



MEDEN
SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE
MATTERS
ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

A Parents & Carers Guide

Introduction: Why Attendance Matters

At Meden, we expect the highest standards of attendance from all our students so they may develop their full potential during their time at school. It is our aim to maintain a culture of excellence, attendance and punctuality. Missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities. Everyone within the school community – students, parents, all teaching and support staff and external agencies must do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality maintain an integral part of the school's work.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest standards for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our school so successful. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. The routines students develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and further aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good Attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence;
- Students make better progress, both socially and academically;
- Students find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with;
- Students find learning more satisfying;
- Students are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.



GOOD ATTENDANCE

MEANS BEING IN SCHOOL AT LEAST 96% OF THE TIME
OR HAVING NO MORE THAN SEVEN DAYS OFF!

0

**DAYS
ABSENCE**
100% ATTENDANCE

7

**DAYS
ABSENCE**
96% ATTENDANCE

19

**DAYS
ABSENCE**
90% ATTENDANCE

29

**DAYS
ABSENCE**
85% ATTENDANCE

38

**DAYS
ABSENCE**
80% ATTENDANCE

47

**DAYS
ABSENCE**
75% ATTENDANCE



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**EDUCATION + ATTENDANCE + EFFORT
= ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES!**



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Our Attendance Procedures

Reporting Absence

What to do if your child is ill:

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required daily. If your child is too ill to attend school, parents/carers must contact the Academy as soon as possible. Please give your child's name, the reason for absence and how long you expect the absence to last. You must contact us each morning, before 8:50 if your child is absent.

If no one is available to take your call, please leave a message. You may receive a call back from a member of staff requesting further information. On your child's return following an absence, parents/carers must write a letter, signed by you, to the tutor stating the reason for absence. This does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the attendance team.

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence, the school is required to start child missing in education procedures. Meden School will make all the reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including home visits and making enquiries to known friends and wider family.

What to do if your child has an appointment

We ask that where possible, you make routine medical appointments and other appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, we require notification in advance. Please provide a note from home and/or appointment letter/card to confirm the appointment. Your child should attend school before the appointment and return afterwards where possible. The absence will only be authorised for the duration of the appointment, including travel time.



Our Attendance Procedures

Calls to parents/carers

We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously. If the attendance officer has received no reason for absence and a student is absent (8:50-9:15) calls are made daily to the contact numbers the School holds on record. Calls are made on a daily basis, even where your child has been absent due to illness on previous days. We cannot assume your child is still ill unless you have notified us. We would not wish to put your child at risk by failing to contact you. Please ensure your child realises the importance of attending tutor on time and getting their present mark. Parents/carers can also support the school by ensuring we hold up to date contact numbers.

Holidays in term time

Family holidays should take place during the school holiday dates. These are published in advance of the next academic year. Please be mindful that absence due to holiday is not, and never has been, a parent's entitlement. This is breaking the law and the school cannot legally grant permission for this. If holidays are taken in term time, parents/carers must inform the school in advance to take their child out of school for a holiday. This must be in writing addressed to the Principal. The absence will be unauthorised and legal action may be taken.

Leave of absence for other reasons

Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as shopping, birthdays, day trips, etc. If parents/carers wish their child to be absent for other reasons, such as compassionate leave, special family occasions, or to participate in sport or musical competitions etc. application should be made, in advance to the Headteacher. It may be necessary for parents to apply for a performance license in such circumstances.

Persistent Absence

Students who are absent 10% or more of the time at school, for whatever reason, are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. The Academy monitors all absence thoroughly and the attendance data is shared with the Department for Education. If your child has persistent absence, both the parent/carer and the student will be subject to an Attendance Plan and/or home school contract to improve their attendance.



Our Attendance Procedures

Authorising Absence

Only the school can authorise absence. Government guidelines are specific and allow the school to authorise the following:

- student absence through “leave” given by the school (this commonly includes medical appointments, interviews and other similar special circumstances)
- student illness
- religious observance where applicable

Examples of absence which have not been authorised in the past include:

- shopping trips
- “looking after” brother/sister, cat/dog,
- elderly relative etc.
- arrival after the close of the register (9.15am) with no valid reason for the late arrival
- truancy
- day trips
- holidays taken during term time

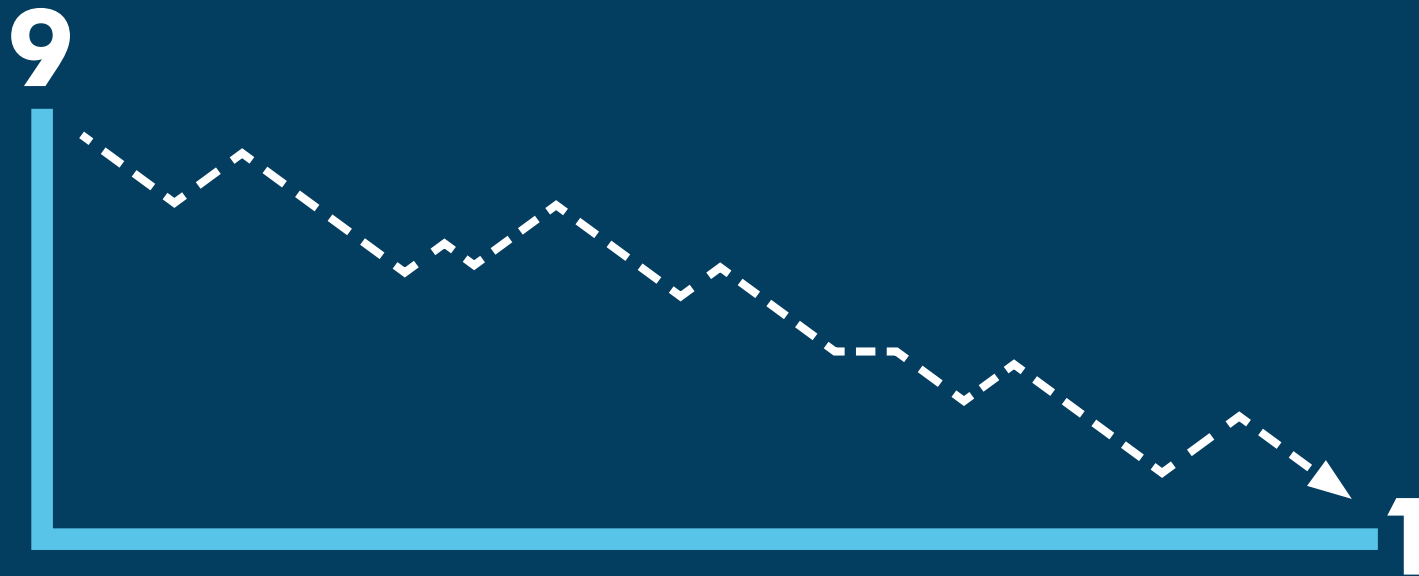
Unauthorised Absence Fixed Penalty Notices

In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child has in excess of 3 days unauthorised absence over a 6 week period. If payment is made within 21 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice the cost is £60 per parent/carer rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. The School refers parents/carers who remove their child for a holiday to the Attendance Service for the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Nottinghamshire County Council’s guidelines and further information on Fixed Penalty Notices can be found on their website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk



DAYS OFF COST GOOD GRADES



**RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT FOR EVERY 17 DAYS
MISSED FROM SCHOOL, YOUR GCSE RESULTS
WILL GO DOWN ONE GRADE!**



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Being Punctual is the Expectation

Lateness To School

Students who arrive late for no good reason will be issued with a breaktime detention the same day and parents will receive a text message which informs of the lateness and the detention as a consequence. According to DfE guidelines, registers must be closed after a certain time in the morning. Therefore, if a student arrives after 9.30am, they cannot receive a late mark but have to be marked as absent for the whole morning session. If the lateness is due to a legitimate reason e.g. a medical appointment, the absence can be authorised. Otherwise, the session is marked as an unauthorised absence. A text is sent home to parents informing them of this and the fact that they could be liable for a fixed penalty notice if the child receives 10 or more unauthorised absence sessions.

Meden School's Support For Good Punctuality

We place a strong emphasis on good punctuality; we support this by:

- Giving sanctions to students who arrive late to school or lessons;
- Informing parents, by text, if their child arrives late for school;
- Senior staff patrolling the local area, first thing in the morning, to encourage students not to loiter in these areas and make themselves late;
- Uploading attendance records into a student's MCAT App, allowing parents the chance to monitor any lateness/ absences;
- Addressing issues of poor time keeping with individual students and their parents;
- Visible, digital clocks at the entrances to school

Parents' Support For Good Punctuality

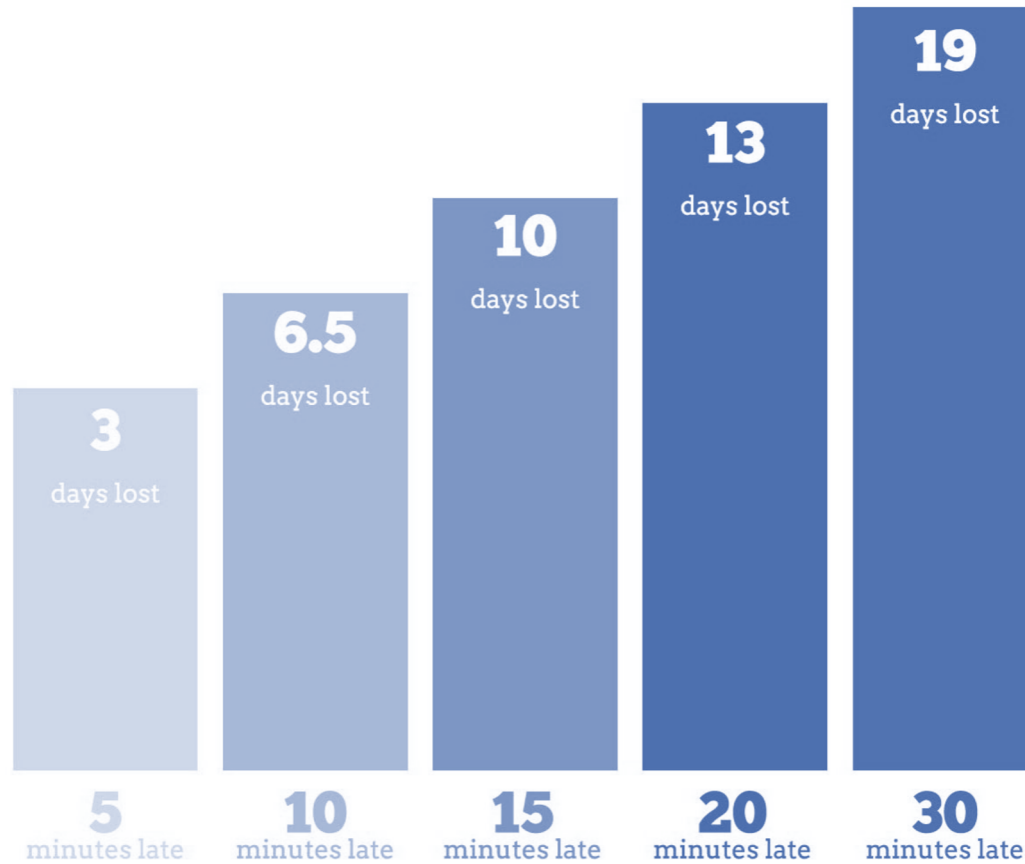
We would ask parents to support us in maintaining good punctuality by:

- Ensuring that their son / daughter gets up in plenty of time to be ready and prepared for school;
- Ensuring that their son / daughter has organised their bag and equipment the night before so that this does not delay departure in the morning;
- Discussing any issues of lateness to ensure this does not become a habit;
- Monitoring their child's attendance record when it is sent home and looking for patterns of lateness.



Do you know what good time keeping means?

Lost minutes = Lost learning



*Over one full academic year

Make sure your child is at school and ready to learn, before the bell rings.

Students: Try to get to school 10 minutes early (8.40am), get settled and ready to learn!

Did you know?

Being 15 minutes late each day is the same as missing two weeks* of school!

Ways for parents to encourage good attendance . . .

- ✓ Find out about your child's absence regularly and check if this matches your own records.
- ✓ Talk regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it. They are more likely to attend school if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- ✓ Phone the school as soon as possible to tell them why your child is absent and when you expect them to return.
- ✓ Only grant days at home for genuine illnesses.
- ✓ Avoid taking holidays in term time. Know the routines of the school days to avoid issues e.g. Have they brought in their PE kit?
- ✓ If you have concerns—phone the school.
- ✓ Praise and reward good attendance at school.



For further advice contact Meden's Attendance team on 01623 843517 or Nottinghamshire County Council's Early Help Unit on 0115 804 1248

ASPIRATION



EXCELLENCE



ACHIEVE

How we promote good attendance in school

What does the school do to encourage good attendance?

- ✓ Inter tutor group competitions and rewards
- ✓ Individual rewards for students with good and excellent attendance records
- ✓ School, year group and tutor groups targets are set for attendance and individual targets where necessary
- ✓ Regular attendance information sent to parents/carers to assist them in monitoring their child's attendance
- ✓ Regular promotion of good attendance in assemblies, the student bulletin, termly newsletter and at parents'/carers' evenings
- ✓ Detailed analysis of attendance figures and trends for individuals, year groups, sub groups and the whole school
- ✓ Regular reports to governors
- ✓ Computerised registration system which allows every lesson to be monitored
- ✓ A member of the office staff dedicated to the administration of attendance
- ✓ Contact with parents/carers when students absent or late
- ✓ Dedicated School Attendance Officer
- ✓ Support for students and parents/carers where attendance difficulties are emerging

We are always asking our students...

What is your attendance %?

How are you going to improve it?



PARENTS AND CARERS: FAQs (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

What can I do if my child is starting to present attendance difficulties?

These difficulties can show themselves in a number of different ways e.g. a reluctance to go to school, feigning illness, failure to attend school even though the child is sent, missing lessons whilst in school. If a problem seems to be emerging parents/carers should:-

- Talk to the child to try to ascertain if there are any problems or worries at school on the journey to or from school or at home
- Contact your child's Year Team as soon as possible
- Seek advice from the School's attendance team Consider seeking advice from appropriate websites

Why doesn't Meden School authorise holidays?

We are very aware of the essential role good attendance plays in achieving good academic progress and good social skills. We, therefore, took the decision many years ago that we could not authorise holidays in term time as doing so would be in direct contradiction to what we know is best for our students.

Why do you issue fixed penalty notices if parents/carers remove their children for a holiday?

We can not authorise an avoidable absence which causes harm to the continuity of a child's education. We are aware that holidays in term time are cheaper than those in school holidays and that this can be a motivating factor. The penalty notice therefore attempts to remove this incentive as well as reinforcing the importance of school attendance. Please note: the fine monies are not given to the school.

Would I have received a fixed penalty notice if I had lied about the absence?.

We expect honesty in our dealings with parents/carers and we are sure parents/carers wish to model this to their children. However, it is also our experience that children will tell their friends of their holiday who inadvertently tell their teachers. The length of absence can also trigger attendance officer investigation, including home visits, leading to the truth of the matter.

What should I do if my child is reluctant to attend school?

There may be many reasons why a child is reluctant to attend school, both issues related to school but also issues which are not related to school in any way. Contact the Year Team as soon as possible if your child is reluctant to attend school. They will suggest a meeting with you and your son/daughter to discuss strategies which can be put into place to support his/her attendance at school.

If my child refuses to attend school, can I be held responsible?

Yes. As the child's parent, you are expected to ensure that they receive an education. If your child does not attend school you could face court action resulting in a possible fine and or even imprisonment. Please contact the Year Team if you are concerned about your child's attendance.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice - payment discharges your liability in this respect. However, it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with school and support agencies such as the NCC's Attendance Service.

What do I do if my child is ill?

Telephone the school office on each morning of your child's illness by 8.50am. If your child experiences a prolonged absence, a note from his or her doctor may be required by the school.