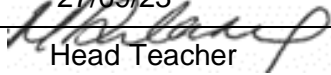




ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE and REGISTRATION POLICY

Document Control Information

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1	23/10/2020	Policy adapted from previous version
2	20/07/2022	Updated inline with LA fines
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Signed	

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Non-Maintained School | DfE No. 936/7063

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Meath School
Attendance, Absence and Registration Policy

The registration and attendance records of Meath School are viewed as vital and important documents in:

- Meeting statutory requirements
- Maintaining effective records of all pupils and staff attending school.
- Ensuring that careful and efficient processes of monitoring absences can be carried out.

Pupils

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends and remains in school throughout each working day. Parents/carers are informed and reminded of the school's expectations and requirements for notifying, via the school office or, of reasons for any absences of their child. (See Admission Papers and Newsletters).

Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Principals will rightly prioritise attendance. Absences due to holiday will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional absences mean rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Staff are informed of the school's expectation and requirements through circulation of guidelines and the insertion of such guidelines into the class registers. (See Appendix 1).

Administration staff monitor the registers on a twice daily basis and transfer data to the attendance module in Integrus. Any concerns can be alerted to the Principal and reports can be printed off from the data management system. Patterns of absence are monitored termly and at year end.

Pupils with less than 95% attendance are identified and letters are sent out to families. Local Authorities are alerted when a child's attendance regularly falls below 90%. In the event of two consecutive letters being sent, and/or a year end letter, the Principal invites the parents/carers into school to discuss the absence rate.

Individual pupil absence records are included in the reports for each pupil's Annual Review.

All registers are preserved for three years from the last date of issue.

Attendance

To encourage attendance those children and families with 100% attendance record in a term are awarded with a certificate.

Children's attendance is recorded at the beginning of the first lesson of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The register is kept open for 30 minutes, and pupils who arrive after the registration check are marked as late. In the space below the class names, a note is made of both the time of arrival for late pupils, and the reason, if known. Registers are then taken to the front office, where they are kept until the beginning of the next session. Pupils arriving after the 30-minute period described above will have their late arrival recorded in the same way on the database by the admin staff. The registers are used to verify children's absence in the event of any evacuation of the school premises [fire drill, fire, etc.]

Absence

Parents/carers are asked to notify school at least, by 9 a.m. on the first day of absence. In the event of a child's unexplained absence, the class team will inform the school office in order that they contact parents/carers by 10.00 am that day to clarify the situation. If the family has not indicated a length of absence, they will need to phone in each day of absence before 10.00am.

Teachers are responsible for recording absences in the register. Each register contains a list of standardised symbols to record absence. Each absence must be distinguished as being authorised, unauthorised or an approved educational activity.

“Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised**. Parents/carers may not authorise absence, only schools can do this.” *[DfEE Circular 10/99 – Social Inclusion: Pupil Support – Guidance on Attendance Registers]*.

Absences which are unexplained are recorded as unauthorised until agreed as authorised by the leadership team. The unauthorised absence symbol is then further coded with one of the designated symbols.

If a pupil leaves the school site during the school day, usually because of illness or to attend a medical appointment, this will be recorded in the register in the space below the class names by one of the school office staff.

Legal sanctions

The Principal is responsible for requesting the Local Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. They may take extreme circumstances into account when making a decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Absence procedures

The school is clear with families of the zero tolerance for holidays taken in term time. Should the absence be due to a cultural or faith activity, parents/carers are asked to use the Absence Request form (App 2) before making any bookings.

1. Parents/carers are asked to inform school **in writing** prior to absence for medical appointments or hospitalisation (see App 2). Staff should bring such notes/requests to the attention of the Principal, in order that a decision can be made about authorised or unauthorised absence. Non-authorised absences would be holiday in term time, day trips, family weddings, parties etc.
2. The Principal can request medical appointment cards and prescriptions as evidence.

From the first day that a child does not attend school and there is no explanation or authorisation of the absence, the following steps should be taken:

A staff member will make contact with the parents/carers (person with parental responsibility for the child) to seek reassurance that the child is safe at home.

The outcome of the contact should be assessed and if there are any concerns a consultation with the school's designated safeguarding officer should take place to consider the child's vulnerability.

In the following circumstances a referral to children's social care and / or the police should always be made promptly.

- The child may be the victim of a crime.
- The child is subject of a Child Protection plan.
- The child is subject of s47 enquiries.
- The child is looked after.
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household.
- There is a history of the family moving frequently.
- There are serious issues of attendance.

If there are concerns about the child's safety, then a referral should be made to the police and children's social care on day one. The education welfare service should be informed and requested to assist in locating the child.

If the judgement reached on day one is that there is no reason to believe the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, then school may delay making a referral. The process of 'reasonable enquiry' has not been identified in regulations, however this includes school staff

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checking with all members of staff whom the child may have contact with, and with the pupil's friends and their parents, siblings and known relatives at this school and others.

School staff should also make telephone calls to any numbers held on record or identified, sending a letter to the last known address, home visits by some school staff and consultation with local authority staff.

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3. If a pupil has been absent for three days without notification from the family, and admin staff have been unable to make contact, the child's LA will be informed of the situation, and any resultant actions. Careful liaison will be necessary between the LA Education Welfare Officer and the school's Family Support Worker if either/both are subsequently involved in investigative follow-up. Attendance problems are best sorted out between the school and the parents/carers on a voluntary basis, but if problems fail to be resolved the school would need to refer to the appropriate LA's Education Welfare Officer. The Principal will then refer the child (and evidence of absences, letters/meetings with the family) to the LA's Education Welfare Officer. The same process will apply for a child whose attendance rate is below 85% for 3 consecutive terms or where the Principal feels the length of absence is unjustified

A child may not be removed from the school roll before the end of four weeks. After four weeks the child's Common Transfer file should be uploaded to the Department for Education secure site for the transfer of pupil information when a pupil moves between schools and the receiving school is known. The LA must also be informed.

4. Staff should be clear about who has parental responsibility for each child and who has access rights. This information is held and updated within the Integris system, accessible to the Principal and admin staff. Class teams, care teams and admin staff need to be clear about who can take a child out of school, and who is to be contacted if a child has failed to return to school.
5. If a pupil's natural mother and father are separated or divorced, the school will require details of parental responsibility and access rights. These details will be sought at an interview organised by the Family Support Worker and noted on the child's individual records. The school will also require details of any other individuals who have a claim to parental responsibility. If separated/divorced parents/carers have equal access rights, the school will need written confirmation of any deviation from the customary communication procedures. Similarly, if access has been granted to one parent/carer only, the school will need written permission from that parent/carer in order that the other parent/carer gain access to the child. The school must have sight of any orders existing for parental responsibility and for access rights.

Should a pupil change schools:

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

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if known

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to Education Welfare.

General Data Protection Regulations

Steve Williams, Data Protection Officer of I CAN [whose responsibility it is to ensure that the legal responsibilities of Trustees are met] will ensure that I CAN is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office regarding Data Protection under the terms of the GDPR 2018.

Staff

All staff on the school premises register their presence by marking themselves in on the inventory computer at reception. All entries and exits from the premises must be maintained on this system, which is used in the event of any evacuation of the school premises [fire drill, fire, etc.]. It can also be used by line managers to determine absences.

Staff are expected to seek approval from their line manager in advance for any known absence, and to complete a sickness self-certification form or special leave form as appropriate. (See Special Leave Policy). These are then authorised or non-authorised by line managers before being passed to the HR department via Breathe HR.

In order to arrange emergency cover for absent staff, it is vital that the appropriate line manager is informed of any absence at least by 7:30am on the first day of illness. An indication of when staff will return to work is also important in these circumstances; if no duration has been indicated on the first phone call, but staff subsequently require additional days off school they must phone their line manager by 7:30am on each additional day of absence.

Staff should always attempt to make medical/dental appointments in out of school hours if at all possible. Again, line managers should be informed well in advance if time off is being requested for medical/dental appointments within the school day. Appointment cards may be requested.

Staff are expected not to request time off school during term time for holiday purposes.

Further information on these and related matters is available in the relevant section of the I CAN Policy Manual.

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ATTENDANCE REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

The class register is a legally required document and as such should be maintained following the guidance below.

- All entries in the register must be made by an adult employed at the school.
- All recordings should be made in black pen.
- Original entries and corrections should be clearly distinguishable. Do not remove pages or use tippex.
- All registers should be returned within 15 minutes of the start of the first class session in the morning (or immediately after assembly) and the same in the afternoon.
- Use an oblique stroke to record presence a.m. (/) and a reverse oblique stroke to record attendance p.m. (\).
- Record a 'O' for each child not present at registration.
- All children who arrive after 9.30 should have their arrival recorded as late by the school office i.e. Ø. In the space below the names in the register, times of arrival of late pupils should be recorded, with a reason if known
 e.g. Michael Jones – Late 31/8 9.40 (traffic problems)
- If an absence is known about and has been authorised an authorised absence code should be entered within the circle. Please refer to list in registers.
- If the reason for the absence has not been communicated, the circle should be left empty (i.e. as an unauthorised absence) until information/note from home is received when the appropriate coding can be inserted.
- The code 'c' should be used for all other circumstances not listed.
- The reason for the absence must be recorded in the spaces below the class listing in the register
 e.g. Michael Jones © 1/9 – 4/9 Sickness & diarrhoea
- Staff attendance should not be included in the class registers. Staff must sign in and out on the inventory in the entrance area.
- The Principal must be informed of all unauthorised absences prior to confirmation of such in the register. To assist data collection all unauthorised absences should be recorded in red i.e. go over the circle with a red pen.
- The taxi register should continue as a record of handover between taxi/parent and school in the morning and school to taxi/parent in the afternoon.
- The taxi register is an internal record and not the legal registration of attendance.
- The care register is a record of children who stay for after-school clubs and overnights.



MEATH SCHOOL, BROX ROAD, OTTERSHAW, SURREY

ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Child's Name: **Class:**

Care Group:
(if boarder)

I would like to request permission for my child to be absent from school on the following dates. (Please detail dates of absence)

First day absent from school:
.....

First day back in school:
.....

Total no: of days absent:
.....

Reason for proposed absence:

Signed:

Date:

Authorised/Not authorised:

Principal

Date:

Please ensure you have informed the class team and care officers (if applicable).

MEATH SCHOOL



Date

Dear Parent/Carer

The guidance to schools has toughened about absences in term time. Whilst we know illness is difficult to avoid, we need to report to you your child's absences at the end of each term, and in July.

We want to make as much progress with your child as is possible but cannot if they are not at school!

The government expects attendance to be at least 90% of school days. We know medical appointments affect our children more than others. However, if your child's attendance falls below the 95% mark we will let you know.

If your child's attendance is regularly below 90%, we will need to alert the appropriate LA Case Officer and Education Welfare Officer.

If you don't have a letter from us about attendance you will know all is well.

'Golden Peacock' certificates are awarded for families and children who achieve 100% attendance per term.

Yours sincerely.

Kim Bent
Principal

Appendix 4



MEATH SCHOOL

Date

Dear

ATTENDANCE FOR THE TERM 20__

(Child's name) attendance was ___% for the _____ term 2022. Absences were due to illness and medical appointments. We aim for at least 92% attendance for all learners so that their education is not disrupted, and they make the maximum progress possible. Most Meath children attend for at least 95% of sessions.

Yours sincerely

Kim Bent
Principal