



Meole Brace
C of E Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy

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1. Policy Statement

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building and maintaining strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#). 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Good school attendance is everyone's responsibility. At Meole Brace C of E Primary School and Nursery we recognise this and follow the roles and responsibilities for ensuring good school attendance for all pupils and different pupil groups as outlined in the DfE statutory guidance: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#), as follows:

3.1 All Pupils

Parents/carers are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

3.2 Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents/carers are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

3.3 Persistently absent pupils

Parents/carers are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

3.4 Severely absent pupils

Parents/carers are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

3.5 Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents/carers are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

3.6 Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents/carers are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

3.7 Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents/carers are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. • Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. • Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

3.8 Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents/carers are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school - wherever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

3.9 Monitoring

Parents/carers:	Schools:	Governing bodies:	Local authorities:
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p> <p>(If parents feel the school and/or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)</p>	<p>The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.</p> <p>The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.</p> <p>Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making.</p> <p>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.</p> <p>Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils 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 pupil 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 also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am or as soon as practically possible by calling or e-mailing the school office (see also section 7).

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 pupil'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.

4.3 Planned absence

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

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school may authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil 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.
- If no explanation has been provided for the child's absence, the parents/carers will be contacted by the school office by telephone.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Education Welfare Officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through parent/carer consultations in the Autumn and Spring terms and a written report in the Summer term.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

The 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 the 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 pupil 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

It is the responsibility of all school staff and Governors to celebrate and encourage good school attendance; however, any incentive/reward must not be in anyway discriminatory (e.g. to a child with a medical condition requiring on-going appointments or absences).

We therefore do not reward individual attendance but rather focus on whole class groups from which any such individual can be anonymously discounted when calculating average attendances. Therefore, at the end of each week during Friday's Celebration Worship, the "Attendance Trophy" is presented to the class with the highest average attendance. This is celebrated and prominently displayed in school.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is continuously monitored and analysed to identify and address poor attendance amongst individuals and pupil groups. See Appendix 2: Attendance procedure flowchart for initial and graduated responses to pupil absence.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Class Teachers, and school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

- Move through the Educational Welfare Officer's procedures of warning letters and scheduled and unscheduled home visits.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

7.5 Key personnel

Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance: Mr. Henry Bray (Headteacher)

School Attendance Officer: Mr. James Hamilton
(Office Coordinator)

Education Welfare Officer: Mrs Laura Mathias

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Henry Bray, Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: DfE Attendance Codes

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical / dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
H	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, but still on the admission register, with no alternative provision made
C	Authorised absence for reasons not covered by any other authorised absence code, this code should only be used in exceptional circumstances
B	Approved educational activity as pupil is being educated off site (not dual registration)
D	Dual registered (at another establishment) – not counted in possible attendance
J	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending interview with prospective employer or another educational establishment
P	Approved education activity as pupil is participating in an approved supervised sporting activity
V	Approved educational activity as pupil is at an organised educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registration closed
O	Unauthorised absence as the school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence, has not authorised the absence and it is not covered by any other code / description
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed session/s for a reason that has not yet been provided
X	Non-compulsory school age absence – not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll – not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure – not count in possible attendances

Appendix 2: Attendance procedure flowchart

Attendance Flowchart

On the first day of absence (and each subsequent day of absence) parents/carers are required to contact the school with information about their child's absence. If the school does not receive an explanation for the absence, then a school administrator, senior leader or pastoral support will contact the parents/carers directly to find the reason for absence.

This information is recorded by the administrator in the Absence Log and the child's Class Teacher is informed.

<u>Leave of absence</u>	<u>Weekly update</u>	<u>Monthly attendance review</u>
Office to inform class teacher of leave of absence names and dates via email.	Attendance update as standing item on weekly staff meeting and safeguarding agendas	EWO and School Attendance Lead review attendance and identify causes for concern.

