



Attendance Policy

This policy was updated in November 2024
The policy must be reviewed and updated at least every 12 months.

Introduction

Research has established a clear link between attendance and the attainment of students. Meadowbrook College is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of college attendance is essential.

To achieve this we will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. To maximise the attendance of each pupil we aim to prevent students from being deprived of their educational opportunities by;

- Conveying to students and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Having a consistent approach to managing absence across all sites.
- Identifying and addressing patterns of absence as quickly as possible.
- Establishing good home school links and communication systems both to ensure the safety of pupils and support parents with their statutory responsibility.
- Recognising those students whose attendance is outstanding.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this college attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. (*DfE Working Together to Improve school Attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities*)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Each year the college will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets for specific groups and individuals. These will take into account national targets for Alternative Provision.

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

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

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- [Working-together-to-improve-school-attendance - GOV.UK](#)
- [Equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools - GOV.UK](#)
- [Keeping-children-safe-in-education - GOV.UK](#)

Other Meadowbrook documents supporting this policy:

- SEN and Inclusion Policy
- Medical Needs Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Whole School Expectations

Meadowbrook College expects all our students:

- to aim for 100% attendance.
- to attend school every day/session of their agreed timetable.
- to arrive on time and prepared for the day.
- to inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

Meadowbrook College expects parents and carers:

- to aim to support their child to achieve 100% attendance.
- to ensure that their child attends school every day/session unless they are too ill to attend or there is an acceptable reason for absence.
- to contact the school on the first day of absence whenever their child is unable to attend school and give a valid explanation.
- to respond to any communication regarding attendance or progress.
- to ensure that their child arrives at school on time and prepared for the day.
- to refrain from taking their child out of school for holidays or occasional days unless there are significant exceptional circumstances, authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Meadowbrook College expects the home school (for dual registered students):

- to provide all information pertaining to previous attendance trends and interventions at point of referral.
- to provide regular feedback and contact regarding attendance and absence.
- to inform Meadowbrook College staff of any problem or reason that may hinder their student from attending school.
- to support Meadowbrook College with interventions designed to improve attendance.

Parents/carers, students and home schools should expect the following from Meadowbrook College:

- to provide an appropriate educational experience for each student.
- to provide regular feedback and contact regarding attendance and absence.
- to respond to concerns raised by both students and parents/carers in a prompt, fair and proper manner.
- to follow school procedures regarding attendance and refer specific issues to supporting agencies and home school where appropriate
- to contact the dual registered home school on the daily via email or phone to inform them of any absences.

Roles and responsibilities

The Trustee Board

The Radcliffe Academy Trust is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the College on, at least, a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school level absence data and reporting it to the College Trustees. The Headteacher also supports staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

Base Leads / Team Leaders / Safeguarding and Welfare Officer

- Monitor attendance data at an individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to their SLT link and to the Headteacher where relevant
- Work with Social Care, home schools and/or other agencies to tackle persistent absence.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Liaises with the Headteacher regarding the issue of fixed-penalty notices if required.
- Make referrals to other agencies if required.

Attendance Procedures

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register. Attendance registers must be kept for at least 3 years. The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

The attendance register will be taken twice a day, once at the start of the students' planned morning sessions and again at the start of the students' planned afternoon sessions.

The register will indicate if:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Dual registered and attending their home school

Students must arrive in school by the time set by individual bases/programmes on each school day.

In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered. (*see Appendix 1 - Attendance codes*)

Categorisation of Absence

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

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

1. Unauthorised Absence

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

2. Authorised Absence

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

3. Approved Educational Activity

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

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

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

4. Dual Registered

This is for students who are dual roll main registered at their home school and are due to attend their home school or education otherwise provided by them.

Lateness and punctuality

Students must arrive in school by the time set by individual bases on each school day.

You will be advised of the start time of the first session on enrolment and the register will be taken at the beginning of this session and will be kept open for 30 minutes. This procedure will be followed again at the beginning of the afternoon session.

Students arriving after the start of college/lessons but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers closed.

If students arrival at college is persistently late, Base Leads/Team Leaders will inform parents and attendance targets may be set.

Unplanned absence

Parents/Carers must inform the college if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the College has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the College may ask parents to provide 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.

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

In the case of dual registered students, the college will contact the home school via email or phone call to inform them of any absence and any explanation ascertained.

Medical or dental appointments

When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside college hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment will be recorded as an authorised absence if notified in advance.

In the case of dual registered students, home schools will be informed.

Following up on absence

Only the college can authorise absence, on the basis of the information provided by parents/carers. Where explanations are not received or are not felt to be acceptable, the absence will remain unauthorised and that parent/carers contacted.

If students are absent without their parents/carers knowledge this is a cause for concern as they may be putting themselves at risk in a number of ways.

Where there is no contact from parents/carers and the students are absent without an explanation, the college will follow up to ascertain the reason and ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. In the first instance college staff will make contact with parents/carers via phone, text or email. Where appropriate, the college will also follow this up by contacting any allocated social worker.

If a student is missing from college for some consecutive days and parents/carers cannot be contacted then the school will write and may make a home visit. In cases where a student is dual registered, the college will also make contact with their home school to ensure a coordinated response.

Any student who is absent without explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to the Oxfordshire County Council Attendance Team if we have been unable to make contact with parents and to instigate a re-integration plan. All agencies working around the child/family will be engaged prior to consideration of any legal action.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of Base Leads and/or Team Leaders/Safeguarding and Welfare Officers to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

A student is identified as a **persistent absentee** if they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions. A student is identified as a **severe absentee** if their absence falls below 50%. Persistent and severe absence is taken seriously as it will have an impact on learning and educational prospects.

All students categorised as persistently / severely absent will be monitored closely (initially for 4 weeks), students individual attendance targets will be revisited and revised in agreement with the student to reflect a realistic and achievable target and parent/carers will be informed.

In the case of dual registered students, the home school will also be informed to ensure a coordinated response and a decision will be made on who is leading in regards to supporting approved attendance.

Where persistent / severe absenteeism continues, an attendance letter informing parents/carers of their child's attendance percentage and outlining the expected figure will be sent. This letter should clearly state the next procedure if attendance doesn't improve. *(see Appendix 2 - Attendance Letter 1 template)*

If the persistent / severe absenteeism continues following the first attendance letter, parents/carers and the student will be invited into school to discuss the absenteeism and plan a way forward. This supportive meeting may also include a representative from the students home school if they are dual registered and other agencies currently involved with the family or student. *(see Appendix 3 - Attendance Letter 2 template and Appendix 3 - Attendance Meeting Record and Action Plan)*

If attendance still does not improve to the expected standard then the case will be discussed with the Headteacher and may be referred to Oxfordshire County Council Attendance Team for advice/intervention. Any referral to the County Attendance Team may result in further legal action or the introduction of parental contracts if deemed appropriate. OCC will intervene where Meadowbrook has failed to gain co-operation from the family. The procedures outlined below for proceeding to legal action, including fining parents, may result from this collaboration.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

By law, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances.'

The College considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained above
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes where this has been agreed with the Headteacher.

Legal sanctions

The Education Act 1996 Part I Section 7 regarding the duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age states:

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

- (a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

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

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

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

- (1) If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.

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

It will be Meadowbrook College's intention to try to work with the family to avoid any legal action.

Parents/carers or students may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Promoting and improving attendance

Meadowbrook College aims to provide an environment where students feel safe, education is stimulating and students want to attend.

Teachers are encouraged to build positive relationships with students, show concern when they have been absent and fully supportive and welcoming when they return.

High expectations and the importance of good attendance are outlined and communicated to parent/carers and students at all induction meetings. All students at Meadowbrook College are encouraged to strive for 100% attendance.

Attendance recognition will be used to incentivise students who have good or improving attendance. These awards will be issued for each full school term or short term programme.

Parents/carers and students are encouraged to communicate with their Base Leads/Team Leaders/Key Workers if they are experiencing any problems which may be impacting on attendance.

Meadowbrook College recognises that returning to the college following a period of absence, exclusion, unforeseen events or ongoing individual challenging circumstances can be difficult. In all of these situations college staff will plan carefully with parents/carers, students and relevant agencies about how best to support the students' return. Plans may include a phased return and reference to how students can catch up on any missed work.

Monitoring and Reporting

Meadowbrook College will monitor attendance levels at both an individual and programme/provision level to help identify any patterns that may show a student or group is at risk of disengaging.

Attendance data will be collected and analysed half-termly by SLT and Team Leaders to look at specific support for individuals and or groups. Team meetings will regularly identify an agenda item looking at these trends to inform any changes to individual or group support.

The College will ensure that parents/carers and home schools are aware of their child/students attendance using various means including telephone calls, text messages, written reports and your child's Team Leader will always be available to discuss any concerns with you

Appendix 1 - Attendance codes

Codes	Description	Meaning
/	Present at school - morning session	Present in school
\	Present at school - afternoon session	Present in school
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Education supervised off site or other alternative provision
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	Authorised as absent by the Headteacher
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised as absent by the Headteacher
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Not a possible attendance, due to current timetable
D	Dual registered at another school	Not a possible attendance to avoid double counting
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved (supervised) education activity
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Present
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Approved (supervised) education activity
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements (transport not yet in place)	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Approved (supervised) education activity
W	Attending work experience	Approved (supervised) education activity

Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Attendance not required
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Attendance not required
#	Planned whole school closure	Attendance not required
Key		For the purpose of data collection
Present in school or other approved educational activity		Classed as attendance
Authorised Absence		Classed as non attendance
Unauthorised Absence		
Not a possible attendance Attendance at another dual roll school or unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		Not collated for statistical purposes
Administrative codes		Not collated for statistical purposes

Appendix 2 - Attendance Letter 1 template

Insert date XXXXX

Insert name and address

XXXXX

Dear XXXX

LETTER 1 ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

At Meadowbrook College, we are highly focused on the pursuit of excellent student attendance. In order to access the full curriculum and give your child the best chance of success with us, we need to encourage students to attend the College as close to 100% as is possible. To this end we regularly monitor the attendance of all of our students and any student, whose attendance falls below 90%, will be closely monitored. We will contact parents on a regular basis to ask that you support us in dealing with the persistent absence.

I enclose a copy of XXXX attendance record at school. You will see that his attendance is now XXXX; I am sure you will agree, it is a cause for concern. I would like you to contact me at the above address, within the next few days, to discuss any factors affecting XXXX attendance or to offer an explanation for the recent pattern of absence from school.

I will continue to monitor XXXX attendance and will speak to him about it on a regular basis in school. With your co-operation, I anticipate a gradual improvement in XXXX attendance.

Should XXXX attendance not show significant progress over the next four weeks, you may be invited in to school for an attendance and progress meeting.

Yours sincerely

Jacqui West

Headteacher

Appendix 4 - Letter 2 Attendance Meeting

Insert date XXXXX

Insert name and address

XXXXX

Dear XXXX

LETTER 2 ATTENDANCE MEETING

You may recall my letter dated XXXX expressing concern with XXXX current level of school attendance which at the time was XXXX.

XXXX attendance is currently XXXX. Due to the lack of significant progress, I would like to invite you to a meeting at Meadowbrook College - XXXXX on XXXX at XXXX, to look at ways of improving XXXX attendance, plan a way forward and offer our support.

This meeting is being arranged because of the very serious nature of this matter. It is expected, therefore, that you will want to attend the meeting. If you fail to attend, we may have to take the decision to refer to the Oxfordshire County Attendance team for further advice and guidance.

I must point out to you that, as a parent, you have a duty to ensure your child receives an appropriate full time education. If you fail in this duty, you may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996 and liable to prosecution. If convicted you can be fined up to a maximum of £2500 per parent and/or receive a custodial sentence of up to 3 months . Alternatively the authority have the right to issue you with a fixed penalty notice which would mean you have to make a payment of either £60 or £120 depending on when you pay the notice.

If for any reason you are unable to attend this meeting, please call 01865 253198 to reschedule.

I look forward to meeting with you

Yours sincerely

Jacqui West

Headteacher

Appendix 5 - Attendance Meeting Record and Action Plan



Attendance Meeting Record and Action Plan

Date/time of meeting:		Venue:	
Present at meeting and role:			

Student name:		DOB:	
Dual roll school:		Current year group:	
Current % attendance:		% attendance last term:	

Summary of key points:

Actions agreed:	To be completed by:	Timescale for completion:

Target % attendance:		Timescale for improvement:	
Date, time and venue for review meeting:			

I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present.

Print name:	Role:	Signature
	<i>Parent/Carer</i>	
	<i>Student</i>	
	<i>MbC representative</i>	
	<i>DR school representative</i>	

Governor Approval and Review Dates

This policy was updated on 21st November 2023

The policy was approved by the Radcliffe Academy Trustees at the Education Committee meeting on 1st March 2024, approval is recorded in the meeting minutes.

It is due for review by November 2024

Date	Author	Recommended Change	Approved by Trustees
6.7.2020	BOT	Policy completely rewritten	13.7.2020
26.11.21	BOT	Team Leaders to monitor attendance in teams not SLT	3.12.21
26.11.21	BOT	Attendance monitoring to take place half-termly not termly	3.12.21
26.11.21	BOT	Addition to Appendices of Covid attendance Coding guidance from DfE	3.12.21
21.11.22	BOT	Policy links updated and key documents added	25.11.22
21.11.22	BOT	Team Leaders / Safeguarding and Welfare Officers to monitor attendance	25.11.22
21.11.22	BOT	insertion of the category of severe absence	25.11.22
21.11.22	BOT	remove appendix 2 covid absence	25.11.22
21.11.22	BOT	Insert JW as head on appendix letters	25.11.22
22.11.23	BOT	Reference to Base Leads added where appropriate. Updated guidance links	1.3.2024
21.11.24	BOT	Attendance codes updated page 10/11 Legal reference to FPN reduced page 8	