

Edmonton County School (Secondary)
Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Educating our Community for Success

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Aim

Our aim is to provide a high-quality education in a safe, disciplined and caring environment, to enable all our students to succeed; every lesson in school matters and all students must attend school regularly and on time in order to make good progress. Our expectation is that student attendance for year 7-11 will be no less than 95% with no unauthorised absence.

Some students find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages we will work with students and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to ensure the right support is in place. In order to achieve this, rigorous systems for recording attendance and procedures to address non-attendance will be maintained, along with positive measures to highlight and promote good attendance.

Our aim is for students, parents and members of staff to work together to ensure excellent attendance for all students is achieved.

Rationale

There is a clear link between student achievement and the level of attendance at school; 94% attendance equates to 12 days of absence per year which is on average 4 days per term. Students who are regularly absent find it difficult to catch up and can fall behind with their learning; research shows that just 17 days' absence from school can mean a drop in a GCSE grade in all subjects. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work.

Learning is also affected if students regularly arrive late to school. Being 5 minutes late each day equates to 3 whole days off school per year. Late arrival disrupts the education, not only of the student who is late, but of other students in the class too. Good punctuality to school and lessons enables a positive start to each lesson and allows the teacher to teach without disruption.

Both attendance and punctuality form a central part of the schools 'Behaviour Matters' policy.

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time. Some students and their parents/carers may need to be supported at times to meet their obligations and responsibilities. School staff and outside agencies have responsibility for ensuring this happens in a timely and appropriate manner; details of school action are outlined below.



Legal Framework

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence if a parent fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school at which they are registered, if that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under s444 Education Act 1996 or s36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

Section 444A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, Headteachers (as well as Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. As a result, the Local Authority has responsibility for developing a local code of conduct that will govern how all of the partners named in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, will issue Penalty Notices.

The Attendance Policy is that set by the Board of Governors. The principle is that children should attend school and that parents/carers have a duty in law to ensure their child attends school regularly and only absent with good reason. The decision on whether to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher and the governors expect the Headteacher, or their representative to apply the principles of the DfE guidance, law and school policy to ensure that children do not miss parts of their education unnecessarily and that any approved absence is for educationally valuable activities.

DfE Guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Attendance Recording

Every half-day of absence from school must be recorded by staff as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable causes, or when permission has been given.

Only the school can authorise an absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. These are an offence by the parent/carer and include:

- holidays and birthdays,
- shopping trips and outings
- looking after brothers and sisters
- waiting for deliveries
- visiting relatives and friends
- lack of uniform
- translating for non-English speaking parents
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (30 minutes after registers close)

Punctuality to school and lessons

Poor punctuality is considered an attendance problem and is subject to the same interventions. School starts at 8.25am and students arriving after this time are recorded as late. If a student arrives late following an unavoidable medical appointment and has provided evidence of the appointment, this will be recorded as authorised absence.

Lateness to school: If a student is recorded as arriving late to school, a text message will be sent to parents/carers advising of a 30-minute detention that day. If a student arrives more than 30 minutes late and does not have a valid reason, this is recorded as unauthorised absence for the morning session. If a student has 2 or more U codes in one week, they will be placed in school detention on Friday which is for an hour. If unauthorised lateness persists, parents/carers will be contacted as per the attendance concern escalation process. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority at the request of the school if there is a period of persistent unauthorised lateness.

Lateness to lessons: All minutes late to lessons will be recorded by the class teacher on the school management system. A weekly report will be produced by the Student Manager responsible for Phase, and a break-time detention will be set that week to make up this time. Access to toilets will be restricted during lesson time and lesson change over to ensure students arrive to lessons on time. Students with medical issues will be issued with a pass to allow them to access the toilets during lesson time

Intervention and Escalation Process

We understand that children are sometimes ill or unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties, are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the student at an early stage. Parents are advised to contact the School Attendance Officer or Progress Leader in the first instance to discuss any attendance concerns they may have.

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. This adds up to missing almost half a term. These students are called “Persistent Absentees” by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence, including authorised absences. Once attendance falls below 92% or there are other patterns of absence highlighted, the following escalation process will be followed:

Attendance Officer will make contact with parents/carers either by letter or telephone call to establish reasons for absence and provide necessary support to improve. Student managers will speak to students to establish any concerns and offer support.

Four-week review – no improvement

Progress Leader will offer further support and a Level 1 meeting with parents/carers will be held. Targets will be set, and internal/external support will be arranged if appropriate.

Four-week review - no improvement

Assistant Headteacher will invite parents/carers into school for a Level 2 meeting if they are not engaging with school or accessing support provided and attendance is still declining. EWO process explained, and targets set.

Four-week review - no improvement

Senior Leadership Team member will invite parents/carers and student in for a level 2 meeting

Four-week review - no improvement

Education Welfare Officer will be contacted by process of Early Help Referral from school so further measures can be put in place to support the family and so that legal avenues can be pursued if necessary.

In addition to the clear process detailed above, there many other ways the school highlights, challenges and supports school attendance:

- Highlighted on every student’s profile and addressed at Parents Evenings and Academic Review Days
- Posters around school and on noticeboards highlighting top attenders and targets
- Family Support Workers and Counsellors in school to support struggling families
- Regular Inclusion Panel meetings to support EHCP and other vulnerable students achieve good attendance
- Progress Leader attendance and punctuality report for students

Rewarding good attendance

We also believe it is important to acknowledge and reward good attendance; this includes:

- Form time celebration each week to acknowledge good attendance
- Reward assemblies every half term to praise excellent attendance
- Phone calls home to acknowledge improved attendance
- Year student leader badges
- Phone calls home to parents to congratulate students
- Raffle tickets awarded for the end of year golden ticket raffle
- End of year trips and rewards
- First person entry to the canteen at lunch
- ECS Attendance pens

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- Attend school every day unless they are unwell or have another authorised reason for absence
- Arrive in school before 8.25am, prepared for the day and go straight to period 1
- Be punctual to all lessons for the whole school day
- Inform a member of staff if they have concerns that may affect their attendance

Parents/Carers

- For safeguarding purposes, the school must be provided with at least two up to date contact numbers
- Ensure their children attend school every day unless they are too ill to attend or there is another acceptable reason for absence; this is a parent/carers legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act)
- Ensure their children arrive on time, prepared and equipped for the day
- Inform the school by phone on 02083603158, press 1 for the attendance line. This must happen before 8.30am on each day of absence
- Avoid making non urgent medical and dental appointments in school time
- If appointments must be made in school time, a copy of the appointment card or letter must be provided, and if a student is absent for more than 5 consecutive days a medical certificate will be required
- Attend meetings/events to communicate with the school regarding their children's attendance and progress; these include Parents Evenings, Academic Review Days and Curriculum Evenings, along with individual meetings if attendance is a concern
- Engage with range of support offered to encourage improved attendance

Attendance Officer

- Be responsible for the daily recording of attendance within the school management system and generate reports to support monitoring of concerns
- Notify parents/carers daily by call, text or email, where a student is absent and no reason for absence has been provided.
- Arrange home visits for students who have been absent for 3 days and all attempts have failed to contact the family
- Work closely with parents/carers, students, staff and outside agencies to ensure students are provided with appropriate support to improve their attendance
- Make initial contact with parents/carers to advise of attendance concerns, in line with the attendance concern escalation process
- Produce weekly spreadsheet detailing 'Persistent Absentees' and action taken so far to improve their attendance; share with appropriate staff
- Initiate referrals to Education Welfare Officer in line with the school escalation process, and ensure EWO is notified of all Elective Home Education requests, Children Missing Education and any other students removed from roll who are not attending another educational establishment
- Meet monthly with Education Welfare Officer, Progress Leaders and Inclusion Panel to discuss current concerns and create plan of action
- Inform designated safeguarding team of any safeguarding concerns
- Send Penalty Notice Warning letters for persistent lateness after the register has closed, persistent truancy, and holidays in term time
- Promote and reward good attendance at every opportunity
- All staff have safeguarding responsibilities, and must report any concerns through the appropriate channels
- The above list is not exhaustive and other interventions may be appropriate

Student Managers

- Greet students who are late between 8.25am and 8.45am and record the late mark on the school management system
- Provide pastoral support to students whose attendance is a concern
- Support the Progress Leader to improve attendance and punctuality
- Monitor lateness to lessons and arrange support/sanction in line with behaviour policy
- Support the Exams Officer during exam periods by calling home promptly for any absentees
- Inform designated safeguarding team of any safeguarding concerns
- Promote and reward good attendance at every opportunity
- All staff have safeguarding responsibilities, and must report any concerns through the appropriate channels

- The above list is not exhaustive and other interventions may be appropriate

Progress Leaders

- Liaise with the Attendance Officer to act upon attendance and punctuality data and put in place action plans to support students who are a cause for concern
- Meet with parents/carers to discuss reasons for absence and provide guidance and support to enable attendance to improve, in line with the attendance concern escalation process
- Inform designated safeguarding team of any safeguarding concerns
- Make referrals to internal support teams and external agencies where appropriate to provide support for the student and family
- Support Student Managers to address students who are regularly late to school and lessons
- Support Heads of Faculty to address students who are truanting lessons or regularly late
- Support the Exams Officer during exam periods to ensure students are present and on time
- Promote and reward good attendance at every opportunity
- All staff have safeguarding responsibilities, and must report any concerns through the appropriate channels
- The above list is not exhaustive and other interventions may be appropriate

Safeguarding Leads

- Where appropriate and relevant, inform the Attendance Officer of safeguarding issues where they may impact on school attendance
- Carry out home visits where a student's attendance is a concern
- Support students and parents with guidance and signposting to agencies who can help them

Inclusion Team

- Be responsible for updating sims throughout the day to record students working in the inclusion room
- Support Progress Leads to address and improve attendance of SEN students
- All staff have safeguarding responsibilities, and must report any concerns through the appropriate channels

Teachers

- Complete registers accurately and before the end of each period
- Highlight any attendance concerns, lateness or truancy to the Attendance Officer/Student Manager/Progress Leader
- Use sanctions to address students who are late to lessons and/or truant from lessons
- Support students with extended periods of absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school
- Discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers at Academic Review Days and Parents Evenings
- Inform designated safeguarding team of any safeguarding concerns
- Promote and reward good attendance at every opportunity
- All staff have safeguarding responsibilities, and must report any concerns through the appropriate channels

Heads of Faculty

- Ensure that teachers in their faculty update their registers accurately and for every lesson
- Ensure that teachers enforce good attendance and punctuality and follow up on truancy and lateness to lessons
- All staff have safeguarding responsibilities, and must report any concerns through the appropriate channels

Assistant Headteacher

- Scrutinise data to monitor attendance and punctuality
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Officer to discuss concerns and ensure policy is being consistently applied and reviewed regularly
- Meet regularly with Progress Leaders to monitor interventions in each Phase
- Scrutinise data after each data window to discuss and monitor attendance concerns
- Meet with parents/carers in line with the attendance concern escalation process
- Ensure achievements in attendance are regularly celebrated and rewarded
- All staff have safeguarding responsibilities, and must report any concerns through the appropriate channels

Deputy Headteacher (Responsible for Pastoral Quality Assurance and Evaluation)

- Overall responsibility for overseeing, directing and co-ordinating policy and ensure it is consistently applied
- Meet regularly with Attendance Officer to discuss policy
- Produce information regarding the attendance policy for parents/carers and ensure it is included on website and in newsletters
- Collate attendance data and share with Leadership Team, including data for vulnerable groups

- Inform parents and staff of any changes to attendance policy
- Regularly review attendance monitoring procedures
- Scrutinise attendance data and attainment data to look for trends/specific group concerns, and implement strategies to address this
- Regularly report to Governors regarding attendance
- All staff have safeguarding responsibilities, and must report any concerns through the appropriate channels

Support during and after long term authorised absence

It is important that during unavoidable, authorised extended periods of absence, students are supported to continue their study. The school will provide work for the student to complete at home, and in some instances external agencies will provide programmes of study and work. On return from absence, all students are made to feel welcome, and will be supported to catch up on work missed and brought up to date with any information; this will be co-ordinated by the Progress Leader. A reduced timetable may be put in place for a short period of time to enable a phased return to school; this will be kept to a minimum and reviewed regularly.

Education Welfare Service

Students may be referred to the Education Welfare Service if the school feels this is appropriate after completing all steps in the attendance concern escalation process. The Education Welfare Service provides advice and guidance to schools on the use of effective strategies for promoting excellent attendance and addressing levels of unauthorised absence. Through interventions with families, they are able to work collaboratively with other professionals and signpost families for support. Identification and tracking of Children Missing Education, ensuring all children are receiving an appropriate education and implementing School Attendance Orders where appropriate. Statutory duties include issuing of Penalty Notices in accordance with Enfield's Code of Conduct and Referral to Magistrate' Court in accordance with Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. In addition, they are also responsible for issuing Child Performance Licences, Child Employment Permits and Chaperone Licences for Enfield residents.

Penalty Notices: Under the Antisocial Behaviour Act the Local Authority can issue Penalty Notices if a parent or carer is unwilling to improve their child's attendance. Parents and carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly, and absences are not authorised. Penalty Notices are issued if a student has twenty or more unauthorised absences within a three-month period, or if there has been an unauthorised leave of

absence of five or more consecutive days. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and does not require an appearance in court. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents and carers to avoid convictions.

The Education Welfare Service will consider a Penalty Notice based on the information supplied by the school. Payment within 21 days of receiving a notice is £60 and £120 if paid between 22-28 days. If no payment is received, legal proceedings will begin in the Magistrates Court. Prosecution can result in a fine of £1,000 for each child. When a parent knows their child is failing to attend and doesn't act, a higher penalty of £2,500 and a custodial sentence can apply.

Further information regarding Enfield Council's Code is available at

<https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/school-welfare-and-information/absence-and-attendance/>

Holidays in Term Time

Regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; there is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time. Taking a child on holiday without permission, or staying longer than agreed, is an unauthorised absence and you will be breaking the law. This could lead to the Education Welfare Service issuing a Penalty Notice, a criminal record if the case is proven in court, and the loss of a school place.

Exams

During exam periods (Public and Internal), attendance to exams will be recorded by the exam invigilators. Any absentees will be immediately notified to the Attendance Officer, Progress Leader and Student Manager. The Student Manager will promptly contact home to establish reason for absence or lateness and see if the student is able to attend the exam.

Study Leave

Edmonton County believes that students needs are best met by attending school, and study leave should be used sparingly, in line with The Department for Education guidelines. Students have no legal right to study leave, and if it is not approved by the school, staying at home will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Study leave will only be authorised for year 11 students during external examination periods, and students may be provided with a varied timetable to support revision. Provision will be made available for those students who want to continue to come into school to revise.

School Closure

In the event of a school closure due to an exceptional circumstance, the school will endeavour to provide work for students to complete at home. Parents will be kept updated via the school website and by text and email.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of the policy will be monitored at monthly meetings between the EWO and Attendance Officer, and at termly meetings with the Deputy Headteacher overseeing Pastoral Quality and Evaluation. The Attendance Officer will produce monthly reports for discussion and review by the Deputy Headteacher, and an annual review of statistics and policy will be presented to the School Governors.

Appendices

Attendance Codes, Descriptions & Meanings

Codes	Description	Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Education off site (no Dual reg)	Approval Education Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised Abs	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	In for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
#	School closed to students & staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session

X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Student not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend/No mark recorded	No mark	Out for whole session

Term dates

Academic Year 2022-2023

Autumn Term 2022

INSET – Thursday 01 September 2022

First half: Friday 02 September 2022 – Thursday 20 October 2022

Half-term: Friday 21 October 2022 – Monday 31 October 2022

Second half: Tuesday 1 November 2022 – Wednesday 21 December 2022

INSET – Thursday 22 December 2022

Spring Term 2023

First half: Monday 09 January 2023 – Friday 10 February 2023

Half-term: Monday 13 February 2023 – Friday 17 February 2023

Second half: Monday 20 February 2023 – Thursday 30 March 2023

INSET – Friday 31 March 2023

Summer Term 2023

First half: Monday 17 April 2023 – Friday 26 May 2023

Half-term: Monday 29 May 2023 – Friday 02 June 2023

Second half: Monday 05 June 2023 – Friday 21 July 2023

INSET – Staff Professional Development Days – School is closed to students

Thursday 01 September 2022

Thursday 22 December 2022

Friday 31 March 2023

Public & Bank Holidays

Christmas Holiday: Monday 26 December and Tuesday 27 December 2022

New Year's Day: Monday 02 January 2023

Easter Holiday: Friday 07 April and Monday 10 April 2023 Spring Holiday:
Monday 01 and Monday 29 May 2023

Summer Holiday: Monday 28 August 2023