
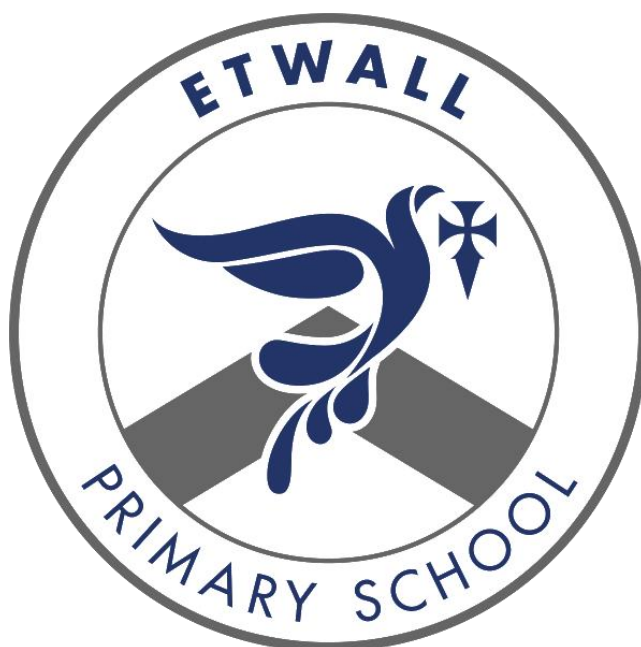


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This policy has been reviewed on 12/07/2024 and has been impact assessed in the light of all other school policies and the Equality Act 2010.			

Attendance Policy



Reviewed September 2024

At Etwall Primary School we believe that everyone should be included and that there is equality of opportunity for everyone, regardless of race, gender, ability, disability and social factors. This policy is intended to be inclusive of all in the school and wider school community.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

At Etwall Primary School we are committed to working together to ensure all pupils receive the best education possible and to enable them to make progress and achieve their full potential. For this to happen, pupils need to be in school to access the valuable teaching and learning opportunities.

This policy aims to make clear what is expected of parents and pupils and to assure parents of our willingness to work positively with them if problems arise.

It has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Principles

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote the importance of good attendance through the curriculum and personal/social opportunities.

Good attendance by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All pupils should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We will ensure that parents are aware of attendance matters and work with them to ensure good attendance and punctuality. To support the school in our commitment to improve school attendance and punctuality, we have employed an independent Education Welfare Service (VIP Education) who will provide advice and guidance to the school, parents, and pupils.

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance and education does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

This includes:

- parents keeping pupils off from school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- pupils who arrive to school after the close of the register
- holidays taken during term time that have not been authorised by the head teacher

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

Registration

School opens at 8:40am with the doors closing just before registration at 8:50am.

School closes at 3:15pm for children in EYFS and 3:20pm for all other year groups.

Schools are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. Therefore, information about the cause of each absence is always required.

When completing the register, school follow the DFE school attendance guidance to determine which relevant code to use; [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

The register will be taken twice a day, at the start of the morning and the afternoon. Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using **Arbor**, our school management information system. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule.

Morning registration.

The morning register is taken at 8:50am. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 9:20am are recorded as late – Code L.

Registration closes at 9:20am. Pupils arriving to school after this time are late - after registration closes, and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness – Code U.

Afternoon registration

The afternoon register is taken as soon as children return to the classroom after lunch.

Due to staggered lunchtimes, this is different for each phase of school. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but within 30 minutes of registration are recorded as late – Code L.

Pupils arriving to school 30 minutes after afternoon registration has closed are late and, unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence– Code U.

Late procedures

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

- Any pupil who comes into school after 8:50am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).
- Any child who arrives for school later than 9:20am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect the child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.
- Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9:20am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Parents are requested to contact the school office if their child is going to be late and provide a reason for lateness. If lateness is a cause for concern, the following procedures will be followed.

1. Parents will receive a letter informing of the concern.
2. If no improvement, the class teacher or ELSA / family support worker will contact parents to further discuss and offer support and advice to improve punctuality.
3. If still no improvement, parents and pupils will be invited to a meeting with a member of the leadership team to discuss the reasons for lateness and to offer support. Referrals to wider support services may be offered if needed. The discussion held will be documented by the headteacher and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised with parents and the pupil during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
4. If no improvement is seen after the meeting has taken place, the school may follow the Derbyshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent lateness.

Reporting Absence

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the ELSA family support worker, SENCO or the headteacher at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems.

If a pupil is absent from school, we ask parents to:

- Contact the school office by 9:15am on the first morning of absence.
- Reply promptly to any request or inquiry concerning an absence.

If parents do not contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence, a member of the administration staff will try to contact them to find out the reason for absence. This ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent, where necessary, to establish that their child is safe. If a reason is still not known after 5 school days, the absence will be unauthorised.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.

Children Missing in Education

Schools have a duty by law to refer any absence of 10 days or more to Derbyshire Local Authority Children Missing in Education department where they have been unable to establish contact with the parent/pupil or have general concerns about the absence.

To avoid any referrals, parents are requested to inform the school if they are moving house/area or country and to provide a forwarding address, contact number and the name of the new school if known.

Medical Absence

Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. If the school has concerns about the level of medical absence that a pupil has incurred, they will contact the parents to discuss it further and to find out whether their GP or other health professional has been contacted.

Parents may be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing a note from a medical professional or a copy of any prescribed medication. If the school do not receive medical evidence, the absences will be unauthorised.

Medical and Dental Appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible, confirmation of the appointment will be required prior to authorising the absence and a Code M used on the register to record when the child has attended the appointment.

Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

The school attendance team includes the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)/Family Support worker (FSW), the SENCO and the Headteacher who all have responsibility for attendance and are able to provide support for pupils and families experiencing difficulties with attendance.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Sharing attendance data at parents' consultations and explaining how attendance is impacting progress and achievement
- Supporting a pupil if they are experiencing difficulties coming into school or have a medical condition that requires frequent medical appointments or time off school
- Daily monitoring of attendance to alert attendance team to emerging needs or to monitor attendance targets

ELSA/ FSW

ELSA/FSW is responsible for:

- Supporting a pupil if they are experiencing difficulties coming into school or have a medical condition that requires frequent medical appointments or time off school
- Supporting families who are experiencing difficulties in maintaining high attendance rates

Inclusion Lead

Inclusion Lead is responsible for:

- Sharing attendance data/concerns with ELSA/FSW to identify families who may need support
- Targeted communication with parents of pupils with attendance patterns that are of concern
- Fortnightly/Monthly/Termly attendance monitoring and tracking

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the staged response is managed within the resources available to the school
- Reviewing attendance with Inclusion Lead and with the Safeguarding link governor
- Whole school communication around attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring attendance summaries are communicated on a termly basis to all families

Administration staff

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Informing Inclusion Lead/ELSA/FSW of any emerging concerns
- Ensuring the school registers are accurate and all registration processes are correctly followed
- First hour check of registers and phonecalls if reason for absence is not known

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring children arrive at school on time and every day unless there is good reason not to be
- Informing the school of absences and detailing the reason(s) why

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96.5%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

Graduated Attendance Response by Group				
Trigger/Group All	Trigger/Group Low Need	Trigger/Group Emerging Need	Trigger/Group High Need	Trigger/Group Intensive Need
1. No trigger	1. Holiday Requests	1. Lates 2. 90-95%	1. Lates 2. 80-90% 3. Persistent Absence 4. No contact from family in 3 days 5. EHCP plans	1. Less than 80% 2. Children Missing Education 3. Part Time Timetable

			6. Mental Health Needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pastoral support on gates in the morning -Communication to parents on good attendance -Late marks/ Absence marks -First hour checks of registers -Attendance figures shared termly at parents' evenings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Requests unauthorised for holidays -Holidays escalated to DCC for penalty notices -Teachers raise concerns with attendance team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Informal conversations to raise awareness if attendance is falling -Professional conversations with other schools regarding siblings and wider understanding of issues -Reported through CPOMS safeguarding reporting -Teachers raise concerns with attendance team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Letter issued half-termly where absence continues to fall -Teachers discuss concerns with attendance team -Fortnightly monitoring for improvements for targeted children -Referral to ELSA/FSW/SENCO -Reported through CPOMS safeguarding reporting -Professional conversations with other schools regarding siblings and wider understanding of issues -Attendance panel -Referral to wider agencies -Possibility of fixed penalty notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attendance panel as part of Early Help -Consider referral to Starting Point -Professional conversations with other schools regarding siblings and wider understanding of issues -CME protocol -Part-time timetables monitored on 6 week basis -Records kept on CPOMS safeguarding platform -Escalate to Local Authority for fines/supervision order -Referral to wider agencies -Breakfast club support -6 weekly review
Contact: School Office: info@etwall.derbyshire.sch.uk Class Teacher	Contact: School Office: info@etwall.derbyshire.sch.uk	Contact: Inclusion Lead: sarah.giles@etwall.derbyshire.sch.uk Class Teacher	Contact: Inclusion Lead: sarah.giles@etwall.derbyshire.sch.uk FSW/ELSA: nikki.carter@etwall.derbyshire.sch.uk Class Teacher	Contact: Inclusion Lead: sarah.giles@etwall.derbyshire.sch.uk FSW/ELSA: nikki.carter@etwall.derbyshire.sch.uk Headteacher: headteacher@etwall.derbyshire.sch.uk

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

Monitoring attendance procedures

To support the achievement of 96.5% attendance each year, we monitor attendance regularly. The headteacher is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance with the Inclusion Lead supporting with attendance tracking and communication. Strategies include fortnightly monitoring of attendance data, discussions with the Safeguarding Team and a graduated response to communicating concerns with parents.

Promoting good school attendance

Breakfast Club

Daily Breakfast Club is available every day. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off before school, ensuring they are on time for registration.

The School Learning Environment

A welcoming, organised learning environment, that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

Parent/Teacher Consultation Evenings

This provides an opportunity for class teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to the Attendance Team.

The Inclusion Lead regularly monitors every pupil's attendance. Where there appears to be a particular problem with attendance, the following procedures are applied.

- Informal conversations to raise awareness (by class teacher and logged on CPOMS)
- Formal letters (of increasing concern) sent to parents informing them of a decline in school attendance and the need for this to improve due to the impact on their child's education.
- If no improvement seen, parents and pupils where appropriate will be invited into a meeting with the Inclusion Lead or Family Support Worker to discuss the concerns and to offer support around any possible barriers or problems at home or at school which may be contributing to low attendance. Referrals to wider support services may be offered where appropriate. The discussion held will be documented by the FSW and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
- Invite to Attendance Panel to further discuss strategies for improvement
- If school attendance does not improve, the school may follow Derbyshire Local Authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for pupils with persistent absence.

Requests for leave of absence

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Leave of Absence form available from the school office or the school website and handed in 4 school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

Where a child does not reside with both parents, it is the responsibility of the parent making the request to inform the other parent. The school will send a letter to the parent making the request informing them if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

If a request for leave has not been received and we have reason to believe a pupil is on holiday, a letter will be sent to parents requesting medical evidence. If no medical evidence can be provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised, and a penalty notice request sent to the Local Authority.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued

Parents/carers have the legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time, properly dressed, with the correct equipment and ready to learn.

Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This is in accordance with the 1996 Education Act, Section 444 or 444 (1A). It aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of ten school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive and can span two academic years.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the head teacher. (e.g., family holiday)
- Persistent late arrival to school, i.e., after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 10 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

A session is equivalent to half a day in school.

Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, school will contact the parent and discuss their reasons in more detail, offering support to deal with any issues raised. If after this time the parent still wishes to home educate their child, the school will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Prior to deciding to home educate, parents are requested to contact Derbyshire Local Authority Elective Home Education department.

Summary

It is vital to a child's progress that they attend school as often as possible and that they are on time.

There are strong and proven links between pupil attendance and educational achievement. Just 17 days absent from school in a year could, in the future, mean a drop in a GCSE grade within all subjects so it is

important that good attendance is established whilst children are in primary school.

Impact of absence:

Missed number of days	Missed number of sessions	Missed number of weeks	Missed number of lessons
1	2	0	5
3	6	0.5	15
5	10	1	25
7.5	15	1.5	35
10	20	2	50
12.5	25	2.5	65
15	30	3	75
17.5	35	3.5	90

Impact of lateness:

Over a school year –

5 minutes late every day = 3 days absent
15 minutes late every day = 10 days absent
30 minutes late every day = 19 days absent

If parents have any concerns relating to attendance or lateness that they wish to discuss, they should contact the headteacher in the first instance.

School staff are committed to working with parents to ensure any problems are dealt with straight away in order for pupils to feel happy and safe at Etwall Primary School and achieve to the best of their ability.