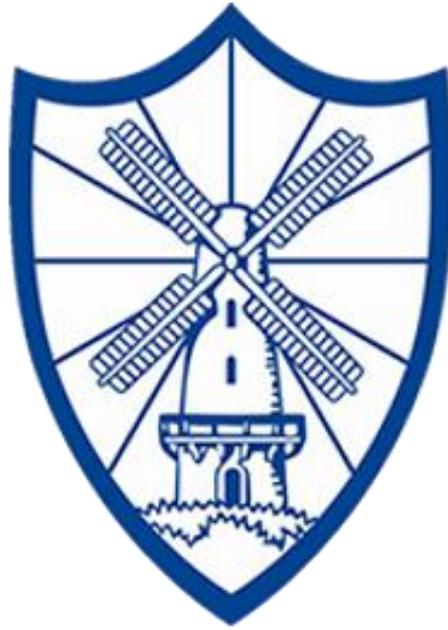




Meopham Community Academy



Enjoy, Learn, Aspire

Attendance Policy

This policy was reviewed by: Paul Hale, Deputy Headteacher
Date: September 2016
Approved by Governors: September 2016
Next Review Date: September 2018

Statement of Intent

Meopham Community Academy is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Meopham Community Academy.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:50am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

Rebecca Nicholson (Headteacher) has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late.

It is the responsibility of school Administration Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)

- Parents informed termly of child's attendance figure

Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance - class teacher/ Administration Officer to investigate and notify Headteacher of concerns
 - 90 - 95% attendance - monitored through attendance meetings with EWO, school intervention letters/meeting with parents
- Below 90% - consider involving Attendance Advisory Officer
- Children Missing Education**

No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Kent County Council guidance will be followed.

Lateness

At Meopham Community Academy the register is taken at 8:55am and 1:15pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.30am and 1.30 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents at parent consultations and may be referred to the Attendance Advisory Officer.

Proceedings for Lateness

<u>Analysis of late book</u>	<u>Actions</u>
<u>Morning:</u>	
If late 5 x in one term and no previous lateness	Inform class teachers who will speak to parents
If late 10 x in 2 consecutive terms	Send out 1st late letter
If late 5 x in the following term and has already had a letter.	2nd letter sent to parent
If no improvement in following term	Send a 3rd letter informing parent that Attendance Advisory Service may need to be involved.
Review lateness the week before 2 nd open evening	Print out of lateness and give to Class Teacher who will speak to parent.

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence. Where there is doubt, the Headteacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Attendance and Lateness

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held. The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

'Five Steps'

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils.
2. Discussion with Senior Leadership Team to identify pupils with attendance below 95%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness.
3. Invitation to meet with school staff
4. Initiate an Early Help Notification
5. Support from Attendance Service

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Attendance Service is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings MUST be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence in a term (Autumn/Spring/Summer) the school will consider the following:

Attendance Advisory Officer Actions

This may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.

Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

Exceptional Circumstances - Family holidays, for whatever reason, cannot be approved, even if the parent is unable to take time off work at any other time. An "exceptional circumstance" would have to be defined as an unavoidable cause eg, a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

Requests for holidays in term time will not be authorised.

School Based Absence Intervention

