



Edinburgh Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of Review:	02.02.2018
Approved by Governing Body:	07.02.2018
Date of next Review:	07.02.2021

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
- 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.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets 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) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 We expect all children who are on roll at Edinburgh Primary School to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so. We believe the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children where they can achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally.

3.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 2006)* the school's governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present and punctual at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. The register will also show whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

3.3 At the beginning of each academic year, the school will circulate to all governors, staff, parents/ carers and pupils a clear written statement of the basic elements of the schools attendance policy. Copies will also be given to pupils who join in the course of the year.

4. AUTHORISED ABSENCE

4.1 Authorised Absence is when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the reason has been passed on to the school by a parent or legal guardian. Only the school can make the absence authorised. **Parents/Carers do not have authority to authorise their child's absence.**

4.2 Absence due to illness will be authorised unless school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity is in doubt, the school may ask Parents/Carers 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.

4.3 It is accepted that from time to time children do become unwell. However, a child's attendance is expected to be at least 95%, even taking into account occasional ill health. If a child is vomiting, has diarrhoea or a high temperature they should not attend school and Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on their child's 1st day of absence. If a child were to become unfit for school, whilst in attendance then school staff will contact Parents/Carers accordingly asking them to collect their child. This absence will be marked as an authorised illness ('I').

4.4 If there are 10 or more day's absence per year for medical reasons, a medical certificate, doctors letter, prescription copy or similar proof will need to be provided before further absences can be authorised.

5. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1 Unauthorised Absence is when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Parents/Carers can be fined or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absence. Examples of unauthorised absence include meeting relatives from the airport, taking holidays & other leave in term time, time off for family celebrations and arriving after the register has closed i.e. after 9.25am

6. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

6.1 Persistent Absence (PA) is the official term used when a child has an attendance of 85% or less. The school will keep a record of all PA children. All children on this list will be monitored at least fortnightly throughout the academic year and will be required to provide substantive evidence to authorise further absences, even when & if their attendance increases above 85%.

6.2 Where there are additional concerns affecting a child's attendance a referral to Early Help will be considered as well as further family support.

7. REPORTING ABSENCE

7.1 Parents/Carers of absent children are expected to telephone the school before 9.30am on the 1st day of absence, or as soon as practically possible. The school office is staffed from 8am to accept parent calls. Information about a child's absence is then recorded, giving access as to the reason for a child's absence to the class teacher. Parents/Carers are expected to telephone the school each subsequent day that a child is ill to provide an update. If the absence is known about in advance, such as a hospital appointment, a copy of the appointment letter should be given to the school office. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

7.2 Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside of school hours or in the holiday periods.

7.3 Time out of school to attend appointments should be kept to a minimum and Parents/Carers will be encouraged to bring their child to school both before and after the appointment time.

7.4 When a child is absent unexpectedly and without an explanation, the class teacher will record the absence in the class register. A report will be run each morning which identifies any child who is absent without the reason being known (identified as 'N' code). Parents/carers of children with an 'N' code will receive a text message from school. Once the reason for a child's absence is known the registers will be updated accordingly.

7.5 At the end of each week, any child who still has an 'N' code will receive a school letter seeking information about the reasons for the absence/s. At this point the child's attendance code will be changed to an unauthorised ('O'). This absence will remain unauthorised until an adequate reason is provided by a Parent/Carer or until medical evidence has been received.

8. ABSENCE REQUESTS

8.1 At Edinburgh School, we believe that children should be in school every day so that they can make as much progress as possible. Requests for absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances which are due to extenuating or compassionate reasons.

8.2 Parents/Carers must apply for a child's term time absence in advance. Permission will not be granted once the absence has been taken. All requests must be made using the designated form and the decision will be recorded. This form is known as 'Request for Leave during Term Time.' All leave requests received will be individually assessed by the Head Teacher who will record a decision on the form. The school will send this form back to the Parent/Carer along with a letter clarifying exactly if and how many days leave have been granted and the possibility of incurring a 'Fixed Penalty Notice.'

8.3 Edinburgh School will follow Waltham Forest Council's Policy of minimum unavoidable absence from school during term time and will grant the following **maximum number of day's absence from school for circumstances defined as 'exceptional'**.

These circumstances are:

- Bereavement/funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – up to 5 days

- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence – up to 5 days
- Religious observance – up to 3 days per academic year
- 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 Age 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 an educational provision.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts, or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the Local Authority – up to 3 days
- Time off related to child Entertainment Performances, which is subject to a licence being issued by the Education Welfare Service – up to 3 days

8.4 ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR HOLIDAYS OR TO VISIT RELATIVES DURING TERM TIME WILL NOT BE APPROVED

9. MEDICAL ABSENCES

9.1 Medical Absences will be recorded and monitored as 'M' on a child's registration record. The duration of absences granted due to health conditions will follow Government health guidelines unless stipulated otherwise through Dr and other health professional guidance. Where a child's health condition is deemed to be affecting their school attendance without medical verification, the child and his/her parent/s will be encouraged to meet with the School Nurse.

10. LONG TERM ABSENCE

10.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over 10 days, the school will do all it can to send material home, to enable the child to 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 of school.

10.2 A support plan will be put in place for children with chronic illness.

10.3 For children whose long term absence is unauthorised, Parent/Carers will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and they are likely to receive a Fixed Penalty Fine. Where unauthorised absences exceed 4 weeks parents will be notified that their child's name will be taken off roll.

11. REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

11.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or

guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, who will visit the home and seek to ensure the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

11.2 After a 2 week monitoring period where there has been no or insufficient improvement, a 'Parental notification' letter will be sent home. Where there is still no significant improvement a School Attendance Panel (SAP) meeting will be held in school, inviting the Parents/Carers, and chaired by a senior court officer. A further 2 week monitoring period will be granted. Where no improvement has been made by this stage, the case will be referred to the local magistrate's court.

11.3 Legal action may be taken against any parents or guardians who fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

12. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

12.1 Under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Local Authorities are required to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the Parent/Carer of a child who has irregular school attendance, where the absence is unauthorised by the school. Fixed Penalty Notices are an alternative to prosecution. They do not require the Parent/Carer to appear in court and no criminal record is incurred.

12.2 An assessment of the circumstances will take place before a Fixed Penalty Notice is served. Parents will receive a warning letter that if any unauthorised absence occurs they would receive a Fixed Penalty notice. However, the authorising officer (Educational Welfare Courts Officer or the Head of Services) has the discretion to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a first offence in exceptional circumstances.

12.3 A Fixed Penalty Notice imposes a fine of between £100 -£120, per child to each Parent/Carer reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days. If the fine is paid after 28 days but within 42 days of being issued, the fine is £120. If the fine is not paid within 42 days, the Parent/Carer will be prosecuted in a Magistrates court for the offence under S.444 of the Education Act 1996.

13. PUNCTUALITY

13.1 Frequent lateness can often precede poor attendance and also present difficulties for the pupil in achieving fully at school. Persistent lateness does not constitute as full school attendance (section 444 of the Education Act, 1996).

13.2 At Edinburgh School, children are met in the playground by a member of staff at 8.55am and escorted to class. Class registers are taken straight away. Children arriving after 8.55am are expected to report to the 'late desk' they then receive an 'L' mark in their register. Children arriving after 9.25am will receive an unauthorised absence mark, ('U' code).

13.3 Persistent lateness will lead to formal procedures (letters and meetings) from the school and, if the situation does not improve, Parents/Carers will be referred to the Education Welfare service.

13.4 Pupils will be monitored regularly for lateness and will receive letters home notifying parents and will be invited in to meetings to discuss the adverse effects punctuality has on their child's learning as well as its social & emotional impact.

13.5 Pupils who have 12 'U' codes in any one term period without substantive reason will be issued with a FPN and Parents/carers may incur a fine.

14. ATTENDANCE TARGETS

14.1 The school sets attendance targets each year which are agreed by senior staff and governors. These targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in the previous year.

15. MONITORING AND REVIEW

15.1 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 governing body will have a named governor for attendance.

15.2 All absences and lateness will be monitored on a daily basis for individual pupils so that appropriate action can be taken. Absences will also be monitored for trends in relation to gender, ethnicity, year groups, classes, seasonal patterns, and absences on certain days of the week, the nature of authorised and unauthorised absences and individual pupil absence rates.

15.3 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.

15.4 Half – termly attendance data will be given to the Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer to help inform targets and action plans.

15.5 The school will notify the local authority of pupils who's attendance is irregular or who is continuously absent without authorisation for ten or more school days.

15.6 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of 3 years.

15.7 The rates of attendance will be reported in school newsletters, on the school website and in the 'Information for Parents' booklet.

15.8 Attendance will be discussed with parents at termly open evenings.

15.9 The governing body will review this policy every 3 years, or earlier if considered necessary.

16. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

16.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

16.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

16.3 The attendance officer

- 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/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

16.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

16.5 Office Staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system.

****This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.****