Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy Status	Final Policy
Responsibility for this policy lies with (Headteacher, Full Governing Body, Curriculum or Finance & Resources Committee)	Full Governing Body
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Learning to Succeed Together

'Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.'

Working Together to improve School Attendance 2022

Edward Pauling Primary School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. **The school's target for attendance is a minimum of 97%.** At Edward Pauling, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

Legislation and Guidance:

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with /responding to parental enquiries.
- To produce weekly, half termly, termly and annual data for SLT to analyse.
- To oversee the analysis of weekly, half termly, termly and annual data and respond to findings. Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- To meet with the Attendance Officer to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Schools Attendance Support Service and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used effectively.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.
- To report to the Local Authority as requested.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school of absence.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- To promptly inform the Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To send messages (via ParentMail) to parents and record the outcome when a pupil doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To inform parents/carers by letter, if attendance falls below 95%
- To maintain SIMS attendance records in line with this policy.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To report to the Local Authority as requested.
- To support Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school of absence.

The School Office Staff is responsible for:

- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers (in the Attendance Officer's absence).
- To promptly inform the Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of SIMS registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions. To maintain SIMS attendance records in line with this policy.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date records of pupil attendance through the SIMS register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's SIMS system at 8.50am and 1.15pm.
- To regularly remind pupils and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties regarding, for example, Child Protection.
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To inform the Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher promptly of pupils who persist with poor attendance. To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents' Evenings.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Make sure their child attends everyday on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attend school every day on time.

Recording Attendance

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school 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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at **8:50 am** and will be kept open until 9:25 am. The register for the second session will be taken at **1:15 pm** and will be kept open until 1:30 pm.

Absences

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:10 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. Parents may leave a voicemail on the School's answerphone, send an email or visit the office to inform the school of the reasons for absence.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. **Where the absence is longer than 3 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

A leave of absence form must be completed and these are available from the office.

Following up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send a Parentmail message to the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If there is still no response a telephone call will be made to all of the contacts on the pupils contact file. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the Schools Attendance Support Service, the Police and or Hounslow Children's Social Care. Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving The School Attendance Support Service, The Police and or Hounslow Children's Social Care.

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Where there are concerns regarding punctuality, the school in the first instance will send out letters outlining these concerns. If there is no improvement, parents will be invited into school to discuss and find ways to improve the pupil's attendance. If there is still no improvement the school will make contact with the Schools Attendance Support Service.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term-Time Absence

The **Headteacher** will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- Significant family bereavement, i.e. mother (step), father (step) principal carer or sibling.
- Significant family illness to mother (step), father (step), sibling or principal carer.
- Disclosure of significant abuse where a short leave of absence may be beneficial to recovery.
- Involvement in court proceedings, either in the family courts or in criminal proceedings.

Family requests for holidays for family weddings or to see relatives are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances, the availability of cheap flights or holidays are also not deemed to be exceptional circumstances. The onus is always on the parents to provide evidence to support applications for leave of absence.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office/reception area. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid Reasons for Authorised Absence Include

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new 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.

Legal Sanctions

The local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
  Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for Promoting / Rewarding Excellent Attendance

We aim to ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) and we regularly promote and celebrate high attendance to ensure that attendance remains high profile across school.

End of Term Attendance Awards

At the end of each term, Edward Pauling Primary School holds an Attendance Celebration Assembly. Top attenders receive a badge, which they are able to wear with pride as part of their uniform! Only pupils achieving 100% attendance and 4 'lates' or less for the whole school year are eligible for the end of term reward.

Breakfast Club

Daily Breakfast Club costs £7.50 per day from 7.30am or £6.00 from 8.00am. Discounts are available for siblings. This supports parents by allowing them to drop pupils off from 8am ensuring they are on time for school. The club is supervised by members of school staff.

The School Learning Environment

A welcoming and organised learning environment that supports and celebrates learners, is a key factor in ensuring pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments is of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT to ensure this.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers promote good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is valued at Edward Pauling Primary School.

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. Teachers will make parents aware of any attendance issues and the impact on standards. If attendance/punctuality doesn't improve, the pupil is referred to the Attendance Officer.

Class Registers

At Edward Pauling Primary School class registers are recorded using SIMS. The system ensures that pupils are registered in class and that attendance information can be captured accurately and securely.

Morning Register- From 8:50 am the school classroom doors are closed. All late arrivals must report to the school office to ensure that they are registered as 'Late.'

Afternoon Register-The afternoon registration takes place after the lunchtime break at 1:15pm.

School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality on a regular basis. The school uses the letters and templates that have been provided by the local authority. Information is always made available on the school website.

Punctuality Folder

All late arrivals are monitored. Persistent lateness is not acceptable and all cases are referred to the EWO if lateness does not improve.

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call from the parent/carer a parentmail will be sent home. The parent/carer is asked to contact school immediately to provide a reason why the child is not in school. Letters are sent to all those pupils with a 'no known reason' for the absence recorded against their register. The absences will remain unauthorised until a reason is provided.

Attendance Meetings

At the attendance meetings, the Attendance Officer supports parents/carers by setting short term targets to ensure pupils attend school. Once a pupil meets these targets s/he is taken off plan and the attendance is monitored over a period of time.

Monitoring attendance

The School will monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. We will identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The School will analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns. We aim to use data to improve attendance. We will provide regular attendance reports to class

teacher and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. We will use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school sessions, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school sessions.

The school will use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence. We will hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school. We will provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

Appendix 1: DfE Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
	Unauthorised Absence	
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day