

1st September 2025

Dear Families

Attendance Matters

Welcome back! I hope you had a restful summer. Thank you for your continued support in helping us create a school environment where all children can feel they belong and can thrive. Together, we can make attending school and accessing education purposeful and rewarding.

Last year brought changes to attendance law and statutory guidance ([The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)) and [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)). Thankfully, there are no new updates this year, allowing us to focus on embedding our **support-first approach** working together to resolve barriers to attendance and ensure every child can access their education.

Our Vision

We aim to build a culture of belonging, where children and families feel supported. We use attendance information to guide early action, celebrate successes, and offer help when needed. Positive relationships are at the heart of this. We know that sometimes there can be barriers to attending school and we want to ensure it can be made as easy as possible.

A Reminder of What the DfE Guidance Means:

We must:

- Have a Senior Attendance Champion in every academy and publicly advertise an [attendance policy](#) (we also have a pupil-friendly version available to aid understanding), to **ensure you are aware of expectations**, processes and legal actions that can be taken (although we always hope to avoid that where possible).
- Promote a whole-school culture where attendance is everyone's responsibility and train staff know their role, **build relationships, promote inclusion**, understand sharing of information and working together (with parents, other schools, local authorities, health etc.).
- Record registers accurately and not keep the registers open longer than 30 minutes after opening; **late arrivals after that must be marked absent** (students must sign in to be counted for fire registers).
- Identify and explore all absence before, or when, it reaches **10 unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks (the National Framework)** and offer early support if needed via reasonable adjustments, support plans and attendance contracts to nurture, support, resolve barriers to attending school and promote well-being.
- Only authorise absence that is requested in advance **and that is for exceptional circumstances** (absence for the purpose of holidays, recreation or leisure do not generally meet that criteria and, if taken, carries an automatic consideration of legal action).
- When support does not lead to improved attendance, formally warn parents that consideration of either intense statutory support or legal action will happen, e.g., a Penalty Notice Fine or Court Prosecution or Family Court Order.

How You Can Help

Let us know promptly about illness or emergencies – good communication helps us all, there are of course times when absence is unavoidable due to serious or long-term illness, liaising regularly with the school in these circumstances is important to support your child.



Plan absence outside of term time but if there is an exceptional circumstance for absence, request absences in advance (absence for holidays, recreation or leisure is unlikely to be authorised and will carry automatic consideration of legal action).

Schedule appointments to avoid missing registration where possible (we know this can be less easy but signing in and out around registration is helpful to avoid absences). Work with us to resolve any barriers to attendance, encourage positive attitudes toward school and talk openly about any worries to build self-awareness, encourage problem solving skills and boost confidence.

We're here to help. Please reach out to your child's academy with any concerns so we can act early and supportively to prevent absence. You'll find more resources on our trust website: [Attendance - Meridian Trust](#)

Warm regards

Sharon Templeman
Meridian Trust Attendance Welfare Leader

Graph Explanation:

- We do not use a specific % level alone when identifying which children may need support for their attendance but we recognise that an overall % can act as a guide to whether an action may be needed, thus triggering exploration.
- The below graph demonstrates what an annual % means in terms of lessons (learning) missed to give some context, and how the % level may be of concern.
- Please note, this graph does not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence, so if a child has, for example, 80-85% attendance due to a medical condition or specific need, and this has been recorded as authorised absence, those circumstances will lower the 'concern' level, opposed to if the absence was all unauthorised. However, it would not lower the requirement for discussion and support that is needed for all absence.

