

MEADOWBROOK COLLEGE **ATTENDANCE POLICY 2016**

Introduction

Meadowbrook College is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of college attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this college attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the college will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The college will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the college will use to meet its attendance targets.

College Procedures

1. Any child who is absent from college at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \) (B,D,P), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of college). Should students have a authorised leave of absence the (C) code with be used.
2. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of college at **9.15am** - 12.30pm.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. college transport was delayed.

2. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at **1pm**
The registers will close at 2pm

3. Pupils arriving after the start of college but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers closed.
4. Parents/Carers must inform the college if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.
5. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside college hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

Absence from School

- **First Day Absence**

Parents are expected to contact the college as soon as it's reasonably practical (eg by 9.00am) whenever their child is unable to attend.

If no information, regarding the absence of a student, has been received and the student is not present then a First Day Response phone call will be made to the parent to check the reason for absence. This call will be made by the students key worker or administrator.

- **Third Day and Continuing Absence**

If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the College will use the contacts list provided by parents.

Where there has been no response, or explanation, the College will continue to telephone and make a home visit if appropriate.

Where there continues to be no response to the College intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the College will refer the issue to the County Attendance Team.

If there are safeguarding issues the College may report the student as a missing person (MISPER)

If a student's attendance slips below 90%, the College will initially write to parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the Team Leader will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the County Attendance Team if appropriate.

If a student is repeatedly late, the College will initially write to parents expressing concerns about late arrival and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the Team Leader will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the County Attendance Team if appropriate.

In extreme circumstances, where the issue cannot be resolved between the College and parents, with the support of the County Attendance Team, the College will refer the matter formally to the County Attendance Team and, where necessary, legal proceedings will be instigated.

- **Ten Day Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council. The college will include details of the action they have taken.

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Assistant Head Teacher and/or Team Leader to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the college will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the college will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory college age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at college or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory college age and are registered at college is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend college.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the college reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to The County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends college, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the college's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to college on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for college after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the college year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The college monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the college and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and college to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases may be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

Leave of Absence

As of 1st September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of college days a child can be away from college **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from college without authorisation or do not return their child to college on the agreed date following an authorised

period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

Attendance Awards

The college will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance

A certificate for 95% attendance and 100% attendance will be given out at the end of every term, with an additional prize for the whole year at the end of term 6.

Attendance Targets

The college will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior college manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our college targets are:

- Attendance registers, by law, must be kept for at least 3 years;
- Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes (Phoenix report AO2) – alternatively electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made; these also need preserving for at least three years.
- Entries in paper registers must be in ink;
- All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the college at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence;
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity.

1. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

2. Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from college for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the college. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.