



MEDEN
SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE
MATTERS
TO EVERYONE

A Parents & Carers Guide

Introduction: Why **Good Attendance is Good** for young people

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.

We want students to feel like they **belong** at Meden, and we believe having good attendance will make them happier.

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 our students**.

Research shows that good Attendance is important because:

- Students feel happier in school and anxieties reduce;
- Students feel like they have more belonging and connection to the school;
- Students make better progress, both socially and academically;
- Students are more successful in transferring into employment;
- Students find school routines easier to cope with;
- Students find it easier to make friendships;
- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence;



We want you to feel that you belong to

Team Meden



Attending everyday supports this

Our Attendance Procedures

Reporting Absence

What to do if your child is ill:

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter and as a school we need to know the cause of their absence.

If your child is too ill to attend school, parents/carers must contact the school ASAP.

- 1) Call or email the school **before 8:50am** – attendance@medenschool.co.uk / **01623 843517**
- 2) Please give your child's name, the reason for absence and how long you expect the absence to last.

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. These include:

- contact with parents/carers and the child
- home visits
- 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 so we are able to authorise this.



Our Attendance Procedures

Calls and texts to parents/carers

If the attendance officer has received no reason for absence and a student is absent calls/texts are made to parents and carers.

Holidays in term time

Family holidays should take place during the school holiday dates. These are published in advance of the next academic year. If holidays are taken in term time, parents/carers must inform the school in advance to take their child out of school by completing a leave of absence form, found on our website. We must make it clear that we are unable to authorise holidays, and some may result in a fixed penalty notice issued to parents.

Leave of absence for other reasons

If parents/carers wish their child to be absent for reasons other than illness, such as compassionate leave, special family occasions, or to participate in sport or musical competitions etc. application should be made, in advance to the attendance team, and the Headteacher will then make a decision on whether this is authorised.

Persistent Absence

Students who are absent 10% or more of the time from school, for whatever reason, are defined as persistent absentees. The school 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,
- 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 **5 days (or 10 half days) of unauthorised absence over a 10 week period. A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.**
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is **charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.**
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) alternative action could be taken instead.

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



How will we report attendance

Reporting lost days and spells of absence

In order to support parents/carers in gaining a clearer picture as to how much their child has been absent from school, it will now clearly state on Progress and ATL reports, how many '**days lost**' and how many '**spells of absence**' have occurred.

- **Days Lost** – how many days a students have not been in school
- **Spells of Absence** – how many separate occasions the student has been absent

Example:

- If you child has 3 days off back to back, this would state that they have **3 days lost with 1 spell of absence.**
- If your child has 1 day off in week 1, 1 day off in week 4 and 1 day off in week 12. They would have **3 days lost with 3 spells of absence.**



Being Punctual is the Expectation

Lateness To School

Students who arrive late for no good reason will be issued with a same day detention. According to DfE guidelines, 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.

Meden School's Support For Good Punctuality

We place a strong emphasis on good punctuality and 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 MCAS 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/Carers Support For Good Punctuality

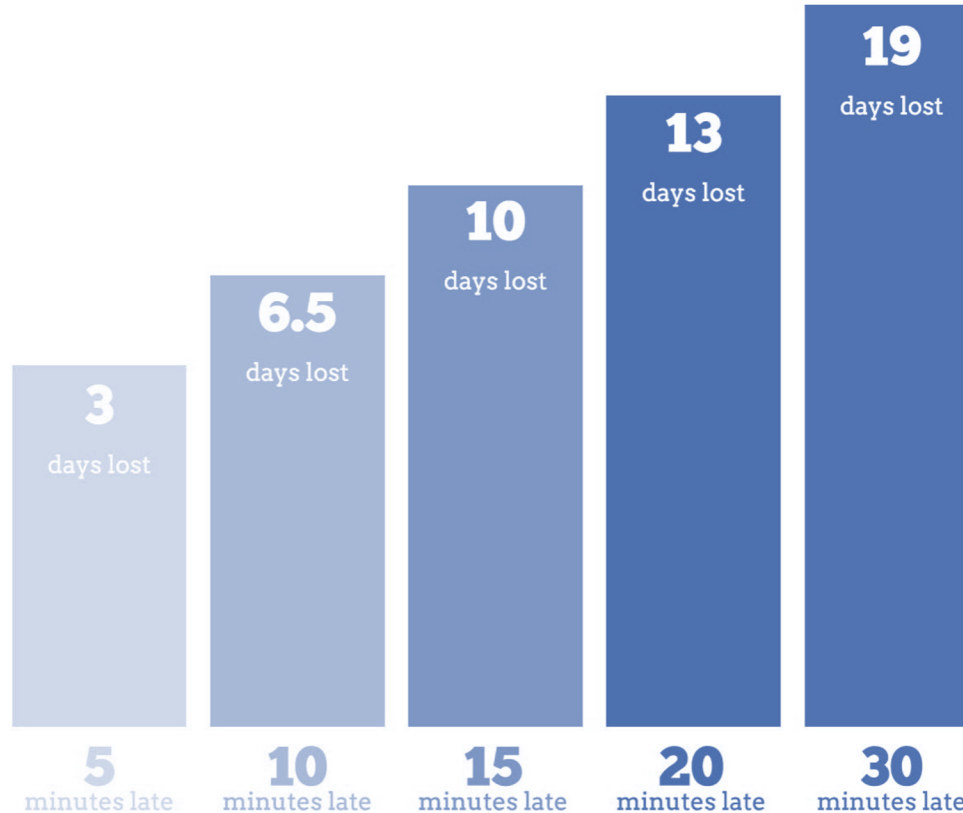
We would ask parents to support us in maintaining good punctuality by:

- 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

Did you know?

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

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

Students: Try to get to school 10 minutes early (8.35am), get settled and ready to learn!

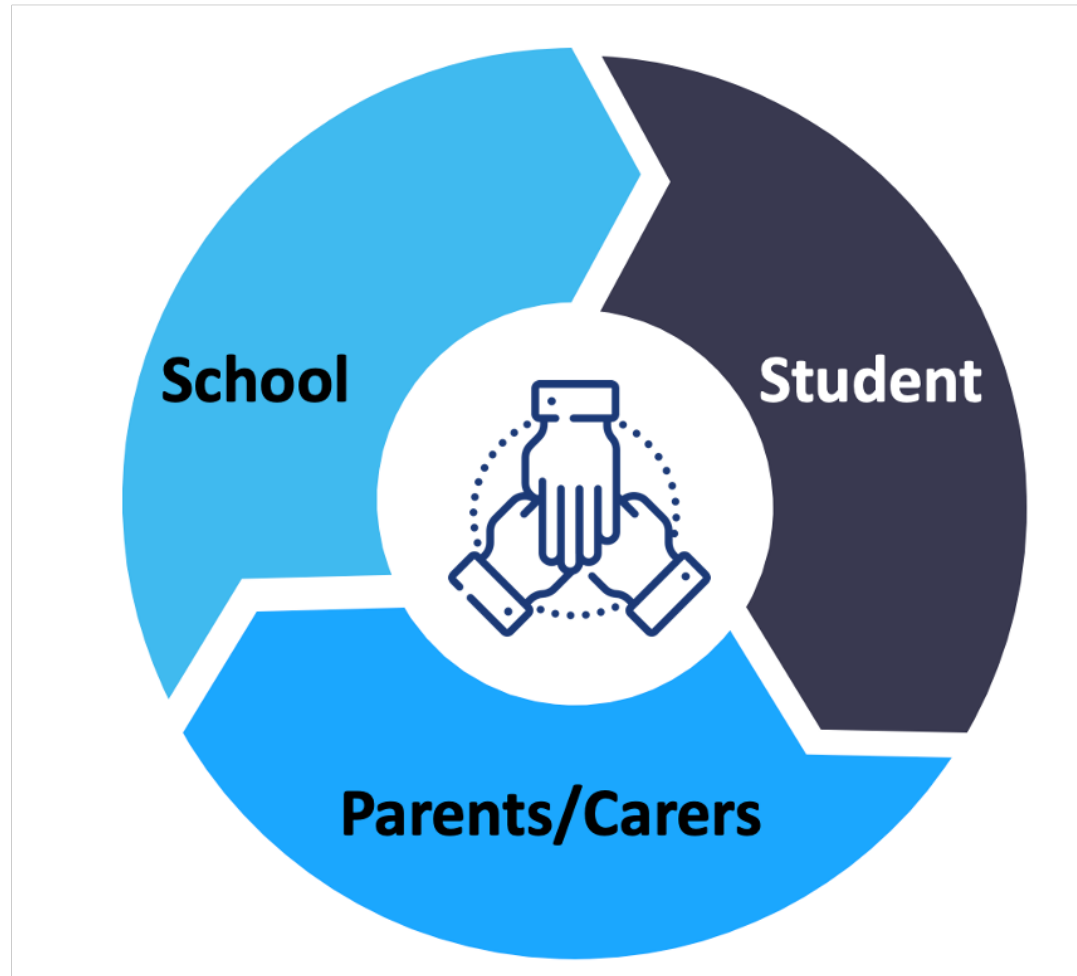
Ways for parents to encourage good attendance . . .

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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

Working In Partnership



We all want the same goal. We are here to support.

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.