



MEPA ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Updated & Adopted:	August 2025
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INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance is crucial for student progress and wellbeing. This policy sets out MEPA Academy's approach to attendance, aligned with the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024) and statutory safeguarding requirements, while respecting the independent school context including regulatory requirements of the Independent School Standards (ISS).

AIMS

- Promote excellent attendance and punctuality to optimise learning outcomes
- Ensure every student accesses full-time education as outlined in their contract with the school
- Identify and intervene early in attendance concerns
- Collaborate with parents/carers and external agencies where necessary
- Fulfil the school's safeguarding obligations under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and meet ISS regulations

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE

This policy complies with:

- DfE Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Statutory from August 2024)
- The Education Act 1996
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (2016)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PRINCIPAL	Mandy Ellen mellen@mepatraining.com
VICE PRINCIPAL	Emma Finch efinch@mepatraining.com
HEAD OF ACADEMY	Lewis Muir lmuir@mepatraining.com
SENIOR ATTENDANCE CHAMPION	Lewis Muir lmuir@mepatraining.com
ATTENDANCE OFFICER	Lewis Muir lmuir@mepatraining.com
KPAS ATTENDANCE OFFICER	Lauren Ferrara Lauren.Ferrara@kent.gov.uk
KPAS EXCLUSION INTERVENTION ADVISER	

PRINCIPAL

Ensure implementation of this policy.

Report attendance figures to governors and local authority.

SENIOR ATTENDANCE CHAMPION

Lead the strategic approach to attendance.
Coordinate with staff and external agencies.

ATTENDANCE OFFICER

Monitor daily attendance.
Liaise with families, pastoral staff, and external services.
Initiate legal intervention where necessary.

FORM TUTORS AND TEACHERS

Mark registers accurately and promptly.
Monitor pupil attendance and raise concerns.

PARENTS/CARERS

Ensure regular attendance.
Inform school promptly of any absences.
Avoid term-time holidays.

PUPILS

Attend school on time every day and aim for
Engage with interventions when attendance is a concern.
Attending to every timetabled lesson, on time

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Target Attendance: 96% or above
School hours: 8:40am to 5:00pm, punctuality is expected
Registers are taken twice daily (morning and afternoon)

REPORTING ABSENCES

Parents must notify the school by 9:00am each day of absence, stating the reason.
Unexplained absences will be followed up by phone call and may trigger a home visit.
Parents can notify via email at attendance@mepaacademy.com or call 01622 756644

DAY TO DAY PROCESSES

MEPA Academy is required by law to take an attendance register twice daily, using approved attendance codes which show whether a pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity off-site. Every half-day absence from MEPA Academy is classified as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the Principal and Attendance Team can make the decision about what absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents or carers cannot do so. Accurate information about the reason for absence must be collected and provided so that the correct decision can be made.

MEPA Academy will keep an electronic register, and will place all pupils onto this register. Our AM Register is taken at 08:40am, which is the first session of the school day and our PM Register is taken at 1:45pm at the start of Period 5. MEPA Academy will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

MEPA Academy school day starts at 08:40am and ends at 5:00pm.

Pupils are expected to have arrived by 08:40am and be present in their Tutor Time for AM Registration, which will be kept open until 09:00am.

Any pupil's arriving between 08:40am and 09:00am will be marked as L – Late Before Registration Closes.

Any Pupil whom arrives after 09:00am will be marked as U – Arrived in school after Registration Closed. This is recorded as an Unauthorised Absence.

FOLLOWING UP UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE AND ATTENDANCE LETTERS

Attendance is monitored daily and where any pupil we expect to attend does not attend, or stops attending without reason we will:

- Contact the parent and 2nd emergency contact via phone and email on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If we are unable to reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may request support from external agencies such as the police or social services
- Identify if the reason for absence is approved or not and allocate the correct attendance code
- Contact the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider undertaking a Home Visit, especially on day 3 of non-communication of absence
- Where relevant report any unexplained absence to a child's Early Help or Social Worker
- Invite parents to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting when appropriate, to discuss support that the pupil and parents may need to improve attendance and punctuality
- Make referrals to external agencies if identified this is an appropriate route of support
- When support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, a referral can be made to the Kent PRU and Attendance Service (KPAS) for statutory intervention or a Notice to Improve may be issued, which, if unsuccessful, may incur a penalty notice to be requested

If a student's attendance drops to less than 90% and there is no satisfactory reason for the absence, or a pattern emerges of persistent / intermittent absence, the attendance team will communicate this by sending letters to parents.

LESSON REGISTRATION, PUNCTUALITY & TRUANCY

The class register is taken at the start of every lesson, this will enable the school to monitor any suspected truancy from lessons. If it is found that a student has been truanting, this will be formally recorded as an unauthorised session absence and followed up by the Senior Attendance Champion.

Lateness to lesson will also be challenged and minutes late to lesson will be recorded on the register by the class teacher. Persistent lateness to lessons will be followed up by the Senior Attendance Champion and sanctions will be issued for this.

Pupils who leave school without permission after the register has been taken are putting themselves at risk. Any member of staff who witnesses a pupil leaving school in this way or who is suspicious about why a pupil is not in their lesson, should contact the Attendance Team immediately who will contact parents/carers once there is clarification that a pupil has left the school without permission.

At this point, the pupil reverts to being the responsibility of parents/carers who will then be advised to contact the police as they see fit.

PUPILS LEAVING THE SITE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

There may be occasions when pupils must leave the site during the school day, e.g., non-routine medical appointment (note must be provided), or a child falling ill during the day. When this happens pupils should leave via the reception. Other than in exceptional circumstances, pupils will only be allowed to leave if accompanied by their parent or another authorised adult.

MONITORING AND INTERVENTIONS

FIRST-DAY RESPONSE

Contact parents/carers by phone initially, with no response a follow up email is sent. Email is to be logged on Safeguarding platform.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

Defined as attendance below 90%

Individual support plans, family meetings, and external referrals are made.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT

- **Step 1: Prompt Family Engagement**
 - On the first day of unexplained absence, the school contacts parents/guardians via phone, text, or email to check on the child's wellbeing and reason for absence.
 - Families are encouraged to share barriers to attendance openly.

- **Step 2: Attendance Support Plan**
 - When attendance falls below 90%, a formal Attendance Support Plan (ASP) is developed in collaboration with the student, family, and relevant school staff.
 - Letter 2 Attendance Concern will be sent to parent/carer.
 - The ASP outlines clear attendance targets, support strategies (e.g., mentoring, pastoral support, mental health resources), and a review schedule.
- **Step 3: Multi-Agency Collaboration**
 - If attendance issues persist, the school initiates early help processes, involving external agencies such as educational welfare, health professionals, or social care when appropriate.
 - Regular multi-agency meetings are held to coordinate support and share progress.
- **Step 4: Formal Attendance Review**
 - Should attendance not improve after interventions, a formal meeting is held with the family, school leadership, and relevant agencies.
 - The meeting discusses further actions including legal interventions as a last resort, in accordance with local authority policies.

INCLUSION TIER	Working together to improve attendance	Attendance Rate	Actions
	EXPECT Aspire to high standards from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.	95-100%	Start of Year and then termly attendance expectations and updates sent to parents/students. Attendance Focus Week each term. 100% Attendance Rewards and Recognition for those who have improved attendance
TIER 1	MONITOR Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.	91-95%	Letter 1 Attendance Concern Pastoral Support Plan (PSP_ developed Letter will be logged on Safeguarding portal as an attendance concern
TIER 2	LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen and to	86-90%	Letter 2 Attendance Concern Meetings – parents requested to attend.

	<p>understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them</p>		<p>PSP update with Attendance Action Plan</p> <p>Letter will be logged on Safeguarding portal as an attendance concern</p>
	<p>FACILITATE AND SUPPORT Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where an absence is a symptom of wider issues.</p>		<p>Referrals and signposting to agencies, such as Early Help, CAMHS, Intense Support Advisor, School Health and offers of support and interventions in school</p> <p>PSP update with Attendance Action Plan</p> <p>All referrals to be logged on safeguarding portal as attendance actions and concerns as well as other related safeguarding concerns.</p>
TIER 3	<p>FORMALISE SUPPORT Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.</p>	81-85%	<p>Level 3 Attendance Meeting with SLT</p> <p>PSP update with Attendance Action Plan</p> <p>Letter will be logged on Safeguarding portal as an attendance concern</p>

	<p>ENFORCE Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.</p>	<p>80% or below</p>	<p>Referral for Statutory Intervention KCC KPAS requested or Penalty Notice Requested for unsuccessful Notice to Improve and further unauthorised absences/lateness have been recorded. Unauthorised Holiday Penalty Notice Requested for Termtime Holidays</p>
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WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

Inclusive Culture and Curriculum

- Promote a positive school culture valuing attendance through assemblies, rewards, and student voice.
- Adapt the curriculum and timetable where necessary to meet individual needs.
- **Staff Training and Roles**
 - Ensure all staff understand their role in promoting attendance and are trained to spot early signs of disengagement.
 - The Attendance Lead coordinates all attendance efforts and acts as a point of contact for families and agencies.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ABSENCE OR LATE ARRIVAL

Students are expected to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of their first lesson. All lessons start on the hour. GCSE students should arrive 15 minutes before morning and afternoon registration.

REPORTING ABSENCE ON THE DAY

Parents/carers must report any absence before the start of their first lesson by contacting the Academy: 01622 756644 or email info@mepacademy.com

Parents/carers must contact the Academy each day they are absent, if more than one day.

REPORTING LATE ARRIVAL

All students must report their late arrival at the reception where their lesson is taking place before going to class. There is no grace period for lateness; one minute late is still late.

ATTENDANCE AND ELIGIBILITY FOR SCHOOL TRIPS

Regular school attendance and punctuality are essential for students to fully benefit from their education and participate in the wider opportunities offered by the school.

Educational visits and trips are considered a privilege that supports learning and personal development.

Students are therefore expected to maintain at least 95% attendance, as well as satisfactory punctuality, in order to be eligible to participate in school trips, visits, and other off-site activities.

Where a student's attendance falls below 95%, or where there are concerns regarding persistent lateness to school or lessons, the school reserves the right to restrict or withdraw that student's participation in trips or visits. Repeated lateness disrupts learning and will be taken into account when determining eligibility.

Decisions regarding eligibility will be made at the discretion of the school and will take into account attendance records, punctuality records, reasons for absence or lateness, and any ongoing support or intervention plans.

The school may review attendance and punctuality in advance of a trip and inform parents/carers if a student is deemed ineligible to attend. In exceptional circumstances, the school may make allowances where there are legitimate or documented reasons for absence or lateness.

This measure is intended to promote good attendance, punctuality, and engagement with learning, and to ensure that educational opportunities are accessed by students who consistently meet the school's expectations. Any decision made by the school regarding a student's eligibility to attend a trip on the basis of attendance or punctuality will be final.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

Headteachers cannot grant leave of absence during term-time unless under exceptional circumstances.

All requests must be submitted in writing.

Unauthorised holidays may incur a Fixed Penalty Notice.

ATTENDANCE CODES

PRESENT AT SCHOOL

Code	Description	Statistical Classification
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Present

ATTENDING A PLACE OTHER THAN THE SCHOOL

Code	Description	Statistical Classification
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved Educational Activity
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
W	Attending work experience	Approved Educational Activity
B	Attending any other approved supervised educational activity	Approved Educational Activity
D	Dual registered at another school	Approved Educational Activity

Note: Codes B and K require an explanation when used, as per the statutory guidance.

ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

Code	Description	Statistical Classification
C	Leave of absence granted by the school	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence granted by the school for a pupil on a part-time timetable	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence granted by the school for a pupil on a part-time or remote education timetable	Authorised Absence
E	Excluded (but no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
H	Holiday (not authorised)	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness	Authorised Absence
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised Absence
O	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
Q	Not attending due to exceptional circumstances (e.g., pandemic, school closure)	Unauthorised Absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence

Code Description		Statistical Classification
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity
X	Not required to be in school (e.g., in some part-time cases)	Not Required to Attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (e.g., pandemic, school closure)	Unauthorised Absence
Z	Pupil not on roll	Not Required to Attend

Note: Codes C1, C2, and Q are newly introduced in the 2024

LEGAL & CONTRACTUAL SANCTIONS

The school may issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in liaison with local authorities, where applicable

Contractual actions may be taken for non-compliance with attendance expectations, including potential exclusion or withdrawal from school roll

Legal action under the Education Act 1996 may be pursued as a last resort

SAFEGUARDING AND CME

Poor attendance may be a safeguarding concern.

All unexplained absences are monitored in line with KCSIE.

Children missing 10 consecutive school days without contact may be referred to Children Missing Education (CME) service.

COMMUNICATION

Attendance is communicated through:

Weekly texts/emails to parents.

Termly reports to families.

Assemblies and rewards for good attendance.

ATTENDANCE REWARDS

Certificates for 100% and improved attendance.

Recognition in assemblies and school newsletters.

RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Attendance data and intervention records are securely stored and shared only with authorized staff or agencies on a need-to-know basis, respecting data protection principles.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school leadership and governing body and updated in response to changes in DfE guidance or legislation.

APPENDIX 1



DATE

Dear XX,

RE: XX – Year XX – Letter 1 Attendance Concern

I am writing with concern regarding Maddison's attendance to school. We aspire for all students to have a 100% attendance. Currently Maddison's attendance is XX%. This letter is automatically triggered as part of our Attendance policy when a student's attendance falls below 95%.

As each family's circumstances are different, we want to work with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupil welfare and wellbeing are really important to us at MEPA Academy, and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for students to experience a sense of belonging, success and fulfilment.

We will continue to support XXX's education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence. Over the next couple of months, we will continue to monitor XXX's attendance.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to get in touch via email at lmuir@mepatraining.com

Best wishes,

Lewis Muir
Head of Academy

APPENDIX 2



DATE

Dear XX,

RE: XX – Year XX – Letter 2 Attendance Concern

I am writing with concern regarding XXX's attendance to school. We aspire for all students to have a 100% attendance. Currently XXX's attendance is XX%. This letter is automatically triggered as part of our Attendance policy when a student's attendance falls below 90%.

We want to continue supporting XXX's education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence. We are requesting yourself as the parent/carer of XX, and XX meet with myself to look at how we can best support XX increasing their attendance at MEPA Academy.

Proposed Date and Time

Below is the proposed date and time of the parental meeting regarding XXX's attendance.

Date:

Time:

Location:

Please could you confirm your attendance to this meeting by emailing lmuir@mepatraining.com. If you are unable to attend the proposed date and time, please email with an alternative date and time suggestion.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Lewis Muir
Head of Academy

APPENDIX 3



DATE

Dear XX,

RE: XX – Year XX – Letter 3 Attendance Concern

I am writing with concern regarding XX's attendance to school. We aspire for all students to have a 100% attendance. Currently XX's attendance is XX%. This letter is automatically triggered as part of our Attendance policy when a student's attendance falls below 85%.

We want to continue supporting XX's education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence. However, due to XX's attendance not improving and falling below 85%, we will be requesting a Penalty Notice with Kent County Council.

In order to prevent this next step, we are requesting yourself as the parent/carer of XX, and XX meet with myself to look at how we can best support XX increasing their attendance at MEPA Academy.

Proposed Date and Time

Below is the proposed date and time of the parental meeting regarding XXX's attendance.

Date:

Time:

Location:

Please could you confirm your attendance to this meeting by emailing lmuir@mepatraining.com. If you are unable to attend the proposed date and time, please email with an alternative date and time suggestion.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Lewis Muir
Head of Academy