



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Effective Date:	Spring 2023
Date Reviewed:	10th March 2023
Date Due for Review:	Spring 2025
Contact Officer:	Headteacher

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

OVERVIEW

All parents/carers who have children of compulsory school age are responsible in law for ensuring that their children receive an efficient education, “suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs which they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise” (Section 7 Education Act 1996).

If learners are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment, they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality within a supportive Christian ethos. This school will do all it can to ensure that learners attend school happily, willingly and punctually, to school, to ensure that all gain the greatest possible value from their education.

Where learners are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality, we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement/

Policy Aims

- To promote the highest possible levels of attendance by pupils the school will: -
Establish attendance as high profile
 - Apply the attendance policy consistently
 - Monitor progress in attendance and report to the governors
 - Endeavour to improve pupils’ punctuality
 - Discourage term time holidays in accordance with the Primary Behaviour and Attendance Partnership Policy

- The school will make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school by: -
 - Regularly reporting attendance data to the school governors
 - Informing parents of school times, term dates and training days
 - Having clear procedures for parents to inform staff of pupils' absence or lateness
 - Displaying materials promoting attendance
 - Liaising with the Education Welfare Service
 - Using reward systems for good/improved attendance/punctuality

- The school will develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks by: -
 - Identifying designated staff in the school office to be responsible for first day of absence contact
 - Ensuring clearly defined late registration procedures
 - Having clear procedures and records of intervention regarding attendance concerns
 - Identifying designated office staff to liaise with the Education Welfare Service re attendance issues
 - Reviewing attendance regularly

- The school will provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils by: -
 - Improving communication between school and parents
 - Highlighting attendance in PSHE, assemblies and parents' meetings
 - Informing parents when a pupils' attendance falls below 90%
 - Providing parents with accurate and up to date information
 - Making staff available to speak with parents

- The school will develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data by:-
 - Consistent use of attendance codes following LA guidance
 - Using a computerised registration system (SIMS)
 - Identifying and collecting information on developing patterns of irregular attendance and punctuality
 - Providing attendance information for the head teacher, governors, relevant staff, education welfare service and parents

- The school will further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school by: -
 - Initiating first day absence contact
 - Making full use of computer generated letters
 - Promoting expectation of school e.g. newsletters
 - Encouraging parents to visit/communicate with the school
 -

- The school will use a system of rewards and sanctions by: -
 - Actively promoting attendance with associated rewards and effective sanctions e.g. certificates
 - Ensuring fairness and consistent implementation of rewards and sanctions
 - Working in partnership with the education welfare service, behavioural support service and parents

- The school will promote effective partnership with the education welfare service and other key services by: -
 - Ensuring the attendance register and admission details are accurate and up to date
 - Carrying out initial enquiries and interventions regarding attendance issues
 - Gathering and recording relevant information to refer any concerns to the education welfare service
 - Identifying key staff to liaise with the education welfare service and other agencies related to attendance
 - Supporting the education welfare service in the use of enforcement tools, when appropriate to do so

The School Day

Whilst the school grounds are open from 8:30am, children should not normally arrive at school before 8.35am. A bell is rung at 8.45am, teaching staff commence duties and children should enter the school building to start the school day at 8.45am. For safeguarding reasons, parents/carers should not enter the school building without having first registered as a visitor at the school office, and must let children enter the building with staff.

Children arriving after the bell need to enter the school through the main office entrance and parents sign their children into school. Registers are marked by 9am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in school by that time (L code). At 9.15am the register will close. If your child arrives after this time they will receive a mark which shows they are in school but in accordance with regulations it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). This means that if lateness persists you may face the possibility of receiving a penalty notice.

Children should return to school for 1pm for the afternoon session. The afternoon session begins with a staggered start from 1.00 p.m. and the register is called immediately at the start of the session.

EYFS pupils start their afternoon session at 1pm. KS1 and KS2 start their afternoon session at 1.10pm. Pupils arriving between 1.10 p.m. and 1.20 p.m. will be marked as late. Any pupil arriving after the close of register at 1.20 p.m. will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Lessons end at 3.30pm daily, 3.25pm for Years 5 & 6. Each teacher supervises his/her class out of the building at the end of the school day. Prompt arrival to collect your child is essential as the staff are not always available for supervision beyond 3:30pm. More importantly, it can be distressing for your child, if they are left waiting for you.

If your child is to be collected by anyone not normally scheduled for a particular day, please advise the teacher or school office of the details prior to 3.30pm.

Similarly, if you have made arrangements for your child to be collected by an out of school club/childminder and the arrangements change, please advise the teacher or the school office.

Why regular attendance is so important:

Learning:- Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding:- Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of these schools, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

- a) *To age, ability and aptitude and*
- b) *To any special educational needs he/she may have*

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

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.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to Educational Welfare using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:-

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving toward that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a mentor or external advisor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school by 9.15am on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you by 10am on the first day of absence if we have not heard From you
- Send a letter stating your child's attendance percentage if it drops below 95%
- Contact you directly (letter/email) if your child's absence drops below 90%
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of staff if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Officer if attendance falls below 85%

Telephone numbers:

We need to have your most up-to-date contact number at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number. This will help us to safeguard your child. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Educational Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to Education Welfare at East Riding of Yorkshire Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact Education Welfare themselves to ask for help or information.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents

- It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure his/her child attends school regularly and punctually
- Must contact the school without delay to report any absence
- Ensure that the school has up to date contact details
- Adhere to the policy with regard to holiday absence
- Ensure children have a good attitude to learning and attendance
- Work in partnership with the school to promote the best interest of their child

School Administration Team

- To monitor attendance on a daily basis
- Ensure correct attendance codes are used
- To mark pupils arriving during registration as L (late) and those who arrive after the register has closed (15 minutes after the start of the session) as U (unauthorised absence)
- Maintain and update all contact information
- Prepare attendance data report for the Head Teacher every half term
- Send reminder letters to parents/carers re clearing unexplained absences every half term
- Will prepare a monthly list of pupil's with less than 90% attendance
- Will identify and monitor pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees, using the school management system (SIMS)
- Will contact parents/carers if attendance/punctuality becomes a concern by telephone/letter
- To make first day absence telephone calls
- To send a letter if no response to call
- If necessary will arrange an action plan meeting in school with parent/carers with the Headteacher

Class teachers

- To record accurate details of attendance at the beginning of each session
- Pass information regarding absence to the administration office
- Will speak to every pupil on returning to school about the reason for the absence to ensure he/she is supported and given the opportunity to catch up with missed work

Headteacher

- Ensure there are named key members of staff with responsibility for attendance
- If parent/carer fails to attend meeting, will do a home visit
- Will hold review meetings with parent/carer
- Will maintain pupil notes regarding attendance issues
- If required, will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service and liaise with the Education Welfare Officer
- Present certificates and awards (in assembly) for 100% attendance termly
- Submit reports to the Governing Body on various aspects of pupil attendance, including measuring progress against targets
- Ensure a whole school approach to the development and implementation of the school attendance policy
- Encourage staff, including ancillary and administrative staff, to see attendance as part of their responsibility
- Offer clear guidance to parents with regard to their legal responsibilities in relation to attendance matters and information on attendance procedures
- Establish clear channels of communication between school and parents
- Chair attendance action plan meetings
- Work closely with the Education Welfare Service with regards to enforcement action

Governing Body

- Are required by legislation to see that registers are kept correctly and this is also monitored by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Are required to inform parents annually the schools attendance figures
- Should review attendance statistics and trends and support measures to improve attendance
- Appoint a governor with specific responsibility for attendance matters and ensure this Governor is available to attend meetings with parents

Education Welfare Service

- To provide a dedicated Education Welfare Officer who will work in the school (as per service level agreement)
- The dedicated Education Welfare Officer will support school staff in identifying attendance concerns and becoming familiar with the procedures and documentation required for referring attendance concerns to the Education Welfare Service
- The dedicated Education Welfare Officer will advise on policy, strategies and legal requirements
- Area Education Welfare Officers will liaise with school staff following referral to the service

Authorised Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence. Absence should be authorised if: -

- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carers belong
- The school at which the pupil is registered is not within walking distance of their home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the L.A. for the pupil's transport to and from school in special circumstances.
- The pupil is the child of traveller parent/carers who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return
- There is a family bereavement
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has given leave of absence.
- The pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion e.g. a close member of the family's wedding (this does not include travel to the wedding).

Unauthorised Absence

An absence will be deemed to be unauthorised by the Headteacher following the Local Authority guidelines. Examples of such are: -

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent/carer
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- The pupil is staying at home to mind the house or look after siblings
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions e.g. the pupil's birthday
- The pupil is on a family holiday

Term Time Leave of Absence

Information for Parents

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is, however, a discretionary power held by headteachers to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances for up to 10 days in an academic year between September and July. This may include term time holidays, but this is **not an entitlement**. The headteacher will only authorise holidays during term time in accordance with East Riding Attendance guidelines. Headteachers will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education. In order for consideration to be given, requests for absence must be for exceptional circumstances only.

Further information can be found on the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's website:

<https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-attendance/holidays-during-term-time-and-authorised-absence-from-school/>

If your request is approved, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete.

Any excessive family holiday or any unauthorised leave of absence will be recorded as unauthorised by the school on your child's records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court

Times When Term Time Holidays Will Not Be Approved

The partnership has agreed that holidays will not, **under any circumstances** (including those mentioned above), be authorised at the following times-

1. The first six weeks of any academic year (for all pupils).
2. Year six transition day (for pupils in that year group).
3. Year six SATs week (for pupils in that year group).
4. At any time specified by the school (this will be communicated to parents by each school).

Where there are Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, but this falls within one of the restricted categories above, the Headteacher will discuss this with the Principal Education Welfare Officer before authorising.

Looked After Children

This policy applies to all children, including those who are Looked After Children. The council has an agreed procedure for Children and Young People's Support and Safeguarding Area Managers. The Headteacher will only approve a Term Time Holiday for a Looked After Child in accordance with Children, Family & Adult Services guidance.

Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority has statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent or carer.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of a parent/carer after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, without warning. This includes pupils caught on truancy sweeps, **excessive or unauthorised family holidays** and persistent late arrival after the close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable for prosecution or a penalty notice, it is important you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve improvement, then please contact your school to discuss this.

Further advice and support can also be made available to you through the education welfare service.

Contact

Education Welfare Service
Room FF20
County Hall
Beverley
East Riding of Yorkshire
HU17 9BA
education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk
(01482) 392146

We request that you do not book a holiday until you have submitted a 'Term Time Leave of Absence Request Form' and received confirmation from the Headteacher that they are able, in line with the 'East Riding of Yorkshire's Behaviour and Attendance Partnership Policy for Term Time Holidays' to authorise the request.

Appendix i (<95% letter)

Dear Parent or Carer,

Your child's attendance is important to us. It is our duty to inform you when your child's attendance drops below 95%. This is in line with the government's national target ensuring that all children should attend school for at least 96% of the sessions available in the year.

Your child's current attendance percentage is currently

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance with the school, we would be happy to meet with you or discuss this over the phone.

Kind regards

Mr L Fletcher (Headteacher)

Appendix ii (<90% letter)

Dear Parent or Carer,

Your child's attendance is important to us. It is our duty to inform you when your child's attendance drops below 90%. This is in line with the government's national target ensuring that all children should attend school for at least 96% of the sessions available in the year.

- Your child's current attendance percentage is which is significantly below the 95% expectation. Please try to ensure your child's attendance is consistent and they are in school. I must make you aware that if a child's attendance drops below 85% then the school has to refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Officer.

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance with the school, we would be happy to meet with you or discuss this over the phone.

Kind regards

Mr L Fletcher (Headteacher)