



# Meadow High School

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Headteacher: Mr Graham Cunningham

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Friday, 19th September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

A warm welcome to the start of the 2025-26 school year. We hope that you and your families have had a restful summer break. We would like to begin by thanking all our families who have consistently supported good school attendance. Your commitment ensures your children benefit fully from school life at Meadow. We know that pupils with good attendance tend to enjoy better wellbeing and achieve more in school than those who frequently miss days. Excellent attendance gives children the best chance to thrive in their learning, their friendships, and ultimately their life chances beyond Meadow High School. Young people only have a total of 2660 days in formal education and by the time they reach Meadow High School, 50% of these have gone. It is vital that we maximise the days they have left in order for all the students to leave with the knowledge, skills and character to contribute and influence the communities they will be part of when they leave.

**Why Attendance Is So Important:** Regular school attendance is crucial for your child's wellbeing, achievement, and wider development. Being in school every day helps them stay on track academically and keeps them engaged with their teachers and friends. It also helps build good habits like punctuality and responsibility that will serve them throughout life. In short, everyday counts. Even a few days of absence can quickly add up and significantly impact learning. Thank you again to all parents/carers who send their children to school consistently – your support makes a huge difference, and we celebrate those students who achieved high attendance last year.

**Government's Attendance Expectations:** You may be aware that the Department for Education (DfE) introduced a new National Framework for school attendance and penalty notices, effective from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024. This is designed to improve consistency across England in how schools and local authorities respond to absences.

### Please note the key changes:

- Rolling 3-Year Tracking of Absence:** Unauthorised absences are now tracked on a cumulative three-year basis. If a child has 10 or more unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 full school days) within any 10-week period, schools must consider issuing a fine. Importantly, any penalty notices or unauthorised holiday from last school year will carry forward under the new rules.
- Higher Fines & Escalation for Term-Time Holidays:** The fine for unauthorised school absence (such as an unapproved term-time holiday) has increased for the first time since 2012. From August 2024, each penalty notice is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. If a second fine is issued for the same child within a 3-year period, it will automatically be at the higher £160 rate with no reduced amount. There is also a limit of two fines in any three-year period per parent for the same child. After that (i.e. a third offence), schools can no longer issue a penalty notice-instead, authorities will move to other legal



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interventions such as parenting orders or prosecution in court. In court, parents could face much steeper fines (up to £2,500) or other sanctions, so it's crucial to avoid reaching this stage. Please also be aware that by law Headteachers cannot grant any leave for family holidays during term time except in truly exceptional circumstances. The process for requesting exceptional leave is attached to this letter.

We understand that these Government rules may sound strict. **Please remember that our aim is always to support families and avoid fines wherever possible.** Our priority is to work in partnership with parents so that issues can be addressed early and you are never put in a position of facing a penalty unnecessarily.

Meadow High School follows a clear, supportive process to promote good attendance. We continually monitor pupil's attendance and our first response is support, not punishment. School staff (Form Tutors, Heads of Year or the Attendance Officer) will reach out to discuss any challenges you or your child are facing. We will offer advice and can arrange supportive face-to-face meetings to identify and address any issues, and put in place help to improve attendance.

Please note that this supportive, staged approach applies to all students across Meadow High School. Good attendance is just as critical for an 11-year-old in Year 7, just starting their secondary school journey, as it is for a 17-year-old in sixth form. The law requires regular attendance and we would like to help instil good habits and provide support right from the start of Year 7 and to continue that through post-16 education.

In summary, **we are committed to working with you** to ensure your child attends school regularly, and to navigate any difficulties together. The new Government measure are there to underpin the importance of attendance, but our focus remains on encouragement and support. We will continue to recognise and celebrate good attendance. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact your school – we are here to help.

Thank you for your ongoing support in this matter. By reinforcing the value of education through good attendance, you are opening the door to a brighter future for your child. Let's continue to work in partnership and make sure every student can achieve their full potential.

Yours sincerely,

**Toni Kelliher**  
Attendance Officer

**Graham Cunningham**  
Headteacher

**Article 23:- 'A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community.'**

