



ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE and REGISTRATION POLICY

Document Control Information

Version	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1	23/10/2020	Policy adapted from previous version
2	20/07/2022	Updated inline with LA fines
3	27/09/23	Updated
4	26/11/2025	Updated
5	24/09/2026	Update to be in line with updated statutory guidance
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Reviewed	September 2026
Responsibility	Principal
Review Date	September 2028
Signed	

Meath School

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND REGISTRATION POLICY

Purpose

The registration and attendance records of Meath School are essential statutory documents and are critical in:

- Meeting legal and regulatory requirements.
- Safeguarding pupils.
- Promoting regular attendance and engagement in education.
- Identifying barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity.
- Monitoring attendance patterns and providing timely support.
- Maintaining accurate records of pupils, staff and visitors on site.

Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy has been developed with reference to:

Legislation

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR

Regulations

- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations
- Children Missing Education requirements issued by the Department for Education

Statutory Guidance

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities
- Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance
- National Framework for Penalty Notices

MS 009 Attendance, Absence & Registration Policy

- Surrey County Council attendance guidance and procedures.

Relationship with Safeguarding

At Meath school, we recognise that attendance, safeguarding and educational outcomes are closely linked.

Poor attendance may be an indicator of unmet special educational needs, medical needs, mental health difficulties, family difficulties, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns. Attendance data will therefore be considered as part of the school's wider safeguarding arrangements.

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Promote good attendance.
- Identify emerging attendance concerns.
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Work collaboratively with families and external agencies to improve attendance outcomes.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Principal will ensure attendance information informs safeguarding risk assessments and multi-agency working where appropriate.

Attendance Leadership and Governance

Senior Attendance Lead: Majella Delaney

The Principal will act as the Senior Attendance Lead.

The Senior Attendance Lead will:

- Promote a culture of high attendance across the school.
- Monitor attendance data, trends and patterns.
- Ensure early identification of pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.
- Coordinate attendance interventions and Attendance Support Plans.
- Liaise with parents/carers, Local Authority attendance teams and external agencies.
- Ensure attendance information informs safeguarding decision making.
- Report attendance outcomes and priorities to the Principal and Trustees.
- Ensure statutory attendance procedures are implemented consistently.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility and all staff are expected to contribute to improving attendance outcomes.

Role of Education committee

- Promote the importance of good attendance.

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- Receive and scrutinise attendance reports.
- Monitor attendance outcomes and trends.
- Hold leaders to account for attendance performance.
- Ensure compliance with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensure sufficient resources are available to support attendance improvement.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

As a specialist school for pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Meath School recognises that attendance difficulties may arise from:

- Medical conditions.
- Anxiety and emotional wellbeing needs.
- Communication barriers.
- Neurodevelopmental differences.
- Transport difficulties.
- Complex family circumstances.

The school will take a supportive and individualised approach to attendance and will work collaboratively with families and professionals to remove barriers wherever possible. Attendance interventions will be proportionate and will consider individual need, EHCP outcomes, safeguarding arrangements and medical advice.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

The school recognises that some pupils may experience attendance difficulties due to anxiety, emotional wellbeing needs or Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

Where attendance concerns are linked to EBSA, the school will:

- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and professionals.
- Explore underlying causes.
- Consider reasonable adjustments.
- Develop reintegration plans where appropriate.
- Consider therapeutic, pastoral and safeguarding support.
- Monitor progress through regular review meetings.

Part-Time Timetables and Phased Returns

The school recognises that, in exceptional circumstances, a temporary part-time timetable may be appropriate to support successful reintegration into education.

Part-time timetables:

- Will only be used when in the pupil's best interests.

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- Must have a clear educational rationale.
- Must be agreed with parents/carers.
- Must be formally recorded and monitored.
- Must include review dates.
- Must identify a clear pathway back to full-time education.

Part-time timetables will be reviewed at least fortnightly and will not be used as a long-term arrangement.

Monitoring and Review

The Principal is responsible for implementing this policy and reporting attendance trends to The Education committee

This policy will be reviewed biennially or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or Local Authority procedures change.

Attendance Monitoring

Attendance is monitored daily, weekly and termly.

Attendance information is reviewed regularly by senior leaders and reported to The Education committee at least termly.

Attendance analysis will include:

- Whole-school attendance.
- Persistent absence.
- Severe absence.
- Punctuality.
- Attendance by year group.
- Attendance by vulnerable groups.
- Emerging attendance trends.
- Impact of interventions.

Particular attention will be paid to:

- Children in Care.
- Previously Looked After Children.
- Pupils with Child Protection Plans.
- Pupils receiving Early Help.
- Pupils with medical needs.
- Pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

Stage 1: Emerging Concern

Attendance below 95%.

The school will:

- Review attendance patterns.

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- Discuss concerns with parents/carers.
- Explore barriers.
- Offer support and reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Stage 2: Persistent Absence

Attendance below 90%.

Persistent absence is defined nationally as attendance below 90%.

The school will:

- Implement an Attendance Support Plan where appropriate.
- Work jointly with parents/carers and relevant professionals.
- Consider referrals to attendance services and Local Authority support.

Attendance Support Plans will:

- Be developed collaboratively with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil.
- Identify barriers to attendance.
- Record agreed strategies and reasonable adjustments.
- Include measurable attendance targets.
- Identify responsible staff and agencies.
- Be reviewed every four to six weeks.

Stage 3: Severe Absence

Attendance below 50%.

Severe absence requires an intensive multi-agency response led by senior leaders and relevant agencies.

Encouraging Attendance

The school aims to create a positive attendance culture that supports all pupils to attend regularly and achieve their full potential.

Recognition systems may include:

- Certificates.
- Individual improvement awards.
- Class-based recognition.
- Positive communication with families.

Recognition arrangements should avoid disadvantaging pupils whose attendance is affected by significant health conditions or disabilities.

Registration Procedures

The attendance register is a statutory legal document.

Registers will be completed at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

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Morning registration opens at the beginning of the school day at 9.10am and closes 30 minutes after opening.

Afternoon registration takes place at the start of the afternoon session at 1.30pm.

Attendance will be recorded using attendance codes prescribed by the Department for Education.

Pupils arriving after registration has begun but before the register closes will be recorded using the appropriate late code.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be recorded using the appropriate unauthorised late code.

Registers will be retained in accordance with statutory record retention requirements.

Attendance information may be used during emergency evacuations to confirm the whereabouts of pupils and staff.

Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must notify the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, preferably before 9.00am.

If a pupil is absent and no explanation has been received:

- The school will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence.
- Appropriate safeguarding checks will be undertaken.
- The absence will remain unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

Where a longer absence is anticipated, parents/carers should maintain regular communication with the school.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence.

Authorised absence is where the school accepts the reason provided as valid in accordance with statutory guidance.

Examples include:

- Illness.
- Medical appointments.
- Hospital treatment.
- Approved educational activities.
- Exceptional circumstances authorised by the Principal.

Unauthorised absence will include:

- Holidays during term time.
- Family trips.

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- Absence without satisfactory explanation.
- Other avoidable absences not approved by the school.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Requests must:

- Be submitted in writing.
- Be made in advance.
- Include relevant evidence and dates.

Each request will be considered individually.

Travel arrangements should not be made until a decision has been communicated.

Penalty Notices

Where attendance concerns meet the threshold established by legislation and Local Authority procedures, the school may request the Local Authority to consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

Any Penalty Notice will be administered in accordance with:

- Current DfE regulations.
- The National Framework for Penalty Notices.
- Surrey County Council procedures.

The school will seek to work constructively with families before enforcement action is pursued.

Safeguarding and Absence

Attendance is a safeguarding issue.

Where a pupil is absent and their whereabouts cannot be established, appropriate safeguarding enquiries will be undertaken.

Immediate safeguarding action may be taken where:

- A child may be at risk of harm.
- A child is subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- A child is looked after.
- There are concerns regarding exploitation, neglect or abuse.
- Urgent intervention is required.

Children Not Attending Regularly (CNAR)

The school will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance is causing concern before they become Children Missing Education.

The school will:

- Engage with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

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- Identify barriers.
- Offer supportive interventions.
- Implement Attendance Support Plans.
- Seek advice from attendance services where appropriate.
- Consider safeguarding risks associated with poor attendance.

Transport and Attendance

Where attendance is affected by Local Authority transport arrangements, the school will:

- Record attendance accurately.
- Liaise with parents/carers and transport providers.
- Escalate recurring concerns to the Local Authority.
- Monitor patterns of transport-related absence.
- Work with families and agencies to minimise disruption.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The school will follow all statutory guidance relating to Children Missing Education.

Where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown, reasonable enquiries will be undertaken including contact with parents, emergency contacts, professionals and the Local Authority.

Accurate records will be maintained of all enquiries and actions taken.

Removal from Register

A pupil will only be removed from the admission register where one of the statutory grounds for deletion applies.

The school will fully comply with pupil registration regulations, Children Missing Education requirements and Local Authority notification procedures before removal from roll.

Educational Continuity During Extended Absence

Where pupils experience prolonged periods of absence due to medical, emotional or other exceptional circumstances, the school will seek to maintain educational engagement wherever possible.

This may include:

- Provision of learning materials.
- Remote access to learning where appropriate.
- Communication with families.
- Liaison with therapists and external professionals.
- Reintegration planning.

Data Protection

The school processes attendance information in accordance with:

MS 009 Attendance, Absence & Registration Policy

- UK GDPR.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Speech and Language UK information governance policies and procedures.

Attendance information will only be shared where lawful, proportionate and necessary for educational, safeguarding or statutory purposes.

The Data Protection Officer will oversee compliance with data protection requirements.

Staff Attendance

All staff must sign in and out using the school's visitor and staff management system.

Staff are expected to:

- Notify their line manager of sickness absence by 7.30am on the first day of absence.
- Maintain contact during prolonged absences.
- Provide certification in accordance with organisational procedures.
- Request approval for special leave in advance wherever possible.

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside working hours wherever possible.

Further guidance is available within relevant Speech and Language UK HR policies.

Policy Review

Responsible Officer: Principal

Review Cycle: Biennial

Next Review Date: September 2028 or sooner in response to legislative or regulatory changes. [\[009 Attend...olicy 2026 | Word\]](#)

Document Control Entry

Version	Date	Description
6	08/10/2026	Strengthened attendance governance, added Senior Attendance Lead responsibilities, introduced EBSA and part-time timetable guidance, enhanced monitoring and reporting, added CNAR and transport sections, strengthened registration procedures and educational continuity arrangements.