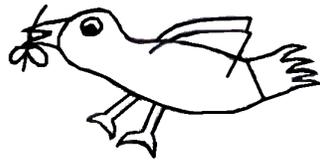


# Mengham Infant School

## Attendance Policy



Mengham Infant School,  
St. Mary's Road,  
HAYLING ISLAND.  
PO11 9DD  
Telephone: 023 9246 2470  
e-mail: [adminoffice@mengham-inf.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@mengham-inf.hants.sch.uk)

**Mengham Infant School**  
**where a happy child is a learning child**

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# Mengham Infant School

## Attendance Policy

### The Law

#### Duties of the local authority (LA)

The LA has a duty to ensure there are sufficient school places. They have statutory powers to bring legal action against parents/carers who:

- fail to ensure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil
- fail to ensure their child is receiving a suitable education - either by regular attendance at school or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them.

The LA has a duty under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to serve a notice or a school attendance order to the parent/carer.

Both local authority maintained schools and academies can issue a penalty notice to a parent/carer for their child's non-attendance, **but it must be compliant with the LA code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.**

#### Parental responsibilities

Parents/carers are legally required to secure full-time education for children of compulsory school age. The education provision must be suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability, and to any special needs the child has. This can be by regular attendance at school, alternative provision, or otherwise (eg elective home education). A child who is registered at school must attend regularly and punctually.

#### The role of school staff is to:

- promote a welcoming atmosphere which makes all pupils feel safe and valued
- encourage and promote good relationships between themselves and parents/carers
- include parents/carers in meetings about their child's attendance and involve them in any initiatives introduced by the school to promote attendance
- ensure that pupils can access lost learning through periods of absence or irregular punctuality, and that absence data is used to identify pupils with potential gaps in learning or progress
- ensure that all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, Traveller pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language, or pupils eligible for free school meals, receive suitable teaching
- set short and long-term attendance targets for individual pupils, groups of pupils and the school as a whole
- reward good attendance and punctuality by linking them to the school rewards systems, homework diaries and records of achievement
- have procedures for helping pupils reintegrate into school or class after long periods of absence or programmes of intervention
- ensure that any concerns about attendance and/or punctuality which cannot be resolved internally are discussed with colleagues from appropriate support services/agencies
- ensure that they deal fairly and consistently with authorised and unauthorised absence
- ensure there is good liaison with colleagues at the previous school when a pupil transfers to a new school
- ensure that parents/carers are made aware of any attendance concerns through phone calls, letters, and homework or pupil diaries.

### **The role of governors is to:**

- ensure that they receive regular attendance reports from the Headteacher
- ensure they set challenging targets for attendance and punctuality, and consider having a named governor with lead responsibility for attendance
- consider the inclusion of a governor as a member of a school attendance panel or family group conference which deals with the poor attendance of individual pupils.

Where a reason for absence is not given to the school by 9.30 am on the first morning of absence, the school will send a text message to the parent (where an up to date mobile number is held by the school). A text will be sent to the parent/carer each day of absence if the parent/carer does not make contact with the school. If no response or valid reason for absence is received the school will record the absence as unauthorised and may result on a child being put onto Attendance Watch.

When punctuality becomes a matter for concern, the school will contact the parent/carer in the first instance. Should regular punctuality not improve, the school will carefully monitor time keeping and offer assistance from the Inclusion Manager or Headteacher.

Ensure all staff members are aware of the School Policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.

### **Contents of an attendance register**

Schools must have clear procedures for completing attendance registers and teachers must complete them neatly and accurately as they may be required as evidence in a court of law.

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second afternoon session.

On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- present
- attending an approved educational activity
- absent, or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- ascertain the reason
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- identify whether the absence is approved or not, and
- identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register (or management information system which is used to download data to the school census).
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### **Maintaining high standards of attendance and punctuality**

Parents and carers are responsible for their child's level of attendance and punctuality. Children are expected to attend school if the school is open. It is not permitted to keep children away from school if a parent/carer is ill (except in exceptional circumstances) nor if a sibling or other family member is ill (except in exceptional circumstances). If a parent/carer feels there are exceptional circumstances for absence, notice should be given in writing to the headteacher who has the ultimate decision on whether an absence may be authorised.

Children should all arrive at school punctually before the start of registration (between 8.45 and 8.55 am). Children arriving during the registration period (8.55 am - 9.10 am) will be deemed to be late and a note of

the minutes late will be made on the electronic register. Reasons for lateness will be noted verbatim on the electronic register.

The designated member of staff will check registers for regular attendance. Teachers should report any concerns to the Headteacher or SIMS Manager. The register is a legal document and may be used as evidence in a Court of Law. Appropriate and consistent recording methods are used in accordance with County recommendations.

At the end of the school day children should be collected punctually from their classrooms. The school day finishes at 3.10 pm and the children will be released to their parent (or designated collector) as soon as is practicable after that time. Failure to collect a child can result in consultation with Education Welfare Services. Where late collection is frequent, this can be considered a case of neglect.

If the school feels that support for a family is required to assist with punctuality or regular attendance, the school will refer the matter to the Family Liaison Officer without prior reference to the family.

The School will undertake regular monitoring of attendance of all children and work with families to improve and support regular, punctual school attendance. The school will alert parents by letter or by postcard. Children whose attendance is a cause for concern will be monitored on a weekly basis under the postcard system and the child will be rewarded with postcards and stickers as appropriate.

If an improvement in attendance is not forthcoming, the School will **consult** the Education Welfare Service when:

- Attendance is less than 85%.
- Contacts with home have not brought about any improvement in attendance.
- Poor communication with home regarding explanations for absence/lateness.
- A child is continually being collected late from school.

The School will **refer** to the Education Welfare Service when:

- 2 weeks (10 school days) continuous absence
- 20 absences appear in a 10 week period
- 20 late sessions over a 10 week period

### **Punctuality**

Registration starts at 8.55am. All children should be in the classroom and ready to start taking the register at that time. The registers should be returned to the school office by 9.10am. Registers are said to 'close' at 9.25am.

Parents should inform the school office, in advance, if they know their child will be arriving late at school. Registration takes place at 8.55 a.m. and pupils arriving after this time will be marked as being late. However, the registers close at 9.25 a.m. and pupils arriving after this time will be marked as unauthorised late unless good reason is being provided. When arriving late, parents will be asked to sign their child into the late register giving a reason for lateness. Children who are persistently late will have individual late registers so that it is easier to monitor lateness, and a note of accumulated lateness will be recorded.

Records of times and reasons will be kept for all children who arrive late. The number of minutes late the child arrives are noted on the official register together with (verbatim) the reason for lateness given by parents/carers.

***FACT:-***

*If a child arrives at school 5 minutes late per day, this equates to a half day's missed education over a half term. Arriving late in school does not only effect your child's education, but disrupts that of your child's peers and class-mates.*

**Attendance**

When a child is absent the parent/carer should notify the school office by telephone (9246 2470), e-mail ([j.hawley@mengham-inf.hants.sch.uk](mailto:j.hawley@mengham-inf.hants.sch.uk)) or text (07935 901851) on the first day of absence. Upon return to school, a note explaining absence must be sent if contact with the school was made by telephone or text.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. A note or telephone call does not automatically entitle an absence to be authorised. In the case of illness the school has a right to request further information if necessary, including a medical note from the doctor or hospital, or referral to the school nurse service.

The school expects regular attendance but aims to be supportive to parents with problems.

Where a pupil is absent without prior notification, an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Pupil attendance will be monitored by ethnicity and we will liaise with EMAS as appropriate.

***FACT:-***

*90% attendance over one week equals half day's absence per week.*

*90% attendance over a school year equals 4 weeks' absence.*

*90% attendance over 5 years of schooling equals half a year's absence (20 weeks)*

*90% attendance over a 10 year school career equals one year's missed education (40 weeks).*

**Absences that are generally authorised by the school**

- Sickness/illness (prolonged illness or excess illness may result in the school requesting a note from a doctor or a copy of any prescription given)
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments. (Preferably these should be made after school or during holidays).
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement

**Absences that are generally unauthorised by the school**

- A parent or other family member is ill
- A parent is using the pupil as a childminder
- A pupil is supporting other members of the family
- Work patterns, for example shift work, making it difficult for the family to ensure the child attends school
- A parent wants company

- A parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home
- It is the pupil's birthday or the birthday of other family members
- A parent does not care whether the pupil attends school
- A parent has taken the pupil shopping or to the hairdresser
- A parent cannot control the pupil
- A parent is hostile towards the school or towards education in general
- A parent distrusts authority
- A parent is using the pupil as an interpreter

### **Leave of absence for purpose of holiday**

Parents should take their holidays during the school breaks. Requests for holiday in term time must be submitted to the Headteacher with a note of the reason why the holiday could not be taken during normal school holidays. The Headteacher will only grant approved leave of absence where the reason given for the request is exceptional. Each application for holiday during term time will be considered on an individual basis, and the decision to approve a holiday as an exceptional circumstance will be the Headteacher's. Any request for leave for a family holiday during term time must be made in advance, in writing, to the Headteacher (using a form requested from the school office) by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

The fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time is unlikely to be considered as 'special' or 'exceptional circumstances'. 'Special' or 'exceptional' circumstances are much more likely to be unique and/or one-off situations e.g. due to a parent's work/employment commitments, where there has been a trauma or bereavement in the family. Ultimately, however, it is for the Headteacher to decide if the circumstances are 'special' or exceptional'.

If a leave of absence for holiday is not approved by the Headteacher and a parent/carer still removes a child from school for the purpose of a holiday all of the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. All unauthorised absences will be noted on the child's school record and Annual Reports to parents.

### **Leave of absence for purpose other than holiday**

If a parent needs to remove a child from school for other circumstance, i.e. ballet exam, funeral, application should still be made to the Headteacher, in advance of the absence, using the form collected from the school office. If appropriate, the school will send work for the child to complete during the absence.

This type of absence would be granted only if the child's attendance and punctuality are of acceptable levels.

Where a pupil has irregular attendance and absences are unauthorised the parent/carer is committing an offence and could either be issued with a Penalty Notice or prosecuted under the Education Act 1996.

### **Relevant legislation and guidance**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- The Department for Education's *Advice on attendance*, March 2013
- Education(Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013

Further information is available from: [www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance)  
In this document the word parent or parents also includes carers or legal guardians.