



Attendance Policy

This policy was agreed by Governors on:

Date:.....

To be reviewed:.....

Chair of Governors:.....

Head Teacher:

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Aims..... | 3 |
| 2. Legislation and guidance..... | 3 |
| 3. School procedures..... | 4 |
| 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence..... | 6 |
| 5. Strategies for promoting attendance..... | 7 |
| 6. Attendance monitoring..... | 8 |
| 7. Roles and responsibilities..... | 8 |
| 8. Monitoring arrangements..... | 9 |
| 9. Links with other policies..... | 9 |
| Appendix 1: Initial first contact..... | 10 |
| Appendix 2: Second letter contact..... | 11 |

1) Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if pupils are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school regularly.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DFE) and refers to the DFE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2010
- The Education Regulations 2011
- The Education Regulations 2013
- The Education Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document, and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be

recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, (amended 2013) headteachers **may not grant any** leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family may apply for a leave of absence if they believe there are exceptional circumstances which warrant it. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

3. School procedures

3.1: Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

A register is a legal document and must be completed accurately. This is also particularly important in the event of an emergency, such as a fire.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

3.2 Registration Procedures

The school day starts at 8.45am and finishes at 3.05pm. Registration will commence at 8.45am. Classroom doors are open from 8.35am. If you arrive at school after registration has been completed, please take your child into school via the office, where you will need to sign them in.

- All pupils are to be in school prior to the registers being marked at 8:45am.
- Registration will take place at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions of school.

- Morning registers are marked and submitted by 8.55am. Pupils arriving between 8.50 - 9.30am will be marked with L for late. Any child arriving after 9:30am will be marked as U unauthorised late.
- If a child is late because of a medical and other valid reason they will be marked accordingly.
- Afternoon registers are marked in class and submitted by 1.05 pm.
- Pupils leaving the school during the day must report to the office to be signed out.
- Pupils returning during the school day must report to the school office to be signed in.
- If a class is on an all day trip, the register must be completed for both the morning and afternoon sessions, coding as appropriate to the activity attended.

3.3 Unplanned absence

1st Day:

Parents must notify school on the first day of an unplanned absence-for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health by 9am or as soon as practically possible. If no contact is made by the parent/carer, school will telephone home.

2nd Day:

If the child is still absent and no contact has been made by the parent/carer, school will again telephone home.

3rd Day:

If the child is still absent and no contact has been made by the parent/carer, school will visit the home. If there is no response, school will inform the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) of the child's continued absence.

3.4 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However we encourage parents to make medical or dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents/carers are required to complete a leave of absence form for appointments made in advance. We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

Applications for other types of absence in term time can also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.5 Lateness and punctuality

If a pupil arrives late but before the register has closed, the pupil will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the headteacher.

3.6 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.7 Reporting to parents

Parents are informed of their child's attendance for each academic year on their child's annual written report. However if though monitoring (see section 6) a child's attendance becomes a concern the Headteacher will meet with parents to discuss reasons for nonattendance and if appropriate a plan will be out in place to support e.g Team around the family meetings (TAFs).

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Authorised absences are those which the school agree are unavoidable, for example, illness, family bereavement etc. and absences for which leave has been granted e.g. medical appointments; where possible appointment letters from GPs/hospitals should also be forwarded to the school.

4.2 Absences during term time

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made at least 2 weeks in advance, by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within 5 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments as explained in sections 3.4 and 3.6.
- Religious observance-where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes-this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

4.3 What constitutes as an unauthorised absence?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school considers avoidable, for example, birthdays, shopping, day trips and holidays.

An absence is unauthorised until an acceptable written explanation is received.

4.4 Holidays

Under DFE legislation as from 1 September 2013, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Family holidays are not regarded as exceptional circumstances. If parents decide to take a holiday without the Head Teacher's authorisation, their child's absences will be recorded as '**unauthorised**'.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each week attendance is celebrated in a weekly assembly where a certificate is given to the class with the highest attendance. Individual certificates are also given to reward children who have 100% attendance at the end of each term.

6. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis by our Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) (Cath Barratt) who reports to the SLT around concerns. If a pupil's absence goes below 95% an initial letter expressing concern will be sent out. (Appendix 1). However if the attendance does not improve after this initial contact, a further letter will be sent inviting parents to a meeting. (Appendix 2)

At this meeting notes will be taken and steps forward/actions recorded. An Early Help Assessment Form may be completed if an ongoing need is identified. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to remain a concern, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Governors will request attendance information from the Head Teacher termly.
- Ensure that the attendance policy is carried out.
- Ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders.
- Take responsibility for ensuring this policy is maintained and updated regularly.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and recording it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and identifying issues.

7.3 The School

The school will:

- Communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- Follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school, initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- Report to the Attendance and Engagement Team and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- Report to the Government on attendance twice a year.
- Consistently administer the attendance procedure.

- Ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Promote good attendance.
- Contact parents if attendance is a concern – see appendices 1 & 2

7.3 The Attendance Officer (HTLA)

The attendance officer will

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

7.4 Parents/ Carers

Parents/Carers will

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Inform the school of the reason for any absence on the first day of absence and confirm the expected date of return.
- Ensure the school has up to date emergency contact details.
- Keep the school informed of any barriers to their children attending regularly.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

9 Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1
First letter - monitoring

Dear Mr and Mrs

Re: _____

Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if pupils are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school regularly.

As you may be aware Eynsham Community Primary and the Eynsham Partnership Academy work closely together to monitor children's attendance. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age helps your child later on in life, and for every day your child is absent you are making it more difficult for them to make progress.

The Government has indicated that an attendance of 96% is satisfactory. Any child with 95% or below will be monitored.

During our routine check of the attendance figures for the whole school for **Term 1**, I am concerned to find that _____ has only attended _____% of the required sessions. We will be monitoring your child's attendance closely and if there is not a significant improvement in the attendance percentage you will be invited into school to discuss the matter further.

We have noted that a period of sickness over this short monitoring period (7 weeks) has had a significant impact on your child's percentage of attendance and have taken this into consideration.

Or

We have noted that an 'unauthorised' holiday has had a significant impact on your child's percentage of attendance and expect that this will now improve as the year goes on.

If you have any specific queries regarding this letter, or you would like to discuss your child's attendance further then please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

Ginny Bayliss
Acting Headteacher

Appendix 2
Second letter – invite to interview

Dear Mr and Mrs xxx

Following my letter on the _____ it has been noted that child and child's attendance has continued to fall and is well below the 96% that the government considers 'satisfactory'. It now stands at % (child) and % (child)

I would like to invite you to school for an attendance meeting to discuss child and child's attendance on:

Date:

Time:

The meeting will be finished in time for you to pick the children up.

Please notify the school office as soon as possible if you cannot make this meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Ginny Bayliss
Acting Headteacher