



The Meadows Montessori School

Attendance Policy

Applies to:

The whole school including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), out of school care, the after-school clubs and all other activities provided by the school, inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours.

All staff (teaching and support staff), any pupils, the Proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

Availability

This policy is made available to parents, staff, and pupils by request from the Head of School or school office.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Head of School.

The Proprietor (who is also the Head of School) undertakes an annual review of this policy and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated.

Approved Date – June 2024	David Green
Review Date – June 2025 (Updated with Dfe Guidance -Sept 2024)	Head Teacher – High School

Introduction

The Meadows Montessori School promotes the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all our children. We expect all children on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

The Head of School is responsible for making sure the school keeps compliant Admission and Attendance registers in accordance with the regulatory requirements.

For all pupils of compulsory school age and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) an attendance record is also kept. Our attendance registers record which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Raise levels of achievement.
- Maximise opportunities for children in our school.
- Establish a positive working ethos early in life.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents> [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made> It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

The Meadows Montessori School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of School – Assisted by Head Teacher

- For the overall management and implementation of the policy and revise and update as required
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave.
- To monitor day to day attendance.
- To liaise with external agencies such as Children Missing Education.
- To work with and support teachers to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.

School Business Manager / Administrator

- To carry out and record the outcome of the first day calls, when a child does not arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance for each class.
- To promptly inform the Head of School or Head Teacher if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To maintain Children Missing Education attendance records.
- To oversee admission and induction of new pupils.
- Liaise with Education Welfare Officer – Lois Songer lois.songer@suffolk.gov.uk

Teaching Staff

- To take a formal register of all pupils twice a day.
- To remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.

Parents / Carers

- To secure education for their children whether at school or otherwise, and to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.
- To ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- To attempt to arrange medical and dental appointments out of school time.
- To telephone to inform the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence for their child and each subsequent day of absence and advise when the child is expected to return.
- Work in partnership with the school about changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

Pupils

- Primary School - To attend school every day.
- High School - To attend every timetabled lesson on time.

Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am each day. We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils on this register. See Appendix 1 for attendance codes.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each day and once during the second session. The register for the first session will be taken between 8.00am and 9.00am and will be kept open for 15 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm in the Primary school and 1:30pm in the High school.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved education activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Lateness

School starts at 9.00am, however children may enter the classroom from 8am. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school between 9.00am – 9.15am. Arrival after 9.15am with no explanation is classed as an unauthorised absence.

The lateness of our pupils is regularly monitored. Where children have persistent lateness problems the Head of School, Head Teacher or class teacher will invite the parents into school for a meeting to discuss this issue.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office or emailing the school office or class teacher before 9.00am.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done by telephoning the school or emailing the school office or class teacher.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section Approval for Term-Time absence.

Following up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupils' emergency contacts, the school may email the parents initially or contact the police when necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.

Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from our school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Examples of where we will not authorise absence are:

- If no explanation is received from parents
- For looking after siblings, shopping trips or birthdays
- For family holidays

Approval for Term-Time Absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#).

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Illness
- Emergency dental / medical appointment
- Religious Observance where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents / carers belong
- Family Bereavement
- Attending an interview for a school, or attending an examination such as ballet, music etc.
- Participation in an approved public performance

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. A copy of this can be obtained from the school office. The Head of School or Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

At The Meadows we are committed to promoting good attendance for all our pupils. We do not offer assemblies or any other reward system for promoting attendance as these are not in line with our school ethos. We aim to make our school an interesting, engaging, and welcoming place that pupils want to attend.

We take a child-centered approach to learning that gives pupils a degree of freedom of choice over how and what they learn. We work with pupils and parents/carers to ensure that our school is a place pupils want to attend and enjoy learning.

Legal Sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority or the police.

Attendance Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the Head of School to monitor overall attendance and seek to ensure that the attendance figures are as they should be. Pupil absence data will be collected each term and discussed at Parents evening, or earlier if a problem is noticed. The school will monitor attendance data to the national average.

- The school keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of five years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way.
- Any ongoing absences, 'Lates' or unauthorised absences for holidays are discussed at the weekly staff meeting and monitored, then followed up as quickly as possible.
- If there is concern about a child's absence, staff should contact the school office, and this will be followed up by the Head of School, Head Teacher, or Class Teacher.

Where a pupil has persistent absence (misses 10% or more of school) or severe absence (misses 50% or more of school), we will hold regular meetings with the parents of the pupil to discuss attendance and engagement at school and find ways to remove barriers to attendance to support the pupil.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- We will hold regular meetings with the parents of the pupil to discuss attendance and engagement at school and find ways to try and support the pupil.
- Provide access to wider support services to support the family and try to remove the barriers to attendance for the pupil
- Involve the Educational Welfare Officer where necessary for support and guidance.

Appendix 1

- Absence Codes – see table below

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late but before registration closes at 9.15am
Attending a place other than the school		
U	Arrival in school after the register is closed	The pupil arrives in school late after the register has closed at 9.15am
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Educational Visit or Trip	Pupil is on an educational visit / trip organised or approved by the school
p	Sporting Activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Work Experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual Registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absence – Leave of Absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical / Dental	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer / educational establishment
S	Study Leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public exam
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-Time Timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional Circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent - Other Authorised Reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious Observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness - Not medical or dental appointment	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness – either related to physical or mental health
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded but no alternative provision has been made
Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil is absent as the school is closed unexpectedly – e.g. due to adverse weather
Y5	Criminal Justice Detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: 1) In police detention 2) Remanded to youth detention awaiting trial or sentencing 3) Detained under a sentence of detention

Y6	Public Health Guidance or Law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – Unauthorised Absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school is not satisfied
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of the session
Administrative Codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays