them that their attendance will be closely monitored by the Head of School and DSL.
 - A phone call will be made to the family home by the Head of School or DSL to discuss attendance. The Head of School and DSL will attempt to identify any barriers.
 - Parents/carers will be invited to attend an informal but minuted face-to-face meeting in school with the Head of School and DSL to discuss attendance and identify actions that both school and home can take to tackle any barriers.
 - The Head of School or DSL will refer the student to the Education Welfare Officer
 - A formal meeting will be held with parents/carers to create an action plan to address barriers to attendance.
 - If the action plan is not agreed by parents/carers and there is no improvement in attendance the issue will be raised with the Local Authority and Statutory Action is followed.
 - An Annual Review meeting will be called. The review will consider how effective the school placement is in light of failure to attend. This is not an action that will be taken lightly, It will be based upon the judgement of the Head of School and DSL in consultation with parents/carers and any related agencies/services. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the young person is attending school and accessing learning.
 - The DSL and Head of School may escalate through this graduated response based on individual circumstances but the expectation is that in most cases the school will work through each action.

7.4 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 £60 within 21 days or £120 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 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 student 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.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Meadows School promotes attendance through a number of means, some are proactive while others are responses to new issues. All contribute to whole school, cohort and individual's attendance rates.

- Whole school attendance is monitored termly and reported to the LAB, it is a significant part of the school evaluation and development plan.
- Relationships with parents/carers are valued and essential in improving/maintaining good attendance. The school encourages regular contact and keeping parents informed of behaviour, barriers, celebrations and attendance rates and concerns. Keyworking and statutory reporting support this.
- The Family Support Team plays a significant role in ensuring good attendance.
- A Fortnightly meeting of the Head of School and DSL monitors the low attendance rates or concerning trends. A tracker is kept which flags any students where attendance is not good enough. For students with severe attendance issues bespoke action plans can be drawn up and agreed with families and related services
- Communication of high expectations – consistent reiteration of attendance expectations to students, parents/carers, staff and other stakeholders is essential.
- Rewards and celebrations. Good attendance is rewarded as are improved attendance rates. Successes are celebrated in assemblies and through home-school liaison.
- Transport issues are dealt with promptly to preclude any delays in restoring taxis. Temporary arrangements may be possible depending on geography.
- The Meadows School seeks to work alongside the Local Authority and all stakeholders around attendance and related safeguarding initiatives – this has included consultation with Education Safeguarding, Targeted Services, Educational Psychology and the Police.

9. Attendance monitoring

The Head of School and DSL monitor student absence.

A student'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 4.1).

If a student's is absent without a known reason the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this on the same day.

If a student absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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

Student-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.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Executive Headteacher, Head of School and DSL. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Relationship Management policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

Related statutory guidance:

[School attendance guidance May 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

12. Further Information

12.1 Factors influencing attendance at The Meadows School:

The Meadows School is aware that there are often extenuating circumstances relating to children and young People with SEND that may influence attendance positively and negatively.

The Meadows School is also aware that minor changes in students' lives, transport arrangements, domestic situations, class groupings, peer relationships, medication, care placements and services involvement may significantly influence their emotional and mental health. This must be considered in actions taken relating to attendance.

Each student's attendance and SEND related difficulties will be treated on an individual basis according to need, but will always be equitable and fair. Students of concern are clearly identified and their attendance monitored. Strategies put in place are recorded and reviewed.

12.2 Mental Health and Emotionally Based School Avoidance:

As a Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware setting, we are acutely aware that some students face significant personal, social, emotional and mental health challenges to be able to attend school before they are able to engage in learning. Often students' mental health condition can change significantly as and when it is influenced by domestic circumstances and other factors outside of the school's ability to control or influence. While The Meadows School staff will try to remove or reduce as many barriers as possible, it is important in such cases to consider how to improve attendance without further compromising deteriorating mental health conditions. In such cases a period of 'stabilisation' is necessary, where academic pressures, social dynamics and emotional demands can be pared back, allowing the student in question to feel able to engage in attending school.

Where the student's mental health deteriorates to this level, and where their mental health and wellbeing becomes the key priority over all other factors, a meeting will be called with all relevant agencies to create a plan that focusses on the best outcomes for the child.

This may see a negotiated arrangement made with parents/carers, SEND, social workers, support agencies and school staff. The negotiated plan will always be time-limited and intentional in working towards improved levels of engagement and ultimately increased attendance rates. It is accepted that the timeline for such interventions can be variable in length. Regular reviews and high quality communication are essential in monitoring the progress and outcomes of these plans, with all stakeholders consulted.

12.3 Injuries and school attendance:

Unfortunately, we occasionally experience instances where students have accidents and are injured whether this is at home, in the local community or at school. Once the right medical attention has been received Parents and Carers subsequently contact school in regards to attendance and managing their return to the classroom. Sometimes the return to school is impeded by the injury, discomfort, plaster cast (or similar) or ongoing medical advice.

This is a very difficult situation for school to manage as each instance is different and each student has a unique set of circumstances.

Very often Doctors at GP practices and hospitals advise that students can return to school, not always fully understanding that some students struggle to self-regulate and safely manage their own behaviour.

We base all our decisions for returns to school on individual risk assessments, as we know that many students struggle to regulate their emotions, behaviour and actions, particularly when they are not physically at their best. We must also consider other students' abilities to behave appropriately around the injured/impeded child – this would feature in the risk assessment.

We may sometimes request that students remain at home for part, or even all, of their convalescence depending on the nature of the injury, their ability to regulate their behaviour and others' responses to the injury. Ultimately this is a safeguarding issue – we need to be sure that the student is as safe as possible, whether this is in school or at home during school hours.

If a student is to return following an injury or during convalescence, we may ask all parties to agree to and sign a risk assessment which will be reviewed on an on-going basis. Any breach of the risk assessment conditions may mean that the student will then remain at home.

The Meadows School will always try to ensure that remote learning can take place when students are not attending school during their recovery period and staff will support students with either IT based work or paper copies.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental

		appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day