



# **Meir Heath Academy Attendance Policy**

**February 2018**

## Meir Heath Attendance Policy

### **Principles:**

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to focus on purposeful learning and attainment.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Allowing us to provide high quality teaching, matched with high expectations, nurture successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve.
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation, but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the wellbeing of children including safeguarding, good behaviour, anti-bullying, and support for children with medical needs. We are always striving to be at the heart of the community and to serve all the children who wish to attend our school, working in partnership and collaboration with families and other organisations.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

### **School Responsibilities:**

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through the curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Officers, family liaison etc where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

## Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, as per September 2017 Staffordshire Local Authority.
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

## The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

- The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. **(January 2015 Guidance)**. The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.
- The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.
- For example, at the end of the 2012/13 Academic year 94% of pupils who were present all the time achieved 5+ GCSE A\* - C or equivalent. Where attendance dropped to between 85 and 90% only 75% of pupils achieved these results. This equates to an absence of around 1 week per year during Years 10 and 11 and clearly illustrates the impact of attendance on attainment.
- The same pattern is also seen at primary school level, where pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in key stage 2 (normally age 11) are a quarter less likely to achieve level 5 or above in reading, writing or math's tests than those with no absence.

### **Admissions Register:**

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.

All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

### **Elective Home Education:**

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at [enquiries@entrusted.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@entrusted.co.uk) of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

### **Attendance data and targets:**

The Local Authority does not prescribe individual school targets for attendance or persistent absence. Our school attendance target, set by the Governors, is 97% for 2017/2018.

## Attendance codes

Key to codes		
/ Present (AM)	J Interview	U Late (after registers closed)
\ Present (PM)	L Late (before registers closed)	V Educational visit or trip
B Educated off site (not Dual reg.)	M Medical/Dental appointments	W Work experience
C Other authorised circumstances	N No reason yet provided for absence	# Planned whole or partial school closure
D Dual registration	O Unauthorised Abs	Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
E Excluded	P Approved sporting activity	X Non-compulsory school age absence
G Family holiday (not agreed)	R Religious observance	Z Pupil not on roll
H Family holiday (agreed)	S Study leave	- All should attend / No mark recorded
I Illness	T Traveller absence	

### Definition of persistent absence:

From September 2015 this definition will change to include pupils missing 10% or more of possible sessions. So pupil attendance MUST be above 90%.

### Meir Heath Primary School has Specific Procedures related to:

- It is the parent's responsibility to notify school that a child is absent and for what reason.
- First day contact systems.
- Registration will close at 9am.
- Encouraging and recognising good attendance and punctuality.
- Home school agreements (on the website).
- Procedures for reporting to Governors regarding school attendance data, policy and procedures.
- Roles and responsibilities within school of staff at all levels including accountabilities and performance management.
- Involving other agencies – the Local Authority must be informed of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission but school should involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern.
- Responsibilities and arrangements for information sharing, safeguarding and complaints procedures if an alternative external agency is used by the school to support pupil attendance.
- Medical or dental appointments.
- Leave of absence during term time.
- Monitoring and analysis of attendance data to ensure appropriate action is in place to encourage good punctuality and attendance for all pupils including vulnerable groups.
- Roles of key staff in school.
- Useful Contact Details.

- Use of Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance September 2017

**Guidelines issued by Staffordshire County Council specify that Penalty Notices may be considered if one of the following criteria is met:**

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. “Persistent” means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the head teacher. (e.g. family holiday)
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register closed. “Persistent” means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child’s first five days of exclusion. An “excluded child” is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

**Other conditions.**

- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.

The fines available to the courts if parents are found guilty of the section 444 (1) offence include a level 3 fine of up to £1,000. If they are found guilty of the section 444 (1A) the fine is at level 4, up to £2,500 and the court can also sentence them to imprisonment for up to three months. Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents of pupils found in a public place during school hours after being excluded from school<sup>8</sup>. The fine is a level 3 fine of up to £1,000

## Legal Framework:

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, Head teachers (as well as deputy and assistant head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.
- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence if a parent fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school at which they are registered, if that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under s444 Education Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

The Regulations also require each local authority to publish a code of conduct for issuing penalty notices, after consultation with governing bodies, head teachers and police. Guidance from the Secretary of State states that this "should set out the criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice".