



Attendance Policy

This Policy applies to the entire setting including the EYFS.

Staff Responsible for policy review: Head, Deputy Head & School Business Manager

Next Review: 1st October 2024

Last Review	Updates made
September 2022	Attendance Percentages and attendance pathway

1. Aims

Good attendance at school is important for a pupil's educational and social well-being. Regular attendance is crucial in securing every pupils' educational development and ability to achieve success allowing them to maximise the education opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance leads to educational disadvantage and also places children at risk.

Pupils who miss school, for whatever reason, can experience a loss of self-confidence and social isolation as well as having gaps in their learning. Children going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

The School's procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education are contained in the "Children Missing from Education" section of the Safeguarding Policy which is to be used for searching for and if necessary reporting any pupil missing from education. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Our aims for this policy are to ensure:

- Excellent attendance (87% and above);
- Excellent punctuality, daily;
- To ensure that where attendance and punctuality fall short of accepted standards, procedures are followed and sanctions are applied fairly and consistently;
- A partnership with parents and school; and
- Ensure that a full record is kept of all absences.

It is also for the School to be aware of all persons present on the school site at any one point in time.

The policy will also ensure that registers are correctly kept and available for inspection by any appropriate body at any given time. The School holds two emergency contact numbers for each pupil to provide the School with additional options to make contact with a responsible adult particularly when a child missing from education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

The School will report to Kent County Council (and the relevant Local Authority in which the pupil resides) a pupil who has been absent from school without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

2. Registers

For information on registering children at The Mead, please see the Supervision Policy.

3. Background and Regulations

Responsibilities of parents:

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

“The parent of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised”. (See the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006).

4. Authorised absence

Authorised absence is where the Head has either given approval in advance for the child to be away or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as a satisfactory explanation for absence.

School may authorise an absence if:

- the child is too ill to attend and the school accepts this as valid (although if the child is off for long periods the school might ask for proof from the doctor);
- the parent has sought the advance permission of the school e.g. for a religious observation family holiday etc;
- the child has an emergency medical or dental appointment;
- the child is involved in an off-site educational programme;
- the child has an off-site examination;
- the child is visiting a senior school; or
- any exceptional circumstances

We encourage our parents to book routine appointments outside of school hours or in the school holidays wherever possible, as absence from school is discouraged and may leave the child missing out on learning opportunities.

Reporting an absence

If a child is to be away from school we ask that the parent emails or calls the school every day of their absence by 9am, on absence@thameadschool.co.uk or 01892 525837. If your child is unwell,

then the nature of the illness must be indicated. Any unnotified absence will be followed up by Miss Winter.

Early Years

Although our Pre-Reception Children and some Reception children are not of compulsory school age we encourage parents to communicate with us if their child is going to be absent and we always follow-up unexplained absences.

Requests for Leave of Absence:

For any absence not relating to illness, secondary school transition or appointments, permission must be sought from The Head. The Head is only allowed to authorise absence for family holidays during term time at her discretion, and only in advance. Please note, holidays during term time are greatly discouraged – including missing the first or last day(s) of term. The Head will only authorise absence sparingly and only after careful consideration, particularly where children have a history of irregular attendance.

If you would like to make a request for leave of absence for your child please email the Head on, Head@themeadschool.co.uk at least two weeks in advance of the planned absence with comprehensive reasons for the request. You will be notified about the outcome of your request by email.

We try to support our families by publishing our draft term dates a year in advance, along with our staff inset days and sharing our termly calendar. We aim for this to enable our families to plan family trips and appointments outside of school hours.

5. Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (eg: shopping);
- family holidays which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess of any time agreed with the school;
- regular lateness with no explanation
- when the School does not agree that absence should be authorised;
- where no supporting documentation can be provided when it has been requested and would have been reasonable to do so; or
- where the School has reason to suspect that the reason for absence is not genuine.

6. Lateness

We strongly encourage pupils to be punctual and aim for all children to be in school as close to 8:20am as possible and no later than 8:40am. We start our tutor time at 8:20am and this time encourages the children to have excellent morning routines and carry out their morning work activities e.g., TTRS, handwriting and SPaG practice etc.

We monitor regular lateness and where necessary, parents will be contacted by the Form Tutor, Deputy Head or Head.

“Repeated lateness at the beginning of a school session can amount to a failure to attend regularly for the purpose of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996”.

7. Unexplained absence

If a pupil is not registered in school at the usual time and no contact has been made with the school via the School Office or absence@themeadschool.co.uk, the Registrar will use the contact details of the parent in order to ascertain the whereabouts of the child. If no contact is achieved with the parents, then the school will contact the other ‘emergency contacts’ given.

As per DfE guidance, the School “will use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated”. See Safeguarding Policy for more information on escalation.

8. Persistent absence

The Mead monitors the attendance of pupils regularly and we encourage all pupils to aim for an attendance of 87% and above. If pupils are persistently absent the Form Tutor will contact their parents to discuss any factors which may be leading to a lack of attendance. The outcome of this meeting is to improve attendance.

Any pupil whose attendance falls below 87% is discussed by SLT and appropriate measures are put in place to:

- improve attendance; and
- understand the underlying reasons for attendance falling and ensure that the pupil is supported, where possible.

In addition to the above, details regarding a current pupil’s attendance history will be passed on to their future schools.

To enable these outcomes, parents may be asked to meet with the Form Tutor and the Deputy Head (Head of Pastoral and DSL) to discuss their child’s attendance if no improvement is seen in attendance after the first meeting with the Form Tutor. (see Attendance Pathway in Appendix A)

The School will also inform the relevant Local Authority and/or Children’s Social Care, as appropriate, immediately if:

- A single absence raises child protection concerns (see the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy); or
- A pupil has ten consecutive days of unauthorised absence.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Appendix A

Attendance Pathway

Rate of attendance	Action	Responsibly
82-87%	Discussion with parents	Form Tutor / Registrar / Deputy Head/ Head
77-82%	Meeting with Form Tutor and Deputy Head	Deputy Head/ Registrar / Head
Below 80%	Meeting with the Head and Deputy Head	Deputy Head/ Registrar / Head