



METHERINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policies, Procedures, Regulations and Guidance

Document Title:	Attendance Policy	
Date Effective From:	1/9/2024	
Date of Last Review:	August 2024	
Date of Next Review:	August 2025	
Approved by:		
Version Control Table <i>[To be updated as required]</i>		
Version Number	Date Authorised	Summary of Key Changes
1		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information related to the updated Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Aug 2024) and the New Lincolnshire Code of Conduct.• Penalty Notices (formally Fixed Penalty Notices)• Letter templates have been updated• Amendment to the stages of non-attendance
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early collection information added



This policy has been drawn up following the guidelines issued by Lincolnshire County Council Educational and Cultural Services Directorate, Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Aug 2024) and the Code of Conduct.

1. MISSION STATEMENT

Metheringham Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end, the school will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy received the full ratification of the Governing Board.

3. AIMS

It is recognised that;

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

4. WHY ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

- **Learning:** Learning at our school is inclusive, interactive and sequential, requiring the participation of the pupils with the teacher and peers during learning time. This is adversely affected when a pupil is absent or habitually late – not only for that pupil, but for the dynamics of the entire class. This is both during their absence as well as upon their return, when time is taken to reintegrate them into the learning context of the class. Additionally, catch up tasks can help make up lost work, but cannot replicate the discussions led by the teacher and/or children, questions raised by other pupils, or the activities conducted in class.
- **Safeguarding:** Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the

welfare and life opportunities for every pupil encompasses: Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti-bullying. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

- **The Law relating to attendance:** Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that ‘the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:(a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’
- **The Law relating to safeguarding:** Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

5. EXPECTATIONS

Primary schools generally have good day-to-day contact with parents and carers. This can mean that many parents are easily contactable which may help to resolve problems and concerns quickly. Conversely, it may make it more difficult for teachers to question parents about absences or to refer to other agencies when the parent is well known to the school. Good practice should include inviting parents to meetings about attendance discreetly, perhaps by telephone call or letter and discussing with them the reasons for pursuing a referral to the Local Authority. If there are Child Protection concerns, then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures should be followed immediately.

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- * That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents:

- * To ensure their children to attend school regularly and punctually.
- * To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- * To inform school **each day** of their child’s absence of the reason for non-attendance.
- * To ensure that their child/ren arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- * To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child’s performance in school.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- * Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- * Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- * Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the student or their parent).
- * Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- * A quality education

6. TYPES OF ABSENCE

Authorised absence: 'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the head teacher:

- Illness
- Medical/dental appointment (with proof)
- Approved Educational Activities
- Compassionate leave for bereavement and illness
- Family weddings and civil ceremonies
- Funerals
- Relocation to different areas
- Religious circumstances e.g. confirmation
- Attending award ceremonies, e.g. Graduation

When will illness be authorised?

We recognise that illness in children is inevitable and may occasionally prevent a child from attending school. Valid reasons for non-attendance due to sickness include contagious illnesses, fevers/high temperature, vomiting, diarrhea or any other condition that significantly impacts a pupil's ability to participate in classroom activities and poses a risk to their own health or that of others. **However, it's essential to note that reasons such as oversleeping, non-serious ailments like minor colds or headaches without significant impact, or missing school for convenience are considered invalid.** We urge parents and guardians to prioritise their child's education by ensuring regular attendance unless genuinely unavoidable circumstances arise.

Schools are required to inform the Local Authority of any pupil looking like they will miss 15 days of school due to illness.

Unauthorised absence: Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not. Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Medical appointments without proof
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Day trips
- Long weekends away and holidays in term time
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

PENALTY NOTICE

Penalty Notices are one of the tools available to the Local Authority to tackle poor school attendance. Penalty Notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and will only be used where it is likely to change parental behaviour and support, to secure regular school attendance, has been provided (in the form of attendance panel meetings) and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the offence (e.g. unauthorised holiday in term time).

- The threshold for prosecution is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A session is a morning or afternoon registration session, meaning two sessions in an ordinary school day.
- The threshold 'A school week' means any week in which there is at least one school session.
- The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.
- When issuing Penalty Notices, 'parent' means anyone with parental responsibility for a child, including natural parents, an adult with whom the child lives and any adult with day-to-day care of the child.
- A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a Penalty Notice is issued.
- For a first offence, if a parent pays the Penalty Notice within 21 days from the date it is served the sum due from the parent to discharge the Penalty Notice is £80.
- The parent can still pay the Notice after 21 days, but the payment increases to £160. This must be paid before 28 days have passed from the date of service.
- For a further offence within a three-year rolling period, the payment will be £160. There is no discretion permitted for early payment.
- A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.
- There is no right of appeal against a Penalty Notice.

TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

On completion of the 'Request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances' document, the Head Teacher will view each request on a case-by-case basis. Parents must seek approval in advance of this leave being taken. No leave of absence without authorisation will be granted.

Since September 2013, the Headteacher has not been authorised to grant leave of absence for family holidays during term times. Any holiday taken will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless this is deemed as an exceptional circumstance. **Unauthorised absences due to term time holidays may result in Legal Sanctions, usually a Penalty Notice or Prosecution if they are taken.**

Where leave of absence is not requested for a term time holiday, and school has sufficient evidence that the unauthorised absence was due to a term time holiday that was not deemed to have exceptional circumstances, **it may result in retrospective Legal Sanctions, usually a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.**

Letters relating to term time holidays

LETTER 1 - [LETTER 1 - PN warning for holidays in term time.docx](#)

LETTER 2 - [LETTER 2 - Holiday request letter \(exceptional circumstances\).docx](#)

LETTER 3 - [LETTER 3 - No request.docx](#)

Missing in Education: A Child Missing in Education (CME) is defined as a child or young person of compulsory academy age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by a Local Authority, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Children missing from education can mean either a child being unenrolled or a child on extended absence.

School has a legal duty to inform the appropriate Local Authority if:

- After 5 days of internal investigation, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a child is missing from the area and their location is unknown (Child Missing in Education - CME)
- A child is absent for 10 or more consecutive days (Pupil Not Attending Regularly - PNAR)
- A child is deleted from the school register (after 20 days) when the next school is unknown (CME)

7. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- * Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and within 10 minutes of the start of the session.
- * Attendance checks at appropriate times and communication with parents.
- * Recording attendance on school reports.
- * Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- * Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3. This should include the sharing of relevant information with the destination school.
- * Assembly stories which emphasise the importance of good attendance.

Weekly

- Class attendance percentage announced on the Newsletter to parents

Termly

- Individual certificate for anyone achieving 100% attendance for the term

Annually

- 100% attendance certificate for the whole year

8. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively. The school will use the following staged approach until it sees the necessary improvements. Future decline will see the staged approach reinstated.

- * Stage 1 – phone call/Seesaw message on first day of absence
- * Stage 2 – subsequent phone call/Seesaw messages each day
- * Stage 3 – Safe and well check to be carried out (if appropriate)
- * Stage 4 – letter informing of the current attendance level and concerns
- * Stage 5 – invite parent in for an Attendance Panel meeting
- * Stage 6 – register a CME/PNAR (depending on circumstances)
- * Stage 7 – issue a Notice to Improve letter
- * Stage 8 - issue a Penalty Notice through the Local Authority

What is a Safe and Well Check?

Metheringham Primary School emphasises the importance of every child's safety and well-being. In line with this commitment, if a child has been absent from school for more than three days and the attendance is not authorised, or if there is reasonable doubt of the whereabouts of the child, the headteacher and another member of staff will conduct a safe and well check to the family address to ensure the child's welfare. These checks are vital to ensure that no child is at risk and to provide necessary support to

families. We understand that there may be various reasons for unauthorised absences, and our aim is to address any underlying issues with empathy and support. If the child is not seen by a member of school staff, or there are concerns about their safety, appropriate authorities (including Children’s Services and/or the Police) will be notified promptly to initiate further action.

Early collection of pupils

Our school values consistent attendance to ensure that pupils receive the full benefit of their education. Parents are not permitted to collect their children early without prior notice or a scheduled appointment, except in cases of emergency. Any early collection without prior approval disrupts the learning environment for both the student and the class as a whole. If an early pick-up is necessary, parents must notify the school in advance and obtain permission.

Letters relating to attendance – these are templates only and may be altered in individual circumstances

Stage 4 - [LETTER 1 Attendance decrease letter.docx](#)

Stage 5 - [LETTER 2 Attendance Panel meeting.docx](#)

Stage 7 - [LETTER 3 - Notice to Improve.docx](#)

Reintegration:

- * The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99), The Attend Package can also be used, if suitable. A referral to the Pupil Reintegration team may be required.
- * Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- * All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- * Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEND Co-ordinator may be required

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

9. EFFECTS OF NON-ATTENDANCE

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days’ absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Boundary	Description
95% - 100% 0 - 9 days absence	As expected
91% - 94% 10 - 19 days absence	At risk of persistent absence
80% - 90% 20 - 38 days absence	Persistent absence
51% - 79% 39 - 95 days absence	At risk of severe absence
Less than 50% More than 95 days absence	Severe absence

10. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% (19 school days) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. The parent of any student who is at risk of moving towards persistent absenteeism will be informed of this immediately so that the situation can be rectified.

11. LATENESS

Our pupils can arrive from 8:45am on each school day. Our morning register is taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:10am. A child registering between 9am and 9:10am will receive an authorised late mark in the register (L code); a child registering after 9:10am will receive an unauthorised late mark (U code). Our afternoon register is taken at 1:30pm.

A pupil who arrives late after the registers close at 9:10am, or 1:40pm, will be marked as absent. If the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and recorded using the appropriate code. If the pupil is late for no good reason, they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code 'Late after registers close' (U). 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks may result in a Penalty Notice being requested.

12. EFFECTS OF LATENESS

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like well-being time, teacher instructions and introductions to lessons. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

13. ATTENDANCE AND SEND

Attendance and punctuality are of paramount importance at Metheringham Primary School, and we are committed to ensuring that all our pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), have the best possible opportunities to learn and thrive. Our SEND attendance aims are to promote consistent, regular attendance for all pupils, recognising the unique challenges and needs of our SEND pupils. We believe that regular attendance and being punctual not only supports academic achievement but also contributes to the social and emotional development of every child and gives them the best possible outcomes in later life. Through close collaboration with parents, carers, and external support agencies, we will work together through formalised meetings to address any barriers to attendance and punctuality, tailor support to individual needs through specific targets, and create a safe and inclusive environment where every child can reach their full potential. Together, we can ensure that all

our SEND pupils experience the best possible educational journey.

The key message regarding the importance of good attendance for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is that consistent attendance and being punctual are essential for their overall development, well-being, and educational progress. Points to emphasise:

1. **Equal Access to Education:** Children with SEND have the same right to a full-time education as their peers without disabilities. Regular attendance and being punctual ensures that they receive the necessary support and accommodations to access the curriculum effectively.

2. **Continuity of Support:** Consistent attendance and being punctual allows for the continuity of specialised support and services that are crucial for children with SEND. Missing school can disrupt the implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and therapeutic interventions.

3. **Social and Emotional Development:** Regular and consistent school attendance provides opportunities for children with SEND to develop social skills, make friends, and build relationships. Missing school can lead to social isolation and affect their emotional well-being.

4. **Educational Progress:** Regular attendance and being punctual is directly linked to academic progress. Consistent learning experiences help children with SEND build upon their skills and knowledge, leading to better outcomes.

5. **Legal and Ethical Obligations:** In England, there is a legal obligation for parents to ensure their children attend school regularly. It's important for parents and caregivers to understand these responsibilities.

6. **Reducing Achievement Gaps:** Consistent attendance and being punctual can help bridge the achievement gap between children with SEND and their typically developing peers, promoting a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

7. **Preventing Regression:** For some children with SEND, missing school can lead to regression in skills or behaviours. Regular attendance helps maintain and build on progress.

8. **Supporting Transition Planning:** Consistent attendance and being punctual are essential when preparing children with SEND for transitions between educational stages, as well as for post-school life, including vocational training and employment.

9. **Parental Involvement:** Building a strong partnership between parents, caregivers, and the school is crucial for children with SEND. Regular attendance and being punctual facilitates better communication and collaboration between all stakeholders.

10. **Individualised Approach:** Schools and educators need to tailor their approach to meet the unique needs of each child with SEND. Consistent attendance allows for ongoing assessment and adjustments to support their development.

In summary, good attendance and being punctual for children with SEND is a fundamental aspect of providing them with the best possible educational experience and ensuring they have the opportunity to reach their full potential. It is essential for their academic, social, and emotional growth, and it helps create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

14. HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME (HAF)

The Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) is a Government funded programme that provides free holiday clubs for reception to year 11 pupils in receipt of benefits-related free school meals in Lincolnshire over the summer, Christmas and Easter holidays.

Schools are also able to add extra pupils (up to 15% of the Free School Meal cohort) at their discretion. Metheringham Primary school will allocate these extra places to children who they class as vulnerable and who they feel would benefit most.

15. SCHOOL ORGANISATION

In order for our attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

Headteacher:

- * To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- * To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- * To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- * To oversee and support the work of the Pastoral Support Team who has a responsibility to work with parents and pupils to improve attendance.
- * To meet with the parents of pupils who have been identified as persistent absentees or potential persistent absentees and agree action plans to prevent this.
- * To carry out safe and well checks as necessary.

Attendance Lead:

- To regularly report progress on attendance to the head teacher and governors.
- To monitor persistent absence, and to work alongside the Pastoral Support Team to contact parents through a phone call, meetings and then by letter to agree on action plans to reduce this.
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To oversee and support the work of the Pastoral Support Team who have a responsibility to work with parents and pupils to improve attendance.
- To meet with the parents of pupils who have been identified as persistent absentees or potential persistent absentees and agree action plans to prevent this.

Pastoral Support Team

- * To follow the staged approach to managing unauthorised absence
- * To meet with the parents of pupils who have been identified as persistent absentees or potential persistent absentees and agree action plans to prevent this.
- * To monitor persistent absence, and to work alongside the Headteacher to contact parents through a meeting and then by letter to agree on action plans to reduce this.
- * To work with pupils identified with poor attendance to break down barriers and to identify causes for poor attendance.
- * To run early morning clubs to support poor attenders if required.
- * Alongside another member of staff, and where appropriate, collect a child from home to ensure that they are in school.
- * To communicate attendance levels to pupils and parents through termly attendance update letters.

Class Teacher

- * To complete registers accurately and on time.
- * To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents.
- * To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence
- * To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- * To inform the attendance lead or pastoral support team of concerns in a timely manner.

Administrative staff in conjunction with the Pastoral Support Team:

School administrative staff and the Pastoral Support Team can play a vital role in supporting the school's attendance and absence management strategies.

- To communicate with relevant staff the reasons for absences via daily email
- To make first day absence calls where possible before 10 am to ascertain why a pupil is not in school.
- To inform attendance lead and Head Teacher when a child hits a previously agreed trigger point
- To produce absence reports on the request of the Head Teacher.
- To highlight any attendance concerns to the attendance lead and/or the Head Teacher.
- To record information on absence given by the parents of pupils with persistent absence onto the management information system.
- Check on pupils arriving late into school and highlight persistent lateness to the Head Teacher.

Governors

- The staffing and welfare committee will monitor the effectiveness of the school's attendance policy.
- The staffing and welfare committee will request attendance figures on a termly basis and monitor the effectiveness of the schools' efforts to combat persistent absence.
- The staffing and welfare committee will give termly attendance updates on attendance to the full Governing Board.

Parents

- * Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- * Contact the school on each subsequent day of absence.
- * Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

16. LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Research has shown that schools, in partnership with the full range of support services, have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The school can open a Team Around the Child (TAC) to ensure that other agencies required to support the child and his/her family can meet and offer support.

Other Agencies to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- * Behaviour Outreach Support Services (BOSS)
- * Educational Psychologists
- * Special Educational Needs Service
- * Social Care
- * Working Together Team
- * Specialist Teaching Team
- * Re-integration and Out of school team
- * Children and Young Peoples Nursing Service
- * Local police

17. Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School

Metheringham Primary school recognises the importance of supporting all students, including those with health needs that may prevent regular attendance. We understand that some children may face health challenges that require them to stay home for extended periods. Our priority is to support these students in their academic progress while safeguarding their health. Parents or guardians of children with health needs are encouraged to communicate openly with school about their child's condition. In such cases, we may ask parents or guardians to provide relevant medical documentation. The school will work closely with families and healthcare professionals to facilitate remote learning opportunities and provide resources tailored to the individual needs of each child, while prioritising the child's health and recovery. Our aim is to foster an inclusive and supportive environment where every child can thrive, regardless of their health circumstances.

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.