

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**



**Approved by Governing Body:**  
**Date of next Review:**

28 January 2025  
January 2028

## 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
- Working together to improve school attendance August 2024

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. Furthermore, regular school attendance and punctuality is an important safeguard and unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of problems, risk and vulnerability. Attendance and punctuality is monitored in conjunction with our safeguarding policy and procedures. To this end we strive to make our school a safe, 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.

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unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of problems, risk and vulnerability. Attendance and punctuality is monitored in conjunction with our safeguarding policy and procedures.

**3.4** At the beginning of each academic year, the school will circulate a clear statement of the basic expectations of school attendance.

## **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 96%, 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## **6. PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

**6.1** Persistent Absence (PA) is the official term used when a child has an attendance of 90% or less. The school will keep a record of all PA children. All children on this list will be monitored weekly and calls made to parents. If improvements are not made each week, meetings will take place at school. Parents will be required to provide substantive evidence to authorise further absences.

## **7. REPORTING ABSENCE**

**7.1** Parents/Carers of absent children are expected to telephone the school before the start of the school day on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence, or as soon as practically possible. 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/card must 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. If it is unavoidable, your child should be in school for the remainder of the school day when not at the appointment.**

**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 telephone call and/or a text message from school. Once the reason for a child's absence is known the registers will be updated and marked accordingly.

## **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. A meeting or phone call (when a meeting is not possible) will be arranged to discuss reason for request for absence. 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 – 1 day per religious holiday up to 3 days per 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 BE CONSIDERED STRICTLY ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS.**

### **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. Children Missing in Education**

**11.1** Children who fail to take up a school place or who have been unexpectedly absent from school for 5 or more consecutive school days are potential Children Missing from Education.

**11.2** In order to safeguard these children and ensure that they are able to access education, we will investigate the whereabouts of these children.

**11.3** Investigations will include attempts to make telephone contact with all family members, home visits and communication with partner agencies such as the School Admissions Service, the Revenue and Benefits Service, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and the BACME Team.

**11.4** If contact is established with a family and they are still residing in Waltham Forest we will notify parents of their legal obligations to ensure that their child is in receipt of full time education and the matter will be pursued as an attendance concern.

**11.5** If a family have left the Waltham Forest area, details of their whereabouts will be obtained and the residing local authority (BACME Team) notified so that they can support the family to access education.

**11.6** If contact cannot be established with the family and their whereabouts are unknown, a CMfE referral will be completed and forwarded to the BACME Service.

**11.7** Should the school have reason to believe that a child may be absent from school due to an unauthorised holiday, contact will not be required and an application for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be submitted to the BACME Service.

## **12. REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

**12.1** 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.

**12.2** 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, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued by London Borough of Waltham Forest and if unpaid, the case will be referred to the local magistrate's court.

**12.3 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.**

## **13. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

**13.1** 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.

**13.2** An assessment of the circumstances will take place before a Fixed Penalty Notice is served. Parents should 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.

**13.3** Your local council can give each parent a fine of £80, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days. From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period. If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school. If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

### **CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED:**

In line with the Waltham Forest Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, the issuing of Penalty Notices will be considered in the following circumstances:

#### Absence from school

- In cases of overt truancy
- In cases of leave during term time, where the absence has not been authorised by the school, for 5 days plus consecutively.
- In cases where an absence during term time has been agreed by the school, and a child fails to return by the agreed stipulated date.

#### Lateness

- In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after the register has been closed. 12+ lates in a term.

## **14. PUNCTUALITY**

**14.1** 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).

**14.2** At Edinburgh School, the school day begins at 8:45am. At 8:45 am, class registers are taken. Children arriving after 8.45am are expected to report to the 'late desk' they then receive an 'L' mark in their register. Children arriving after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised absence mark, ('U' code).

**14.3** 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.

**14.4** Pupils will be monitored regularly for lateness and will receive a school ping and a phone call from the Education Welfare Officer notifying parents and should punctuality not improve 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.

**14.5** Pupils who have 12 'U' codes in any one term period without substantive reason will be issued with an NPR and may incur a FPN.

## **15. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

**15.1** Each week, any children below 95%, are monitored carefully. If a decreasing trend is identified, a call will be made to the parent/carer. For persistently absent pupils, below 90%, any decrease in attendance may result in an urgent meeting at school-according to the threshold being met. Each half term, letters are sent home for children below 95%. Lates are also managed with weekly checks and calls home with expected improvement.

There is a weekly attendance winner for the upper and lower floor, which is announced in the school newsletter and in assembly. Each half term, 100% attendees are rewarded with a certificate and prize.

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

**15.5** Attendance will be discussed with parents at termly open evenings.

**15.6** 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 head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **16.2 The Head Teacher**

The head teacher 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 head teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **16.3 The Attendance Leader**

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the head teacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the head teacher 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, notifying the head of any families we are unable to contact.

**\*\*This policy is linked to our safeguarding policy.\*\***