



INTRODUCTION

At Meadowcroft Infant School we are committed, in partnership with the parents, students, governors, and the Local Authority, to building a School which serves the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.

The School staff, alongside the LA, firmly believes that regular school attendance is key to achieving good attainment. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

EXPECTATIONS

We expect that all students will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons whom have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, fully prepared for the day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details;
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all students, at registration and at the start of each lesson.
- monitor every student's attendance and punctuality;
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a student fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes giving reasons for the absence. (Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from the family doctor or other relevant body may be requested);
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, provide a safe learning environment and provide a sympathetic response to any student's concerns;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of students who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the Local Authority's expectations with regard to regular attendance;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Inclusion may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order;

- meet the requirements of the UN Convention - The Rights Of The Child, by ensuring that, where possible, children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

STUDENTS LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Students are not permitted to leave the premises without prior permission from the school. Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time;

Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected time of return.

Parents must sign their children out on leaving the school and sign them back in upon their return.

REGISTRATION AND PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness to school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at school on time.

Registration takes place at 8:50am and students who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late to School.

Morning registration will close at 9.20am. If a student arrives after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

Lateness by a student will be dealt with through the School behavioural system and may be referred to Education Welfare.

Afternoon registration will be taken at 1.10pm.

The School day ends at 3.10pm each day.

ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE

Meadowcroft Infant School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the School or other students;
- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning registration and in each lesson.
- by providing regular attendance statistics;
- by celebrating good and improved attendance;
- by monitoring students, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

RESPONDING TO NON ATTENDANCE

When a child does not attend School and a reason has not been previously provided, steps will be taken to ascertain why the child is absent.

On the first day of absence, if no email, note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.20am the school will endeavour to contact them that day by telephone or email messages.

If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer.

Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

HOLIDAYS

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. If a family holiday in term time is unavoidable, parents/carers should apply to the School using the 'Application for Leave of Absence' form; however the Head teacher is unable to authorise any absences due to holiday taken during term time. Some exceptional circumstances may be considered when appropriate.

No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.

Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.

PENALTY NOTICES

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996. The Penalty notice is applied per child and per parent.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.
- Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
- Pupils identified by the police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- Late arrival after close of registration on 5 occasions during a half term where the pupil's attendance falls below 85%. The lateness will be recorded in accordance with the 'Registration and Punctuality' section of this policy.
- With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued. If a warning is issued then a pupil will be given 15 school days to show improvement before the Penalty Notice is issued.

Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without a justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice.

The amount payable is £50 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £100 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

CHANGING SCHOOLS

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Meadowcroft Infant School staff as soon as possible. A student will not be removed from the School roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the student will be leaving Meadowcroft Infant School and starting the new school;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known and is applicable.

The student's School records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible.