



# Attendance Policy

## Equalities Statement

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as socio-economic factors. For further information, please see our Equalities Policy.

<b>Date of Approval</b>	<b>March 2023</b>
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	<b>March 2024</b>
<b>Approved By</b>	

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## 1. Introduction

Meopham School encourages 100% attendance and punctuality for all students. The school expects all students to attend regularly and arrive at lessons on time, in order to take full advantage and access the full-time educational opportunities they are entitled to. The expectation is that parents/carers will ensure that their child or young person arrives at school on time everyday and supports the school's policies and procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.

In order to achieve excellent attendance, Meopham School provides a welcoming, safe and secure environment where students feel valued. In addition, the school works hard to create a stimulating and accessible curriculum with high quality teaching for every student, together with a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Attendance is inevitably bound up within the ethos of the school and the networks of relationships that exist within it.

## 2. Why regular attendance is important

**Learning and Achievement:** There is a clear link between high attendance and high achievement. Students with higher rates of attainments have higher attendance levels in comparison to students with lower levels of attendance. We expect all students and parents/carers to know their attendance/absence from school.

- Of students who had an overall attendance absence rate of 8.8%, students were not achieving grades 9-4 in English and Maths.
- Students with an absence rate of 5.2% achieved a grade 4.
- The overall absence rate of students not achieving 9 to 4 was twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% absence rate in comparison to 3.7% absence rate)
- For the most vulnerable students 90% of young offenders had been persistently absent, 83% if knife possession offenders had been persistently absent.

### **Safeguarding:**

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each student is everyone's responsibility and within the context of our school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for a child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- SEND

Failing to attend our school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter which can result in a welfare school, SEAAS or Police check being carried out. If persistent absence continues, this can result in a referral to the Southeastern Attendance Advisory Service or referral to external agencies (Social Services).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at Meopham School is Mrs Rebecca Clements, therefore if there are concerns about student wellbeing and safety, she can be contacted by email: [rebecca.clements@swale.at](mailto:rebecca.clements@swale.at)

### 3. Legal Framework

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

This policy has been created following the recent government guidance issued in May 2022. (Working together to improve school attendance, May 2022).

The law on school attendance entitles every student to attend a full time educational provision suitable for their age, ability and SEN need. Parents have a legal obligation to make sure their child receives that education by attending a school. Where parents decide to register their child at school, it is the additional responsibility of the parent to ensure their child attends that school every day, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from school.

### 4. School Responsibility

To encourage excellent attendance, the school hopes to work with families to identify the root causes and barriers to attendance, at home, in school and to work with families and external agencies to ultimately get the best outcome:

- Ensure all students and parents have high expectations and build a culture of prioritising attendance across the school.
- Ensures all staff understand their role in ensuring good attendance and punctuality, and in reducing absence including persistent absence.
- Provide regular attendance monitoring by Attendance Officers in conjunction with Pastoral and Safeguarding Teams, including acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Ensure students with good and rapidly improving attendance and/or punctuality are recognised and rewarded.
- Ensure students with poor attendance and/or punctuality are investigated through school referral procedures and challenged through school support with the last resort of involving the local authority sanctions.
- Ensure parents/carers are supported to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and are punctual in attending at the start of the school day and at the start of each lesson. Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand the barriers and work to remove them.
- Ensure students and their parents/carers are made aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and are informed of the consequences when it is not.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on how their child is performing at the school, what their attendance and punctuality rates are and how these relate to their attainment and progress.
- Facilitate and formalise support where absence persists. This may include referrals to Early Help, Mental Health support agencies, SEND support and GRT support.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying both individual and Year Group achievements (updated on a weekly basis/monthly basis where necessary.)
- Reward individual students' attendance.

- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates issued in assemblies on a termly basis.
- Inform parents/carers through a letter or direct contact once their child's attendance falls below 96%, the student may be placed on monitoring with an attendance plan.
- Refer to SouthEastern Attendance Advisory Service if there is a concern with a student's attendance or a student's attendance falls below 90%.

## **5. Parents/carers responsibility**

To encourage excellent attendance, parents/carers:

- Have a legal duty to send their children to school regularly and risk prosecution/fines if they fail in this duty. Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence.
- Cannot approve absences for their child.
- Should attempt to arrange appointments for their child or young person outside normal school hours whenever possible. Wherever possible the student will be expected to attend school before and/or after the appointment.
- Ensures their children attend school on time.
- Communicate with the Attendance team daily regarding every absence. The parent must phone the Attendance line everyday for every absence. It is encouraged to leave a message if there is no answer on the telephone line.

## **6. Attendance Team responsibility**

The Attendance Team consists of a Senior Leader who will oversee attendance, attendance officers plus the management of the Southeastern Attendance Advisory Service.

Attendance Lead: Kieran Woolmer (Assistant Headteacher) [kieran.woolmer@swale.at](mailto:kieran.woolmer@swale.at)

Attendance Officers: Gem Austin and Tracy Williams ([mss-attendanceofficer@swale.at](mailto:mss-attendanceofficer@swale.at))

SEAAS Officer: Sharon Harrison

To encourage excellent attendance, the Attendance Team:

- Carefully monitor the attendance and punctuality of all students.
- Identify any attendance problems and students that are at risk of persistent absence.
- Liaise closely with pastoral and safeguarding staff as well as the Headteacher to support attendance and punctuality initiatives.
- Ensure class teachers liaise proactively with the team to help identify and address attendance issues.
- Take relevant action where attendance is a cause for concern, e.g. telephone parents/carers to discuss the problem, make home visits, refer to SEAAS, organise meetings with parents/carers to decide on the appropriate intervention.
- In the case of students who refuse to attend school, home visits are carried out in an attempt to ascertain reasons for absence.
- Pursue enforcement action where no significant improvement has been made to attendance, as required by the 'Attendance Matters Pathway for School' (appendix 1). This is the process by the Local Authority and all schools to address irregular or non-school attendance.

- On discovering truancy, inform the student's parents/carers and Year Team the same day and ensure appropriate sanctions are applied.

## 7. Student responsibility

To encourage excellent attendance, students:

- Must ensure that they arrive promptly, attend all morning and afternoon sessions and timetabled lessons punctually.
- Discuss promptly with the Attendance Team any problems that may affect their attendance.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.
- Provide medical evidence for any appointments that results in an absence.

Note: Permission to leave the site will normally only be given for fixed term exclusion, or authorised medical/dental appointments.

## 8. Teaching staff responsibility

To encourage excellent attendance, teaching staff:

- Monitor class attendance and report any cause for concern to the Attendance Officer/SLT staff member.
- Have frequent discussions with students about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Support students who have been absent in making up missed work.
- Ensure registers are taken on time and accurately.

NB: Subject teacher will follow up suspicious absences by informing the Year Team and Attendance Team immediately.

## 9. Registers

Registers are completed using the Academy's Bromcom information system (a paper copy is always available should the Bromcom system not be available).

Registers are legal documents and must be taken clearly and accurately, using the correct symbols/codes. (see Appendix 1). All schools are required by law to keep an attendance register and no gaps in registration can be left. The attendance register must be taken every lesson from the start of the first session of each school day (morning) and during the second sessions (afternoon) of the school day to mark whether every student is

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendments made to the register will include both the original and amended entry, reason and date of amendment and staff member making the amendment.

Registers must be taken within the first 20 minutes of each registration session. Failure to do so will result in a formal reminder and potentially a disciplinary action. The Attendance Team will check that teaching staff are completing registers promptly and accurately. (see appendix 2)

If a student arrives after the register has closed, s/he should report to reception to be entered as late. Students arriving after the registration has closed without an acceptable reason, will be marked as late or having an unauthorised absence for that session.

## **10. Illness during the school day**

If a student becomes genuinely unwell during the day, the classroom teacher will inform the TAC team. Students should not contact parents/carers directly. This will be counted as an unauthorised absence.

The staff member in the medical room will then assess the illness and make decisions about whether parents/carers need to be informed and whether a student will be sent home, wait and/or return to class.

No student should leave the school premises for such arising medical reasons without staff permission (based on whether contact has been made with a parent/carer at home).

In the event of a student being genuinely unwell and unable to continue with the school day, contact will be made with the parent/carer. In the interest of safeguarding the students, arrangements will be made for the student to be collected by parent/carer or other nominated family member.

Appropriate First Aid will be administered where deemed necessary by a trained First Aider.

## **11. Absence procedure**

Meopham School will only authorise 5 days of illness per academic year provided contact has been made and deemed acceptable. All further absences will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided. Please note the following are acceptable as medical evidence; appointment card, letter, sick note, appointment text or prescribed medication. On the provision that SEAAS are involved, a home visit can be organised to authorise the absence if medical evidence cannot be obtained.

On the first day of a student's absence, parents/carers should contact the school to report the absence. This should be done by a telephone call/email to the attendance line and at the earliest opportunity (by 8:30am), giving a reason for the absence and a date when the child or young person is expected to return. Parents/carers should contact the School on each subsequent day of absence. Please note the attendance office does not open until 8am. There is a high volume of calls daily meaning you may not get through however a voicemail can be left in this instance with a detailed reason for absence (not just 'unwell' or 'ill').

If the absence involves physical injury, with implications upon the student's return to the School, a risk assessment will be carried out by the Health and Safety Lead for each specific case. All unauthorised absences will result in a text message/email being generated by our system to parents/carers.

Meopham School understands the difficulty of obtaining same-day GP appointments, however there are a number of walk-in clinics who provide confirmation of emergency appointments. Symptoms such as headaches, we advise your child taking suitable medication in the morning and

attend school. We are unwilling to authorise a whole day's absence due to a 'headache' or feeling 'generally unwell'.

All contact should be made by phoning the Attendance Office number on 01474 814646 or emailing [MSS-Attendanceofficer@Swale.at](mailto:MSS-Attendanceofficer@Swale.at)

## 12. Understanding types of absences

Every half-day absence from our School has to be classified by the Attendance Officer (not by parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

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

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell/headache/sore throat)
- Absence for illness when attendance is below 95% unless medical evidence is provided
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons (distance is taken into consideration)
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained via email/telephone/message
- Children who report their own absence
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (oversleeping/missed the bus)
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Period pains (unless medical evidence is provided)
- Weddings
- Moving house
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) - A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls to 90% or below for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child or young person's educational prospects and the fullest support and cooperation is needed from parents/carers to tackle this.

Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority; parents/carers will be informed of this immediately and remedial action will be taken. Action will likely mean working with The SouthEastern Attendance Advisory Service to hopefully put support in place before legal action is discussed. This may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing. This will be made following the SEAAAS procedure.



When a referral is made to the local authority, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings need to be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

### **Students with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities**

Students can face additional barriers to attendance if they suffer from long term medical conditions or SEND needs and disabilities. The school aims to work with families to improve attendance and remove the barriers these students face and put additional support in place where necessary to allow them to access full time education. This can include:

- Organising meetings and developing good relationships with the family
- Making reasonable adjustments for the individual student
- Make necessary referral to the relevant agency to support the family and student
- Liaising with the school's SEND team and the local authority SEND team

## **13. Punctuality procedure**

Students arriving after registration time will receive a late mark (L) in the register. If a student is going to be late, parents/carers have a responsibility to inform the school of their child's lateness by telephone.

Registers close at 9:30am. Students arriving after this time must report to the attendance office/reception to sign in. After this time, the attendance mark will be coded as U, which is an unauthorised absence and will affect your attendance percentage.

A text message will be sent to parents/carers at 10:15am indicating absence if no contact has been made by parent/carer to explain this.

Students will be challenged for poor/persistent punctuality as follows:

- Late to school will result in a detention issued by the Year Team.
- Late marks to lessons will result in the following letter being sent home to parent/guardian (3 or more)
  - Placed on an attendance report for punctuality
  - Referred by the Attendance Team or Year Team to SEAAS.
  - Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice by SEAAS.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

*Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct, when:*

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Ultimately, the parent/carer of a student/young person who frequently arrives late at school can be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court under the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure their child attends regularly.

## **14. Supporting and encouraging good attendance**

Whilst any child or young person may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the School, the parents/carers and the child or young person. If a child or young person is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Condoning absence, particularly at an early age, can lead to habitual patterns of non-attendance and can give students the impression that attendance does not matter.

Parents/carers can support students by:

- Ensure regular routines and early bedtimes.
- Helping with homework.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Providing a healthy breakfast.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly to the school.
- Retaining an open and honest communication with the child or young person's school.
- Being positive about school (even if a parent/carer's own experience was less than positive.)

Strategies to promote good attendance in school:

- Meopham School will provide an environment in which students feel safe, valued and welcome. Our ethos must demonstrate that students feel their presence is important and that it is vital for their achievement and progress. Students need to know they will be missed and any absence will be followed up by their relevant Year Team or the Attendance Team.
- Students who feel vulnerable and experience difficulties attending class or have friendship problems will be supported and given strategies to help them cope. The Pastoral Managers will be a key member of staff involved liaising with their teachers.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Special provision will be made for identified students and a mentoring scheme exists to promote confidence and well-being.
- A clearly defined and consistent approach to positive behaviour management exists to provide a fair system and support for all students, especially those who have difficulties; focusing on rewarding the positive.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to students' needs and support is available whenever possible.
- Attendance data will be produced and monitored regularly and analysed in order to identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support.
- High attendance will be recognised and awarded regularly.
- Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be monitored closely and discussed in weekly meetings.

- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, letters home, text messages, SEAAS, MCAS messages etc.) of the importance of regular attendance.
- Daily phone calls will be made for unexplained absences.
- Home visit may be organised for students that have consecutive unexplained absences.
- Students who have been absent for an extended period of time, or who are experiencing serious attendance problems, will have individually tailored programmes to support them.
- School staff will liaise with other services/agencies that may assist students who are experiencing difficulties.
- Pastoral Managers, SENCo, the Attendance Officer, SEAAS attendance officer and Assistant Headteacher will have regular meetings where attendance issues are discussed.
- Referrals to the Wellbeing Team will be made for students who have concerns over their mental health and wellbeing.
- Referral will be made to the SEND team to investigate undiagnosed needs.
- The Assistant Headteacher will report to the Governing body at least every second term on attendance matters.

## **15. Leave of absences (holidays)**

Meopham School's Headteacher is no longer able to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time. The headteacher may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any student absent during term time, unless granted by the headteacher because of exceptional circumstances, will be recorded as 'unauthorised' absence.

Parents/carers must apply through the Leave of Absence form on the website to take a student out of school for a holiday. The Attendance Team will notify the parent in writing of this decision to refuse/grant permission and will code accordingly. Parents who disregard this and still take their child on holiday will receive a letter informing them of a request for a penalty notice and to ask them to ensure their child has good attendance for the rest of the year (minimum 96%). (see appendix 3)

A fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the local authority where 'a student has been taken on a holiday during term time, the absence has not been authorised by the school, and the child's attendance is below the Local Authority average for the previous school year or 3 terms.'

The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receiving a notice and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days.

## **16. Analysing and reporting attendance data**

The Attendance Team reviews attendance on a daily basis and monitors this continually, producing reports on a weekly, termly and yearly basis. These reports compare attendance data with the national average, previous years and are shared with the schools Strategy Team and the Local Governing Body.

All teachers should look for any patterns in absence and investigate or report their concerns to the Attendance Team and/or Pastoral Teams as appropriate. If a student's attendance level drops below 96% the cause will be investigated by the school's Attendance Team who will liaise with SEAAS and parents/carers.

## **17. Monitoring attendance and punctuality at off site provision**

Where students attend external provision, weekly registration certificates are received from the external providers. These are monitored and any concerns reported to the Attendance Team/SLT.

## **18. SouthEastern Advisory Attendance Services**

SEAAS are an outside company employed by The Swale Academies Trust to monitor students concerning attendance levels. The attendance officer will have access to the schools information system, Bromcom. The attendance officer from SEAAS will work with Year Teams weekly highlighting students who fall below the expected 96% level attendance. A pre-referral letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them that SEAAS will now be monitoring the attendance of their child. (see appendix 4 for the process)

## **19. Prosecution procedure**

Reducing unauthorised absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a student's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and learning of others.

Truancing can also leave a student vulnerable to antisocial behaviour and youth crime. Truancing lessons during a school day is non negotiable at this school and will result in students losing their free time.

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child or young person fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (absences without a valid reason). Parents/carers are legally responsible for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually. This applies even if children are missing school without the knowledge of their parent/carer.

## **20. Penalty Notices**

In line with the Local Authority, parents/carers can be prosecuted, fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child or young person attends school regularly and punctually. Alternatively, the Local Authority may supervise a family for at least a year or until attendance improves to a satisfactory level, under the terms of an Education Supervision Order. *Penalty Notices for poor attendance are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.*

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

## **21. Leaving Meopham School**

We are always sad to say goodbye to our students. If a student is leaving Meopham School because they are relocating or they are changing schools, please inform us. We need the student's new address and the details of the new school, including school name, address and start date. This safeguarding procedure means that we know that the student is still in education, safe and well. If a parent/carer decides to Home-school their child, it is essential that you inform school in writing. This can be via an email to [mss-attendanceofficer@swale.at](mailto:mss-attendanceofficer@swale.at)

## **22. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) with the most recent publication being issued in May 2022, the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures and refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census which explains the persistent Absence threshold. These are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

The Education Act 1996

The Children Act 1989

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Education Act 2002

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Anti-social behaviour Act 2003

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The Education (Parenting contract and parenting orders)(England) Regulations 2007

The Sentencing Act (2020)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (2007)

## 23. Attendance in the Sixth Form

### 1. Introduction

Meopham School takes attendance in the Sixth Form very seriously and we acknowledge that good school attendance plays an essential part in academic development for post 16 students. All A level courses are intensive, and students cannot afford to miss valuable teaching and study time. Sixth Form students should strive to achieve consistently good attendance as poor attendance will affect academic attainment. Students should, therefore, aim for at least 96% attendance for the year. An exemplary record of attendance says a huge amount about the student as a person: that they are dedicated, well-motivated, organised and someone who takes their responsibilities seriously.

As well as timetabled lessons students also have non-contact periods on their timetables for private study and independent work. If students are granted the privilege of studying at home in their non-contact periods, we would expect them to be committed to spending their time effectively, but this privilege may be withdrawn if a student is not meeting his/her work commitments. In such cases students will be scheduled to work within school.

All students must be registered on BromCom for all lessons. A 55 minute lesson counts as a single attendance, and this is carefully monitored. Attendance will also be checked on a daily basis. Holidays should not be taken during term time, and if this causes problems for students they must discuss this with a member of the Sixth Form Leadership team. Doctor or dental appointments and driving lessons/tests should be made outside school times, except in an emergency. If a pattern of absence develops this may lead to disciplinary proceedings. Parents will be contacted if punctuality and/or attendance issues arise and there is the potential for an 8.40am to 3.10pm timetable to be put in place. Staff will also insist on punctuality to all lessons and any persistent lateness will be reported and sanctions put in place.

All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually. The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

### 2. Sixth Form Attendance

Meopham School Sixth Form aims to:

- Improve the overall percentage of students at school
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including students, parents, teachers and Governors
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data

- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- Recognize the needs and support of the individual student in the event of significant periods of absence

### 3. Partnership

#### What the School Expects of Students

- Attend regularly, on time and ready to learn
- When in school, attend all lessons and arrive to all lessons on time
- To sign in at reception if they arrive late.
- To tell a member of Sixth Form Team if there is any problem, which may prevent them from attending school
- Make every effort to make dental/medical appointments outside of school hours
- Provide a written request if they need to arrive late or leave early for an appointment or will be absent from school for a full/half day. This should be written and signed by a parent/carers and given to the Sixth Form office, as soon as possible.

#### What the School Expects of Parents/Carers

- To fulfill their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and prepared for the day
- To contact school by telephone on the first day their child is absent for any reason by 8.30am and then on all subsequent days by 8.30am.
- To not take holidays in term time
- To speak to a member of Sixth Form Team if they know of any problem, which may prevent their child from attending school
- To provide evidence to support absence such as an appointment card/letter, or to provide a note, signed by the parent/carers, school explaining the reason for absence
- To complete an absence request form to request exceptional leave of absence.

#### What Parents/Carers and Students can expect from school

- A Sixth Form education that is dependent upon regular attendance at school
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and rewards
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of absence
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified
- Regular communication with students and parents/carers Absences

#### Acceptable reasons for being absent from school, set by the Department for Education:

- The student is too ill to leave the house
- The student has a hospital appointment
- The student has toothache and has an emergency appointment
- A day of religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carers belongs
- The student is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- There is a close family bereavement

- Interviews for courses/employment that will begin after the end of their time in Sixth Form. Students should not miss lessons to attend interviews, shifts and inductions for part-time work
- University and Employer Open Days – students may attend no more than two of these events in an academic year
- Work experience – requests for term-time leave for essential work experience (e.g. medicine, law) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. These requests should be submitted at least a month in advance.

Unacceptable reasons for keeping a child away from school are:

- To mind the house
- To look after siblings
- To go shopping
- To celebrate a birthday
- To pick up or drop off at the airport
- Sleeping in
- One child is ill, so all are kept off school
- Minor ailments such as a tummy ache or headache
- Because it is the end of the week or term
- Driving lessons or tests
- Adverse weather conditions

If a student is absent from school longer than a period of 5 days due to illness, parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence to support the student's absence. Parents/carers will also be asked to provide medical evidence if a student is absent frequently. Leave of absence will not be given to enable a pupil to undertake employment during school hours.

#### 4. Signing In and Out

It is a legal requirement that we know who is on the school site at all times. Students must make sure that they register electronically at reception every day and sign in each time they are late to school. They must also sign out each time they leave the building throughout the day.

#### 5. In-School Procedures

We are keen to identify attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity to give parents/carers, students and the school the ability to intervene early and prevent further decline.

#### 6. Late to Lesson Procedure

Being punctual to lessons is vitally important in order to ensure good routines are adhered to and timekeeping skills are developed. If a student acquires three lates to their lessons over the course of a week they will be issued with a one hour detention after school at a time agreed upon by the sixth



form team. Failure to attend this detention will result in a second opportunity to complete this. A secondary failure will result in further disciplinary action being taken.

## 7. Unexplained Absence Process

If a student is absent from school or from a lesson and we have received no communication from either the student or a parent/carer we will contact the student to provide a reason for the students' absence to enable attendance records to be updated; if no reply is received, then we will contact a parent/carer to provide a reason. If there is still no reason provided then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

## 8. Attendance Rewards

As a Sixth Form we are also very intent on rewarding good attendance to lessons. Students who are regularly attending school achieving an attendance above 95% will be entered into a draw for a variety of prizes on both a weekly and termly basis.

## 9. Cause for Concern Process

### STAGE 1 – Sixth Form/Attendance Team Intervention

Cause for concern interviews will be held with the student by the attendance administrator when attendance or attendance to lessons is between 90% and 95%. This early intervention is intended to identify concerns and to provide support/intervention if needed. Attendance will be monitored closely for 6 weeks and parents/carers will be informed of this. During this period students will not be permitted to self-certify their absences.

### STAGE 2 – Sixth Form Attendance Lead Intervention

#### Attendance or Attendance to Lessons Below 90%

- Should attendance or attendance to lessons decline to 90% or below, students will be invited to attend a meeting with a member of the Sixth Form/Attendance Team.
- This meeting is an opportunity to discuss in detail the issues/barriers that are impacting your child's attendance to school.
- A letter will be sent to parents/carers informing you that this meeting has taken place.
- Attendance will be monitored closely for 6 weeks.

### STAGE 3 – Sixth Form Attendance Lead Parental Intervention

#### Continued Poor Attendance or Poor Lesson Attendance

- Parents/carers of the student will be invited into school for a meeting with the Sixth Form Attendance Lead where we will address the main issues and agree targets and support actions to help improve your child's attendance.
- An Attendance Agreement will be issued with targets and action points put into place that are agreed by the Sixth Form Attendance Lead, the student and parent/carer. We will monitor and review your child's attendance over the following weeks to identify any significant improvement in

their attendance. If this has been achieved, then no further intervention/action will be taken at this stage. Should attendance not improve, or decline further we will implement the next step, as agreed at the previous Attendance meeting.

#### STAGE 4 – Head of Sixth Form Intervention

Failure to Meet the Targets set by the Attendance Agreement

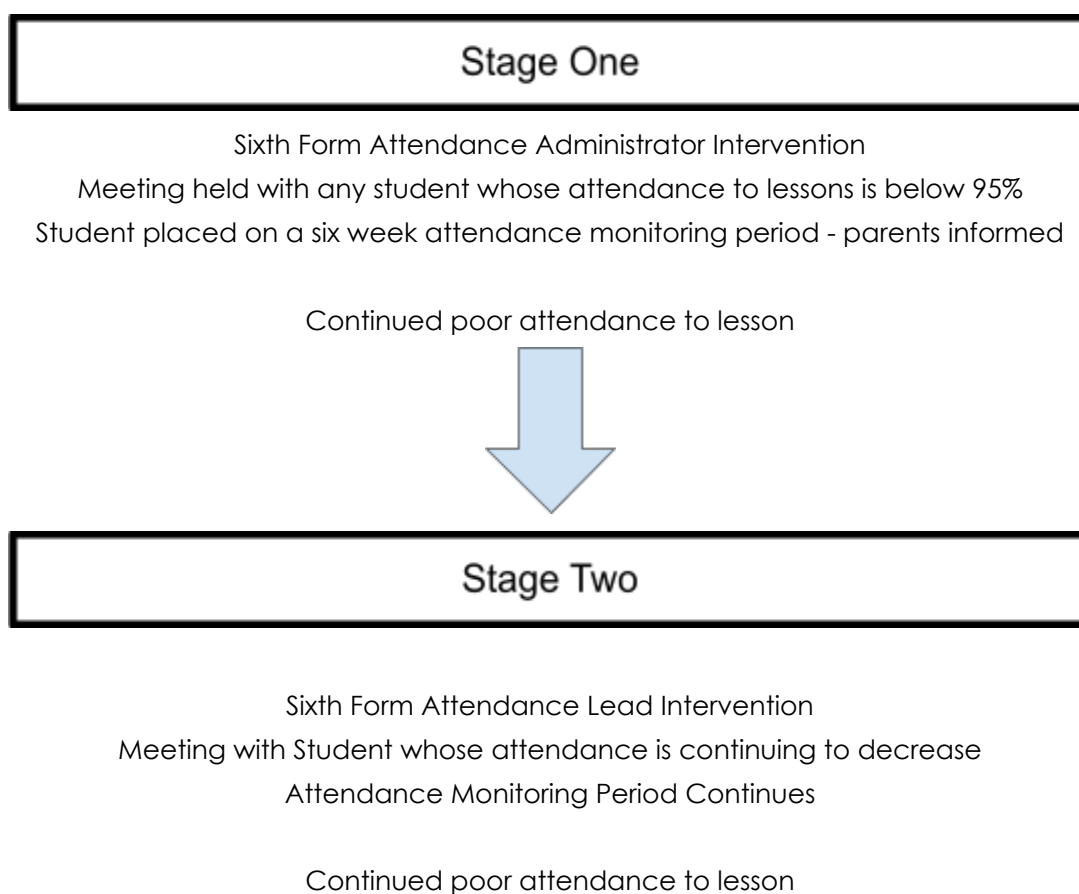
- Parents/carers of the student will be invited to a meeting.
- The offending student will be asked to meet with the Head of Sixth Form with parents/carers.
- A written warning will be issued if appropriate and the attendance agreement will be re-issued.

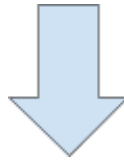
#### STAGE 5 – Further Head of Sixth Form Intervention

Continued Failure to Meet Targets of Attendance Agreement

- Possible request to leave Sixth Form if student is persistently absent from school or lessons and refuses to engage in intervention procedures.
- Appropriate disciplinary proceedings will be decided by the Principal.
- CEIAG interview will be offered to the student.
- The parents/carers of the student will be involved in the process.

#### Appendix 1 - Attendance Flow Chart





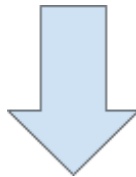
### Stage Three

Sixth Form Attendance Lead Intervention

Meeting with Student and Parent whose attendance is continuing to decrease

Attendance Agreement is put in place and monitored for a further six weeks

Failure to meet requirements of Attendance Agreement

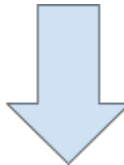


### Stage Four

Head of Sixth Form Intervention

Parental meeting, attendance agreement and written warning

Continued failure to meet requirements of Attendance Agreement



### Stage Five

Further Head of Sixth Form Intervention

Possible request to leave Sixth Form

Alternative pathway interview

## Appendices

The following codes are used for recording absence and attendance in schools; these codes are set out in the Department for Education's guidance on school attendance.

### Appendix One: Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Students are present at morning registration.
\	Present (pm)	Students are present at afternoon registration.
L	Late Arrival	Students arrive late before the register has closed.
B	Off-site educational activity	Students are at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.
D	Dual registered	Students are attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
J	Interview	Students have an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment.

P	Sporting Activity	Students are participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Education trip or visit	Students are on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work Experience	Student is on a work experience placement.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised Leave of Absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
E	Excluded	Students have been excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
H	Authorised Holiday	Students have been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances.
I	Illness  IO1 - General Illness IO2 - Covid related illness	IO1- School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness.  IO2- Tested positive for covid.
M	Medical/Dental Appointment	Students are at a medical or dental appointment.
R	Religious Observance	Students are taking part in a day of religious observance.
S	Study Leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their GCSEs
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Absence	Students from a Traveller community are travelling, as agreed with the school. If the attendance is a concern, the school will request for evidence to be submitted.
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school.
N	Reason not provided	Students is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when reason emerges)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with the reason for the student's absence.

U	Arrival after registration.	Students arrived at school after the register closed.
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### Administrative Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school.	Students of non-compulsory school age are not required to attend. Students affected by Coronavirus.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel or the student is in custody.
Z	Student not an admission register.	Register set up but the student has not yet joined the school.
#	Planned School Closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day.

### Appendix Two: Register Procedure

Meopham School takes the safety of its students to the highest degree. Below outlines the Register Procedure that all staff **must adhere to**. Any error(s) on the registers throughout the day will receive a warning. This can be for a variety of reasons including taking a register late, marking a student absent when in lesson or vice versa.

It is with utmost importance that all staff are taking accurate registers in order for the Attendance Team to identify as soon as possible when a student is missing. If three errors

are made, a meeting with the Headteacher takes place where it can be decided if disciplinary action is needed depending on the circumstance.

In the event Bromcom is not working, you must send a paper register to the Attendance office. Please ensure all of the information is completed i.e. class code, staff code, date.

**Please speak to Mr K Woolmer if you need to discuss this procedure in length.**

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Number of errors</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Codes</b>
1	1	Email from attendance officer and copy in Subject Leader/QA and KIW. Attendance to informally meet.	Taking a register late
2	2	Email from KIW and meeting with DHT	Not taking a register for your class
3	3	Meeting with Headteacher	Marking a student present, when absent
			Marking a student absent, when present
			Not updating a register with a late mark when a student arrives late to your lesson.
			Students in Year group offices/activities/LINK/mentoring, and not informing attendance.
			Entering a wrong code

### Appendix Three: Leave of absence form

We strongly advise that you do not take your child out of school during term time for a holiday. This could be very detrimental to their learning. Government regulations\* state that Headteachers may

not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can leave from school if the leave is granted. Parents should apply for the leave, using this Leave of Absence Form, at least 3 weeks prior to the absence. The Head of school will make a decision based on the conditions described above. Leave cannot be granted retrospectively and Penalty Notices will be requested for each parent/guardian for unauthorised absences. A parent who is not happy with the Head of School's decision has the right of appeal to the Trust Principal. The decision of the Trust Principal is final. \*Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 In order for your absence request to be considered, the below document is required to be completed in full.

<b>Date completed:</b>	
------------------------	--

<b>Student name:</b>	
<b>Year Group:</b>	

<b>Dates of Absence</b>	
<b>Date from:</b>	
<b>Date to:</b>	
<b>Number of school days:</b>	

**Please attach any relevant documents to support the absence request.**

<b>Reason for absence</b>

<b>Parent/Guardian Name (print name):</b>	
<b>Signature of parent/guardian:</b>	

<b>Contact Details</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Email Address:</b>	
<b>Mobile Number:</b>	
<b>Home Number:</b>	

**Attendance Office Use**



<b>Current Attendance Percentage</b>	<b>%</b>
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**Please Tick**

<b>Authorised:</b>	
<b>Unauthorised:</b>	

<b>Signed Attendance Team:</b>	
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