

# Attendance Policy

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## **Version Control**

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## 1. Philosophy

- 1.1. Regular and punctual attendance underpins the good progress necessary to increase the life chances and opportunities for young people. It is a vital element in a commitment towards school and in the understanding that continuity and progression lead to successful learning.

## 2. The law relating to attendance

- 2.1. The Education Act 2006 states that:  
*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient, full-time education suitable:*
  - a) *to his age, ability and aptitude and*
  - b) *to any special needs he may have,**Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*
- 2.2. For educational purposes, the term “parent” is used to include those who have parental responsibility and / or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.
- 2.3. Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## 3. The law relating to safeguarding

- 3.1. <sup>1</sup>Poor attendance can be an early alert for safeguarding issues. Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Refer to section 21 of the Eden Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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<sup>1</sup> DfE “Children missing education” 2019

## 4. Types of absence

- 4.1. Each half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Logging reasons provided for absence enables schools to understand and track pupil groups and fulfil their duties to safeguard children. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons like:
- Illness
  - Medical appointments which fall unavoidably in school time
  - Emergencies
- 4.2. *It is important to note that Ofsted makes no distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence, since the impact of any non-attendance on pupil progress is the same.*

## 5. Equal opportunities

- 5.1. No pupil should be denied permission to be absent from school on grounds of age, race or gender. Consideration should be given to permission for absence on grounds of religious beliefs and / or cultural events. The reasons for the importance of attendance should be made on Education and / or Safeguarding grounds. No one person or group should be made to feel their values have not been respected.

## 6. Attendance procedures

- 6.1. These procedures aim to:
- To raise awareness of the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
  - To keep parents informed about lateness and unauthorised absences.
  - To support families if they are experiencing difficulties in achieving regular and punctual attendance.

### a. School attendance targets

- 6.2. Each school within the academy will set attendance targets each year and report these to parents. Each school will have a system for analysing performance

towards the targets. Staff, parents / carers and the pupils themselves all have an important part to play in meeting these targets. Each school will keep parents / carers updated about how their child's attendance compares with the whole school target.

### **b. Registration**

- 6.3. class registers are to be completed by the agreed time (for each school) at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. It is the legal responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the register is completed.

### **c. Absence**

- 6.4. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as authorised or unauthorised, using the agreed codes. In the first instance, it is for a parent / carer to provide the school with a reason for absence as quickly as possible. Individual schools will publish the procedure for notifying absences

Following up on Absences

- 6.5. The school will follow up absences immediately if they have not been notified of the reason for absence. Messages from 3rd parties, such as transport escorts should not be deemed as an official notification of absence and parents / carers should be contacted to verify absences. If parents / carers are unable to be contacted, then the school will attempt to speak to alternative contacts held on file. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed if there are concerns about a child's safety.

### **d. Lateness**

- 6.6. Each school will make parents aware of the time when the registers close. A child arriving after that time but before the next registration will be marked as late, unless there is an acceptable explanation, e.g. school transport was delayed, medical appointment.

### **e. Exceptional Leave**

- 6.7. Pupils are not entitled to be away from school during term time as a result of a family holiday. Such absences will be recorded as unauthorised. Leave of absence will be granted in very exceptional circumstances on application to the Head. These requests should be made by writing in advance to the Head and permission is subject to his or her discretion.

### **f. Cause for Concern**

- 6.8. Where there are causes for concern about a pupil's attendance, staff will work in partnership with the parents / carers to improve the situation. Parents / carers of pupils whose absences / lateness give ongoing cause for concern will receive a letter in the first instance. This letter will stress the importance of attending school and the legal requirement to do so. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, further steps will be taken, in line with individual systems for intervention in place in each school, with the intention of quickly reversing the trend of non-attendance.

### **g. Penalty Notices**

- 6.9. If there is no improvement in a child's attendance after the school has carried out further steps, the Local Authority may choose to apply a fixed penalty notice for non-attendance, backed by the Courts. This is a fine, imposed on the family by the Local Authority, for persistent absence of a pupil at school. The Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices will be made available for parents.

## **7. Children missing education**

- 7.1. "Children Missing Education" 2016 contains guidance for schools on its statutory duties and also contains non statutory advice for schools.

### **a. Schools' Responsibilities**

- 7.2. When the school agrees to admit a pupil then they should be entered on the admissions register on the agreed date of entry whether they attend or not. If the pupil does not attend, they should make reasonable enquiries to establish their whereabouts and notify the child's local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.3. Schools should agree with local authorities how often they who are persistently absent, or who have missed 10 days or more without permission.
- 7.4. Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days or more without permission the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. However, pupils with EHCP plans are covered by the SEND code of practice and these pupils should not be removed from roll without the agreement of the LA's SEND team. Almost all pupils in the Eden Academy have an EHCP plan.
- 7.5. When a pupil has been excluded for 6 or more days the school has a duty to arrange full time education.

### **b. Recording Information in the schools' admission register**

- 7.6. The school should ensure that information on the admissions register is accurate and up to date. This will enable the school and local authorities to make enquiries if a child is missing in education. If a parent notifies that school that the pupil will live at another address, then this should be recorded in the admissions register immediately with full details of contacts.

### **c. Non-Standard Transition Points**

- 7.7. The school will notify the local authority if a child is to be removed from the admissions register at a non-standard transition point (e.g. when a child leaves the school before completing their current phase). Schools should not remove pupils with an EHCP from the register without consultation of the Local Authority.

#### **d. When the whereabouts of a child is unknown**

- 7.8. If a child is absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown the school should make reasonable enquiries to locate them. Paragraph 37 of “Children Missing Education” outlines the steps that can be taken to locate a child. The school must record the actions it has taken to locate the child. Where the safety of a child is in doubt then a referral should be made to social care or the Police.

### **8. Accountability**

- 8.1. The board of trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. The Head Teacher / Head of School will submit this data to trustees at the end of each term in the form of School Management Information.