



EAST BOLDON INFANT SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

1. Aims

At East Boldon Infant School our aim is to work together with parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend both regularly and punctually. Regular attendance in school helps to establish routines and a positive working ethos early in life as well as ensuring uninterrupted progress and enabling children to reach their full potential.

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 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:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- 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. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Mrs Trish Imrie is our Link Governor for attendance.

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
 - Leading attendance across the school
 - Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
 - Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
 - Having an oversight of data analysis
 - Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
 - Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
 - Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with the named member of the local authority attendance team

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Lisa Holt (Headteacher) and she is supported by Mrs Ashleigh Elliott (Office Manager) and they can both be contacted via the school office (0191) 536 7292 or office @eastboldoninfants.org.uk

3.5 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.

- Registers will be taken twice daily (at 9.00am and at 12.45pm (Reception) and 1.15pm (Key Stage 1). Any child arriving after 9.05am or 12.50pm/1.20pm will be recorded as late for that session with an L code.
- The register will close at 9.25am. If a child arrives after this time a code of U is marked in the register to show they arrived late, after the register had closed.
- Teachers will complete the online registers in accordance with guidance given by the Headteacher. Registers will be monitored at least half termly in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to identify any potential attendance problems at an early stage.
- Should a child be absent, the class teacher will leave the space with a * on the electronic system.

3.6 Office Manager

The Office Manager will:

- Take calls/emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system. A short note may be added into the notes system as reference.
- Check the registers on our online registration system (RM Integris) and endeavour to make telephone contact with any parent who has not notified us of an absence. This will ensure the correct code is then added into the register and ensures a robust daily process to follow up any absences.
- The Office Manager will then update our online registration system with the appropriate information.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.15am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Support school where any causes for concern about attendance have been raised, by attending any appropriate meetings

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will be recorded in the "Attendance Amendment Log" and will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- [For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.25am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.45pm (EYFS)/1.15pm (KS1) and will be kept open until 1.10pm (EYFS)/1.40pm (KS1).

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. (see also section 7).

The school office can be contacted by telephone (0191 536 7292) or by email office@eastboldoninfants.org.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer 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 and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised, medical appointment as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

For any Leave of Absence a parent wishes to take within school time, a Leave of Absence Request form must be completed. These are available from our school office.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

A late slip will be asked to be completed so we can monitor lateness into school and reasons.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will leave a message for a call back.
- If a child is absent for 3 consecutive days and where no contact has been made into school, on the third day we will issue a home visit to take place from the Local Authority Attendance Team, in the interests of Safeguarding and Child Protection. If the child is not seen on this day, a follow up will be made on Day 4. If there is still no sighting of the child, we may instruct a welfare check from the Police, in the interests of Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- If a child is absent for 5 days, where contact has been made into school regarding the absence, a home visit by school staff may be made to the address to ensure sighting of the child. Where this is not possible by school staff, then support from the Local Authority Attendance Team may be actioned to complete the home visit in the interest of Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- In light of the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, a child with unexplained and/or persistent absence from school can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding concern. Further information can be found in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels

- Half termly monitoring and analysis will look closely at pupils/cohorts to identify patterns of low attendance and those pupils/groups at risk of becoming persistently absent dropping below 95% and then those persistently absent at below 90%.
- Parents/carers will be alerted to their child's attendance termly through their child's Target Slips and End of Year Report.
- Letters will be sent out to parents/carers where attendance has fallen below 90% to alert them to this and to explain that their child's attendance is being closely monitored.
- Where concerns are raised regarding attendance dropping below 90% a short meeting will be carried out with parents to discuss concerns and look at ways to work together to improve attendance.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least one month before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Holidays in term time will not be authorised.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- 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 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 educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

New legislation comes into force from September 2024 regarding the criteria and the issue of penalty notices to address school attendance.

The following changes have been made:

- The number of unauthorised absences to 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in the most recent 10 week period.
- The number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child to two, within a 3 year period.
- It increases the amount of the penalty notice fine from £120 to £160 (if paid within 28 days) and £60 to £80 (if paid within 21 days) for the first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child in a 3 year period.
- It sets the amount of any second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same individual child within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice was issued to £160 to be paid within 28 days. No discount is offered.
- Further absences will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court for the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the first penalty was issued.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

6. Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education should be the same as any pupil and therefore attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same for any other pupil.

At East Boldon Infant School, we will always work in partnership with parents to improve attendance, looking at ways to support within school to help them to access their full time education.

Our SENDCo in school is Mrs O'Donnell and she can be contacted, along with Miss Holt (Headteacher) for any concerns relating to medical conditions and SEND.

We may also request support from the School Nurse/Health Services or Local Authority to look at ways to support specific approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND or specific medical conditions.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to help them to understand their child's barriers to attendance and to proactively engage with the support offered.

7. Pupils with a social worker

Where pupils are known to Children's Services and have a named social worker, school will ensure that the pupil's social worker is notified of any unexplained absences.

Parents of children with a named social worker should work with the school and local authority to ensure that the Attendance Policy of the school is followed and reasons for absences are given in accordance to the policy. They should work with the school to understand any barriers faced by their child in relation to attendance at school and proactively engage with support offered by the school, local authority or children's services.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school uses a number of strategies to promote good attendance:

- Weekly updated attendance board in school
- Weekly notification of attendance in assembly
- Termly certificates for 100% attendance
- Termly certificates for improved attendance across a term.
- Annual reward and certificate for 100% attendance across the year

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Analyse data with respect to specific target groups such as those with social workers, SEND and pupil premium pupils.

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to allow them to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

As a school, our aim is always to prevent and intervene early to avoid our children missing a significant amount of school time.

We expect all of our parents to work with the school and local authority to help understand the barriers to attendance and proactively engage with any support offered such as medical verification for absence or an early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with we will work closely with the Local Authority to:

- Place formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
- Issue a fixed penalty notice warning where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change parents' behaviour
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance)

9. Monitoring arrangements

9.1 Governor Monitoring Role

Governors are provided with an attendance report as part of the Headteacher's Report on a termly basis.

In addition there is a link governor with responsibility for monitoring the attendance policy and procedures and they will meet at least annually with the Headteacher. In addition, their role will cover the items in 3.1.

9.2 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Miss L Holt (Headteacher) in conjunction with the link governor. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

- Behaviour policy

Reviewed September 2024

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
Ⓐ	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day