

Attendance policy

Introduction

Eastwood Primary School and Nursery values every child and recognises those families who strive to achieve good attendance. We are also committed to working with families to identify reasons for persistent absence, supporting them in improving attendance so that every child has a chance to succeed.

For a student to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards achieving the school target of **96.5%** attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to children and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. If there are problems which affect a student's attendance, we will work in partnership with parents and children to resolve the problems as quickly and effectively as possible.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school's attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. The school will examine the attendance figures weekly and set targets in accordance with the decision of Governors. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving set goals.

We will adhere to the Code of Conduct under the Provision of the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2004.

Attendance Targets

Our school target is **96.5%**. All children are expected to achieve this target. The progress towards our target will be analysed weekly by the Attendance Lead, in conjunction with the Local Authority and the LATE Team (Lead Attendance Team at Eastwood).

Promoting Attendance

The school will use as many opportunities as possible to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure their children receive their education.

We will also reward and celebrate attendance by

- Rewarding overall attendance and improvement through the use of daily, weekly, termly and yearly rewards.
 - Daily Rewards:
 - Dojo Points - Every child has their own Dojo account. If they are in class and completing their early morning work before 8.50am they receive 3 Dojo points. Children can exchange their Dojo points for an Eastwood cheque which they can use to buy items in the attendance shop.
 - Weekly Rewards: *Awarded during the weekly celebration assembly*
 - Class Trophies – The classes with the best overall weekly attendance, per key stage, is awarded the attendance trophy and an extra 20 minutes Green Time. Green Time is an allocated time where children can enjoy a range of activities and games to acknowledge their effort to improve attendance.
 - Fast Pass – Each week the name of every child who has been at school from Monday to Friday is placed into the weekly Fast-Pass draw. One child, per year group, is randomly selected using the year group name generator. Children whose names are drawn receive the Fast-Pass for the week. Children with Fast-Passes, along with a friend, are allowed to go to the front of the school dinner line, sit at a special top table in the dining hall. They also receive a range of privileges, for the week, agreed by each class at the start of the year. Each time a child receives the Fast-Pass they are awarded an extra 4 Dojo points.
 - Termly Rewards:
 - Mickey on the Gate – Mickey and Minnie Mouse greet children at the playground gate throughout the term. They hand out Mickey Tickets to any children who are in school between 8.35am and 8.45am. If a child receives a Mickey Ticket they earn an additional 5 Dojo points.
 - Most Improved and Best overall attendance reward for the term – At the end of each term the class with the best overall attendance and the class with most improved for the term are acknowledged with a class reward. This may vary from term to term and will be an experience or reward that all members of the classes will enjoy.

- End of the Academic Year:
 - School Target reward – All children whose attendance is 96.5% (the school target) or above are invited to participate in a fun experience. This event may vary from year-to-year.
- Each child will receive an Awarding Attendance Letters at the end of each term. The different colour letter reflects the child's attendance to date. (Yellow 100%, Green 99 - 96.55%, Orange 96-91%, Purple 90% or less and requires improvement).
- Celebrating and publicising good and improving attendance for all years, in weekly celebration assemblies and on the school APP.
- Promoting good and improving attendance in all rooms and shared spaces in the school.

Summary of Legislation:

The legal framework governing school attendance and the responsibilities of parents, schools and the Local Authority is set out by a succession of Education and other Acts and regulations, including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- Children Act 1989
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2004
- The Education (Parenting Order) (England) Regulations 2004

All children of compulsory school age (the term after a child's fifth birthday to the last Friday in June of a child's year 11) should receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under Section 444 (1) and 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996 and its subsequent amendments, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which s/he is registered. Failure to carry out this duty can lead to fines of up to £2,500 per parent and/or a three month custodial sentence.

School Registration Procedures

School Registers are legal documents and should be marked with accuracy.

Registers are taken twice daily at 8.50am and 1.05pm when pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absence.

Any child who arrives after 8.50am but before 9.30am will be marked as late. (Code L)

A child who arrives after 9.30am will be marked as late after registration closes (Code U), unless the school has received appropriate communication from a parent/carers detailing an appointment or other authorised absence, in which case the appropriate absence code will be entered by a member of staff / attendance team.

All children arriving late are recorded in the late book, which is monitored weekly by the attendance lead.

- All children must be marked as either present or absent on their class register / the correct code must be used when recording attendance. Staff must take care to record the mark on SIMS carefully, so that missing marks do not occur. It is a legal requirement that all registers must be completed for both safeguarding and for data purposes.
- Registration in the afternoon will be taken and closed before 1.10pm. Registration must be carried out by the teacher teaching the children during that lesson.
- If for any reason a register cannot be taken on SIMS a paper register will be taken and forwarded to the school

office.

- The register information is used by school administrative staff to contact parents/carers about their absent children and if incorrect can result in embarrassment to the staff and distress for the parent /carer. It is the parents/carers responsibility to make sure their contact details are up to date.

A member of the LATE Team at Eastwood will take responsibility for registration procedures, monitoring overall attendance and advising the Head Teacher and governors. He/she will be responsible for ensuring that Class Teachers keep registers in the correct manner. If a child is not present during registration they will be left blank in the registers with the relevant code written in by the administrative team to show the reason for absence.

Code	Code Meaning
B	Educated off site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration (attending other establishment)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed / days in excess)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (NOT medical / dental appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registration closes at 9.30am)
M	Medical / dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observation
S	Study leave
T	Travellers absence
U	Late (after registration closes at 9.30am)
V	Educational visits
W	Work experience

It should be noted that the Education Act 1996 s.434 (6) states that a person who contravenes or fails to comply with any requirements imposed by regulations is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine. The Head Teacher will meet regularly with the School Attendance Service to discuss attendance issues highlighted by the school's monitoring system.

Student Absence Protocol

Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure they receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special education needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996).

The Department for Education introduced the new persistent absence threshold of 10% from the start of the 2015-2016 school year. This means that any student who falls below 90% attendance will become a persistent absence pupil and therefore be reported to National and Local Government through the school census.

Partnership

We wish to work in partnership with parents and carers. We will discuss with pupils and contact parents if there are concerns about attendance. We expect to be contacted by parents if they have any concerns about their child's attendance, or any other matter. The school will arrange to meet with parents who have concerns as a matter of priority and work with them in the interest of their child.

Parents/carers are requested to contact school **before** 8.50am to report their child's absence and to send a note to explain the absence when their child returns. SIMS data will be analysed after the morning registration period has closed (9.30am), by a member of the attendance team.

In the event that no contact is made and after the registers have been closed:

- The school will make a first day absent, contact call with the named parent/carer as indicated by SIMS. A member of the attendance team will update the registers with any received information.
- Where absence is due to an appointment parents/carers are required to provide evidence such as an appointment card, copy of prescription or letter.
- If a pupil fails to attend school and contact with the parent and carer cannot be made, the school may take action such as reporting the child as missing in education or informing outside agencies to provide support.

Authorised Absence during Term Time

Authorised absence includes illness and medical or dental appointments that unavoidably fall during the school day. However, parents/carers are encouraged to make appointments outside school hours and where possible are expected to bring their child into school before and/or after the appointment, rather than missing a whole day's education.

Religious observance may also be authorised. Eastwood Primary School and Nursery recognises our diverse multi-faith society and respects that on occasions religious festivals may fall within the school term, therefore absence may be authorised as 'special leave' if advance notice is given by the parent/carer.

Following amendments to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013, Head Teachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are *exceptional circumstances*. Only the Head Teacher can approve authorised leave for *exceptional circumstances*.

All requests for authorised leave during term time **must be made in writing to the Head Teacher**. Each case is considered on an individual basis and at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Unauthorised Leave during Term Time

Eastwood Primary and Nursery has legal responsibility to monitor and safeguard all children who have unauthorised absence during the school term.

Unauthorised absence is recorded if the school deems the absence as unnecessary or unexplained for example shopping trips, birthdays, day trips and in most cases holidays.

An unauthorised mark (Code U) will also be given if a child arrives after registration has closed and no reasonable explanation is given.

If the decision is made not to authorise, a letter will be sent to the parent confirming this fact including a warning that a penalty notice may be issued. If a holiday is then taken without authorisation the school will complete a request signed by the Head Teacher (or designated deputy), for a consideration of issuing a penalty notice, within two weeks of the child returning to school, and send it to the Early Help and Family Support who will decide whether to issue the penalty notice.

The current penalty notice stands at £60 rising to £120 [if not paid within 21 days] to **each** parent for **each** child taken out of school.

Further details can be found on the Local Authority website: www.southend.gov.uk

Medical evidence

If a child's attendance is below 90% the parents/ carers are required to provide medical evidence in order for the

absence to be authorised as an “I code” (Illness - NOT medical / dental appointments). The following is classified as medical evidence:

- A doctors stamp on either a school medical slip, which can be requested from the office, or on any stationary provided by the doctor (appointment card, letterhead etc)
- A copy of a prescription
- Medication (this can be shown to the office staff)
- Appointment letter
- Letter from the doctor or other medical professional

Lateness

- Punctuality must be recorded on SIMS in right click comment boxes, staff must record the number of minutes late a student is. The Attendance Lead will analyse patterns and in liaison with the Local Authority to put in appropriate interventions to prevent persistent lateness to school.
- Each half term letters will be sent to families whose children have had missed more than 40 minutes of school due to being late throughout the half term.
- Persistent lateness may result in a penalty fine from the Local Authority. If a child is regularly having unauthorised absences, this could include ‘U’ codes, then the Local Authority may penalise parents of child who is persistently late to school following the closure of the register.
- Children who are persistently late for school will be issued with ‘Payback’ time. This will be on a sliding scale relating to the number of minutes late and may be at break or lunchtime. A text messages will be sent to parents/carers giving details if the Payback occurs.

Penalty notices

Eastwood Primary and Nursery follow the guidelines set by the Southend-on-Sea Local Authority. A penalty notice can be issued, from the Local Authority, if there is unauthorised leave during term time, which is defined as:

- 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taken during an academic year
- Attendance is below 90% during the preceding 12 weeks before the leave was taken

Penalty notices may be issued following assessment of unacceptable levels of unauthorised absence of 20 school sessions or more within a 24 week period in term time.

In accordance with the Local Authority revised penalty notice, panels may be held and parents/carers fined for:

- Overt truancy
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed). In most cases the child concerned will have had less than 90% attendance in the current academic year.

Procedure for the issue of a Penalty Notice

The issue of penalty notices will be strictly administered by Early Help Family Support Services to ensure independence of judicial intervention.

No penalty notice can be issued without prior written warning. No one parent may receive more than one separate penalty notice resulting from the unauthorised absence of an individual child in any twelve-month period. A penalty notice will be issued to each parent of each child exhibiting the relevant patterns of unauthorised absence. Therefore within any twelve month period each parent can receive a separate penalty notice for each child that exhibits the relevant pattern of unauthorised absence and, where appropriate, in respect of more than one child.

The current penalty notice stands at £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt. In the cases where the penalty has not been paid within 28 days of issue, the case may be escalated to prosecution for non-school attendance.

Frequent Absence Procedure

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. This should be reported to the Attendance Lead, by completing a purple attendance form.

Level 1:

If a child's attendance is below the school target, 96.5%, as a result of authorised absence, regular patterns of absence developing, high number of illnesses (I code) without medical evidence to support then a member of the LATE team will contact the parent / carer. If the attendance does not improve over a 4 week period the parent/carers will be invited to attend a Level 2 meeting.

A member of the LATE team will also contact the parent / carer if a child develops a pattern of persistent lates.

Level 2:

Level 2 meetings will be held if attendance continues to be a concern. Parents/carers will be sent a level 2 letter requesting that they attend a Level 2 meeting with the Attendance Lead and the Local Authority because their child's attendance has been classified as persistent absences by the Local Authority. At this meeting an attendance action plan written, including an attendance target. A review date will also be agreed during the meeting. All parents/carers that do not attend will receive a cold call home visit from the Local Authority Officer.

The Department for Education introduced the new persistent absence threshold of 10% from the start of this school year 2015/2016. This means that any student who falls below 90% attendance will become a persistent absence pupil and therefore reported to National and Local Government through the school census.

Level 3:

For cases not meeting attendance targets at level 2 reviews, a referral will be made to the Local Authority to work with at level 3. They will carry out weekly home visits with the aim to support families to remove barriers to attendance and reduce persistent absence.

For cases identified at level 2 with no complex needs or recognised barriers to attending school an Attendance Panel can be arranged. At least 18 unauthorised absences **within a 24 week** period are needed to have an Attendance Panel (Southend Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices).

Attendance Panels must be held with a senior member of staff, school governor and chaired by a Local Authority Attendance Officer or Team Leader. Parents/carers will be issued with a Final Warning Notice and issued a Penalty Fine on the next unauthorised absence in the next school half term.

All cases held at level 3 that do not make significant improvement with attendance and do not have mitigating reasons for absence will be heard at a Pupil Planning Meeting chaired by the Local Authority School Attendance Officer, a school member of staff is expected to attend as well as the parent/carers. The school will need to bring to the meeting an up-to-date attendance certificate. This is a formal meeting with a caution to parents/carers regarding outcome could include a penalty notice or referral to magistrate's court. The primary aim being to agree an action plan with parent/carers and school for immediate return to regular attendance. A first warning letter will be issued at the end of the meeting. Following a first warning a review will be held to look at improvement. If there is no substantial improvement, parents/carers will be issued with a Final Warning Notice and issued a Penalty Fine on the next unauthorised absence in the next school half term or evidence may be gathered to take the parents/carers to court.

A Welcome Back

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to welcome back all children in their class after an absence. They must support the student to catch up on missed work and must also bring the student up-to-date on any information that has been passed to other children.

We will work towards ensuring that all children feel supported and valued, sending a clear message that if a student is absent, he/she is missed. This may take the form of homework or catch up lessons.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body, Head Teacher and staff will ensure there is no differential application of the policy and

procedures on any grounds, particularly of ethnic or national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexuality. They will also ensure that the concerns of children are listened to and appropriately addressed.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance and punctuality of their child both inside and outside the school. They will be encouraged to work in partnership with the school to assist the school in maintaining high standards of attendance and punctuality and will have the opportunity to raise with the school any issues arising from the operation of the policy.

All Staff

All staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed, and consistently and fairly applied. Mutual support amongst all staff in the implementation of the policy is essential. Staff has a key role in advising the Head Teacher on the effectiveness of the policy and procedures. They also have responsibility, with the support of the school leadership team, for implementing the agreed policy and procedures consistently.

LATE (Lead Attendance Team at Eastwood)

The attendance team is responsible for monitoring the attendance records on SIMS each day. The Attendance Lead, along with the Local Authority, will meet each week to monitor attendance. All members of the attendance team follow the Code of Conduct, School Attendance Policy and Legal requirements.

Headteacher

The Head Teacher will be responsible for the school's policy and procedures, and may delegate aspects of its day-to-day implementation and management to a designated member of the school's leadership team.

Governing Body

In addition to the Local Authority and DfE [Department for Education] the Governing Body will establish, in consultation with the Head Teacher, staff, children and parents/carers, the policy for the promotion of attendance and punctuality and keep it under regular review. It will ensure that it is communicated to children and parents/carers, is non-discriminatory and the school's expectations about student attendance and punctuality are clear. Governors will support the school in maintaining high standards of attendance and punctuality. Carole Roast is Eastwood's Primary and Nursery Governor in charge of attendance.

ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW FOR EASTWOOD 2017

Target: (from School Development Plan) To ensure attendance is improving year on year and every year group achieves above the national average (96.1)

