



**Eastlea**  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

<b>Leadership Team Responsibility:</b>	Deputy Headteacher
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# Introduction

This Policy has been agreed by the Governors, Staff and Students at Eastlea Community School.

The policy represents our commitment to striving for excellent attendance. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor Attendance and Punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

## Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement
- It is parents'/carers' legal responsibility to ensure this happens
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development
- Good attendance practice safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents or carers
- All children whose attendance is poor will be considered vulnerable

These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

## Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all children attend as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development
- To explain the school's duty to safeguard the welfare of our students
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence
- To improve the life chances of our students and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood

## Policy objectives:

- To safeguard the welfare, social, educational and emotional development of children
- To reduce persistent absence
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement
- To maximise the potential of every individual student

## Promoting Excellent Attendance:

The school will use all means available to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home/school agreement, parent/carer bulletin, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance.

The school will also, when necessary, employ sanctions to improve attendance. The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise leave of absence in term-time in the **most exceptional** circumstances. In such cases the Headteacher will specify the date when the student must return to school.

Unauthorised leave of absence in term time, and students returning late from school holidays are likely to result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice. A Penalty Notice requires each parent to pay £60 per child, if they pay within 21 days. If they do not pay within 21 days, but pay within 28 days, the fine rises to £120 per parent per child. If they do not pay at all they risk prosecution under S.444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

A penalty notice may also be requested and served to parents/carers for Persistent Absences. Any student who is absent without explanation for 12 consecutive or cumulative sessions (6 school days) (90% attendance), or who has a pattern of erratic attendance or persistent lateness may be referred to the Attendance Management Service of LBN, in order that further investigations can be made.

In very serious cases of poor attendance for no acceptable reason, the school may involve other agencies such as the School Nurse or Social Care, to safeguard the welfare, development and educational potential of the student.

# SCHOOL PROCEDURES

## 1. Registration and punctuality procedures

Registers are taken through SIMS at the start (within the first 10 minutes) of tutor time and every lesson(see below \*). Tutor time or assembly starts at 8:45 am, and all registers must be taken by 8:55 am. Students who arrive after 8:45 am registration period will be coded **L** (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. . Registers will be kept open until 9:15 am.

Students arriving after the registers have closed will be coded **U** (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence.

Only the Headteacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (**N**), until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view (the Attendance Team), and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as **U** (Unauthorised absence). Absence notes received from parents/carers will be kept for the remainder of the academic year, or longer if there are concerns that require further investigation or legal action. If a student is persistently late the Deputy Headteacher and the Attendance Team will arrange to meet with the family as soon as the pattern is identified.

\*It is the professional responsibility of class tutors and teachers to ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time. Inaccurate or incomplete registers can also lead to safeguarding issues. If staff fail to adhere to this, the attendance team and senior staff will follow up. Repeated failure to fulfil this duty can lead to disciplinary procedures being initiated.

## 2. First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school the first day their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. If the school does not receive notification, the Attendance Team will text on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. If there is no or inadequate response to the text, the Attendance team will follow up with a phone call. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day (starting at 9:00 am), in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived, as quickly as possible. This is important for safeguarding reasons.

### 3. Second Day Absence Contact

If the student is still absent on the second day without contact from the family, the Attendance Team will continue to attempt to make contact through phone and text messages to the parents/carers and keep a record of all attempts made.

### 4. Continuing Absence Procedures

In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, the Attendance Team will liaise with the Safeguarding team to ascertain whether there are any safeguarding concerns before making a home visit.

Any student who is absent without explanation for 12 consecutive or cumulative sessions (6 school days) (90% attendance), or who has a pattern of erratic attendance or persistent lateness after registers close may be referred to the Attendance Management Service of LBN, in order that further investigations can be made. Such cases may result in a visit to the home by an Attendance Management Officer. Targets will be set for improvement, sources of support will be signposted if needed. If there is no improvement, court action or a Penalty Notice may ensue.

### 5. Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

Regular analysis of the registers will be made by the school to identify students with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), that is to say absence of 10% or more in a half term, or 4 or more days off in 2 or more periods. The school Attendance Team will be responsible for identification of any emerging concerns, and ensuring that action plans are in place for each student of concern.

Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers, but if the pattern continues the school may refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In cases where there appear to be issues requiring outside intervention to support the family and the child, referral may be made through the Triage system for external agency support. If appropriate PA students and their parents/carers will be subject to an Action Plan or Parenting Contract. Such a plan or contract may include allocation of additional in-school or external support depending on the circumstances.

## 6. Consequences of Poor Attendance /Punctuality

Students are expected to be in school at least 5 minutes before the start of the school day at 8:45am.

- If students arrive after the register has been taken they should sign in at Reception
- All students who arrive after 8.40 receive a 20 minute late detention on the same day. This is carried out by a duty team (consisting of a rota of Achievement Leaders and Leadership team). The detention will be rescinded if parents/carers contact the Attendance Team with a valid reason for late arrival. The attendance team, supported where necessary by senior staff, will make a judgement about whether reasons given are acceptable (routine occurrences such as heavy traffic, late buses, waking up late etc would not normally be considered acceptable reasons to rescind a late detention).
- Students who repeatedly receive late detentions, will be followed up by their Pastoral Managers and will receive longer Pastoral Manager detentions.
- Any student who is late 6 or more times in the half-term may be considered a PA
- Parents/Carers will be notified of this situation and will be given the opportunity to discuss the issue with the Attendance Team, either by phone or in a meeting. The student may be placed on an Attendance Monitoring Report
- If this situation does not improve, parents/carers and the student will be invited in to again discuss the situation with the Attendance Team.
- Students who fail to turn up for late detentions will be escalated in line with the school's detention procedures

For students whose **attendance** and/or **punctuality** fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

- 1) The school may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice on its behalf. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, court action is likely to be initiated
- 2) The school may refer parents/carers to the Local Authority for statutory intervention which may result in court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even up to 3 months imprisonment
- 3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and educational development of the child

## 7. Celebrating good attendance and punctuality:

### **Individual Student Awards**

- Students will be issued 100% Attendance Certificates each half term and will be rewarded with a queue jump pass.
- Students will be issued termly 100% Attendance Badges i.e. Bronze for Term 1, Silver for Term 2, Gold for Term 3
- Students with 100% attendance throughout the school year will gain entry to the end of year school reward event.
- Individual students receive an automatic achievement point for 100% attendance and 100% punctuality on a weekly basis during tutor time
- Students who receive 100% Attendance Certificates, Badges and queue jump passes will be celebrated in assembly.
- Students with 100% attendance will receive congratulatory letters sent home to their parents/carers for good attendance each term
- Students with improving attendance and punctuality will also be recognised by their tutors through the issuing of achievement points. One per half term

### **Tutor Group Awards**

- Tutor group attendances will be announced and celebrated in assembly.
- The tutor group with the overall highest attendance each half term will receive a collective reward.

## 8. Children who cease to attend without Prior Notification (CME) procedures

If the school is unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a student after ten days continuous absence, the Attendance Team will refer the student's details to the Local Authority for them to perform further checks that are not available to school. This is referred to as a Child Missing Education (CME). If after 10 days continuous unauthorised absence and the student's whereabouts cannot be traced, a referral will be made to the local authority for further investigation. Eastlea will always await written confirmation from the LA that a student can be off-rolled.



## 9. Recording absence:

### **Parental Notes:**

Absence requires a written note from parents/carers. This may be an entry in the student's Blazer Booklet, an email sent to [info@eastela.newham.sch.uk](mailto:info@eastela.newham.sch.uk); alternatively parents can call the school absence line prior to 8am on the day of the absence and leave a message. Where parents/carers have difficulties with writing, it is acceptable that the student writes the note and the parent/carer signs. The Attendance Team will make contact with the parents/carer to receive confirmation. Once confirmation of absence is received, the Attendance Team will code the student accordingly.

### **Offsite activities**

These may be recorded as an authorised absence, depending on circumstances and at the discretion of the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance.

### **Lesson truancy**

All subject teachers are required to keep a lesson register. Students who truant lessons will receive a detention after school with the Pastoral Manager of the year group, and parents/carers will be informed.

## 10. Non-starters

Students who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CMEs. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a ten-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the students to the Local Authority CME Officer for further checks. The Attendance team will follow up and await the LA's confirmation to off-roll the student.

## 11. Vulnerable Children

Children who are Looked after (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP), Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Team. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home, or a home visit. At Eastlea, we recognise that there are students with specific medical, therapy, Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), who have a high level of absence, and will be supported through the following strategies:

- Daily monitoring of attendance and absence
- Recording absence as authorised where appropriate
- Working with the the Inclusion Team and the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised (when appropriate) to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these students and the school
- Liaise with the Inclusion Team to organise home visits where appropriate
- Recognise that some students may not be 'available for learning on the school site' and work collaboratively with parents/carers, the Inclusion Team, the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school

## 12. Interventions

The school will systematically follow up absence according to this policy, which is reviewed annually. There are other systematic procedures that the school will use to support students and their families to improve attendance and punctuality to school. These include in-school interventions to support students behaviour, learning, welfare and well being.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CARERS**

## 13. Working in Partnership

The Governors and staff of this school want to work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that children are as successful as they can possibly be. This means being in school as near to 100% of the time as possible. It is parents'/carers' responsibility in law to ensure their child attends regularly and on time.

## 14. Understanding types of absence coding

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, GP note, etc. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are: illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, and emergencies. The school will ask for medical evidence after three days of illness.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are for example: Going shopping; Birthdays; Looking after other younger children in the family; Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell; day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed; truancy etc.

## 15. Supporting Reluctant attenders

Parents/carers should do everything possible to encourage their child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to sort the problem out. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

School phobia is a psychological condition that is medically diagnosed, and in these cases other arrangements may be made for the child's education. However, refusal to attend school may result in parents being prosecuted.

# APPENDIX A: ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE CODES

The following national codes will be used to record attendance and absence:

## Attendance Codes

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

## Absence codes: Authorised absence

Code	Definition	Meaning
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their GCSEs
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

**Absence codes: Unauthorised absence**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when reason emerges)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for the student's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

**Administrative codes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel or student is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

# APPENDIX B: USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

## Introduction

Eastlea is an exceptional school, and you and your child play a part in making it so. We aim to encourage all members of the school community to reach out for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school in good time for the start of the school day, every day the school is open, unless they are genuinely ill or there is some other unavoidable reason.

Some children are reluctant to go to school and say they do not feel well. It is for you as the adult, to judge whether they are genuinely unwell, or just unwilling. It will be better for them in the long run to go to school, rather than avoid it, as days off mean they will fall further behind and make them even more reluctant. Your job as a parent is to encourage them to attend.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is YOUR legal responsibility and permitting absence without good reason is an offence in law and may result in legal action being taken, or a Penalty Notice being issued (see below).

## Learning

Any absence affects your child's learning, and the more they miss the harder it will be for them to catch up. Research has shown that for every percentage point of absence, attainment is significantly lower.

## Safeguarding

There is extensive research linking poor school attendance and exclusion with crime and anti-social behaviour, and risk of exploitation by unsuitable adults. For this reason, failure to attend regularly will be regarded as a safeguarding issue.

## Understanding absence percentages

You may wonder why a school would be concerned if your child's attendance is not 95% or higher. This may make it easier for you to understand:

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks

90% equates to a day off every two weeks

85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks

80% equates to one whole day off every week

**A secondary age child whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school**

Even the brightest and most enthusiastic learner will find it hard to keep up with their work with these levels of absence. That is why we encourage the highest attendance possible.

### **Understanding types of absence coding**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, label from prescribed medication or GP note. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies. Parents/carers must first seek to book all appointments outside of school hours.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will be UNAUTHORISED under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents, Birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark
- Truancy

### **Reluctant attenders**

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to sort the problem out. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

### **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A student is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, **for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both.** Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our Attendance Team, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the student's attainment. All our PA students and their parents/carers are subject to some form of intervention, which may include allocation of some kind of support.

### **Parenting Contracts**

You may be asked to participate in a Parenting Contract to support your child's attendance.

These are initiated where the school feels you may need help in influencing your child to attend properly. They have no force in law, and are entered into voluntarily. A meeting will be held to which you and your child will be invited. The problems will be discussed and agreement reached as to what the school will do, what the child will do and what you as parents/carers will do to try to improve the situation. You may be offered some form of support such as counselling or parenting classes to assist you in setting boundaries and enforcing expectations of your child.

### **Reporting your child's absence**

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school as early as possible on the first day of absence, either by telephone, email or in person, and
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence
- If sickness absence is for three days or more the school will require medical evidence in the form of a doctor's note, copy prescription or label from prescribed medicine.

### **Applications for leave of absence in term time**

Policy is **not** to authorise leave of absence from school during term time. Any applications for leave in term time must be made in writing to the Head of School. There is no automatic right to term time leave of absence, and your request is likely to be declined except in the most exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on its own merit, and the attendance record(s) of the child/ren concerned will be taken into account when making a decision.

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices can now be issued for a range of attendance-related offences, including unauthorised term-time holidays, poor attendance and poor punctuality, or being out in a public place without justification during the first five days of an exclusion. Please view Newham Local Authority website for more information on Penalty Notices.

### **Your contact details**

Please make sure that the contact details you have given to the school are correct and kept up to date, so that in the event of an accident, emergency or any other need to contact you we have the correct details.



## Useful school contacts

Senior Attendance and Admissions Officer	Kate Morley
Deputy Headteacher - Attendance	Matthew Copping
Headteacher	Sarah Morgan
Executive Headteacher	Charlotte Robinson

### Legal References and Linked Policies

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 to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise.'

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.

The Children Act 1989 provides for a number of actions that can be taken to protect children's safety and welfare, on the premise that the welfare of the child is paramount.

DfE Guidance on School Attendance 2019

Eastlea Behaviour Policy