



Edwards Hall Primary School

Attendance Policy

Reference:	Attendance Policy
Responsibility of:	Inclusion Lead
Date Issued:	June 2018
Governor Approved:	June 2018
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Rationale

At Edwards Hall Primary School we expect all children to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Roles and Responsibilities

The various stakeholders in school attendance have the following roles and responsibilities:

Parents and Carers

- Parents should ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Parents should provide the school with up to date information about points of contact and those with 'parental responsibility'.
- Parents or carers should contact the school on the first day of a pupil's absence, giving a reason and also the date on which they are expected to return to school.
- If an appointment has to be made for medical reasons, this should be made outside school time whenever possible. Ideally, the appointment card should be shown in advance to the School Office or to the pupil's Class Teacher.
- Parents should not arrange holidays during term time.

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body has the following statutory duties in relation to school attendance. It will ensure that:

- Admission and attendance registers are properly kept;
- Attendance statistics are made available to the DfE and the LA, including informing the LA if a pupil has been continuously absent for two weeks or more (without a medical certificate);

The Head Teacher

- The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for attendance and ensures that the school meets the legal requirements.
- The Head Teacher ensures that staff provide a positive approach to attendance across the school, using agreed strategies.
- The Head Teacher will ensure that parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission. This will be supported in the Home School Agreement.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring the school rigorously monitors attendance and for taking action to further improve attendance.
- The Head Teacher has a duty under The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make a return to the Local Authority where there is poor pattern of attendance or a pupil has been absent for more than two weeks with no explanation.
- Southend on Sea Borough Council LA requires that returns of attendance be made each half term.
- The Head Teacher should ensure that the school works in effective partnership with other agencies which may support attendance issues, e.g. Youth Offender Service, Connexions, Social Care, Health Services and Traveller Education Services.

The Administrator and Inclusion Leader

- The Administrator takes oversight of registration procedures, ensuring that staff registers are completed in the correct manner, monitoring overall attendance and advising the Head Teacher.
- The Inclusion Leader gives attendance issues a high profile in the school, for example through displays detailing class, year group and whole school attendance, updated half termly.
- The Inclusion Leader is responsible for supporting class teachers in following up all attendance issues and, if necessary, meeting parents to discuss ways the school can support them in addressing attendance issues.
- The Administrator and Inclusion Leader meet regularly with the Local Authority to discuss attendance issues highlighted by the school's monitoring system.

The Class Teacher

- Class Teachers have a vital role to play in raising the attendance and punctuality in our school.
- The Class Teacher ensures that registers are called promptly and correctly. The registers will be closed by 9.30am and by 1.15pm (KS1 and EYFS) or 1.45pm (KS2).
- The Class Teacher will notify the Inclusion Leader of any attendance concerns.
- The Class Teacher will notify the Inclusion Leader if a pupil is experiencing particular difficulties that have led to absence.
- If there are any Child Protection concerns, the class teacher should inform the designated person for Child Protection, on the first day of absence.

School Office

- The School will contact the parent or carer by phone on the first and on subsequent days of absence if the absence has not been notified.
- If, after five days, no reason for absence has been given a letter will be sent to parents.
- After 10 consecutive days of unexplained absence, the Local Authority will be notified (see Head Teacher's and Governing Body's roles, above).

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- The school provides an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important and that they will be missed if they are absent or late and that follow-up action will be taken.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy and practice.
- Good attendance awards will be presented at the end of each term and school year.
- Individual class attendance will be celebrated in assembly and on displays. Each class achieving 100% attendance will receive a certificate and £10.00 voucher to spend on their class.
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The Inclusion Leader and Local Authority will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents are reminded regularly, (via letter, the Home-School Agreement, parents consultation meetings etc) of the importance of good attendance.

Attendance Concerns

When a pupil is absent for no apparent reason it is the duty of all staff to consider possible causes. When considering reasons they should bear in mind factors that could relate to child protection, behaviour and discipline and the anti-bullying policies, so that issues can be dealt with, with the support of the whole school staff.

Persistent Absenteeism

Any pupil whose attendance falls to or below 90% is defined as a Persistent Absentee. Any child with attendance at 90% or below must be supported by official documentation proving appointments, on-going illness/ medical conditions. The Administrator/Inclusion Leader will inform the parent/carer of their child's status as a persistent absentee and inform them of the need for medical documentary proof. Without such documentation, absences are recorded as unauthorised and will continue to be unauthorised until documentation has been received by the School.

Medical evidence

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may also be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90% (as above).
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

Frequent Absence Procedure

Class teachers should notify the Inclusion Leader of any attendance concerns. The Inclusion Leader and Administrator work closely together to monitor attendance for individual pupils on a regular basis. The school adopts Southend on Sea LA's staged approach to attendance, as set out in the LA's policy, strategy and guidance document.

Level 1

If a pupil's attendance is below the school target of 93% as a result of authorised absence, regular patterns of absence, a high number of illnesses (without medical evidence to support them) then the Inclusion Leader or School Office will contact the parent/carer because the child may be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee. The school will issue the parent with an attendance target to meet over a 4 week period. If attendance does not improve over this 4 week period and/or attendance falls below 90%, the parent/carer will be invited to attend a Level 2 meeting.

Level 2

Level 2 meetings are held if attendance continues to be a concern. Parents/carers will be sent a Level 2 letter inviting them to attend a Level 2 meeting with the Inclusion Leader and the Local Authority. At this meeting an attendance plan will be written including an attendance target. A review date will also be agreed. Parents and carers that do not attend will be contacted by the Local Authority.

Level 3

For cases that do not meet attendance targets set at Level 2 reviews, a referral will be made to the Local Authority requesting them to support the family further. This may include weekly home visits which will aim to remove the barriers to attendance and reduce persistent absence.

For Level 2 cases with no complex needs an Attendance Panel may be arranged. At least 18 unauthorised absences within a 24 week period are needed for an Attendance Panel to take place (Southend Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices – Regulation 2004).

Cases held at Level 3 that do not make significant improvements will be subject to further action by the Local Authority. This is set out in Southend on Sea's Local Authority Code of Conduct under the Provision of the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2004.

The Children's Services Department can be contacted directly at The Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, SS2 6ER, or by telephone 01702 215007.

Penalty notices

A penalty notice can be issued 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;
- AND
- Attendance is below 90% during the preceding 12 weeks before the leave was taken

In accordance with Southend-on-Sea's revised penalty notice, panels may be held and parents and carers fined for:

- overt truancy

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- persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

In most cases the pupil concerned will have had less than 90% attendance in the current academic year.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are occasionally exceptional circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance. The Head Teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school, if the leave is granted.

Holiday Requests

In line with amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, the school will not authorize absence for the reason of a family holiday. The school will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Rewards for good attendance

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

Lateness

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Inclusion Leader will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority.

Pupils arriving at school a long time after the close of the register will be given a U code (Late after registration closes). If this occurs frequently then this can be classed as unauthorised absence and may trigger the Frequent Absence Procedure in accordance with Southend on Sea LA's policy, strategy and guidance document.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the

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information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Inclusion Leader, who will contact the parents or guardian.

Disability Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been written with reference to and in consideration of the school's Disability Equality Scheme. Assessment will include consideration of issues identified by the involvement of disabled children, staff and parents and any information the school holds on disabled children, staff and parents.

This policy was revised in JUNE 2018