

EASTHAMPSTEAD PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Easthampstead Park Community School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure students are in school and on time and therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children and young people registered at this school and is therefore shared with parents/carers and students on admission to the school. In law **compulsory** school age applies to all children from the start of the term commencing on or after the child's 5th birthday, until the last Friday in the June during the academic year that the young person becomes 16.

We firmly believe that all students benefit from regular attendance at school and it is the key to an individual's social, emotional, educational progress and attainment. Students' attainment and their level of attendance are clearly linked. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents and carers in ensuring that their sons and daughters achieve the maximum possible attendance. EPCS aims that every student should strive for 100% but at least 96% in a school year. This is achieved by providing an outstanding learning environment, which allows issues that prevent full attendance to be identified and acted on promptly.

Every day of education and indeed every lesson matters. In the National Curriculum where there is built in progression, children who are persistently late or absent will soon get behind with work and then do not understand current lessons when they return. The introduction to a lesson and to the school day is crucial to the child's understanding of their own learning. Children who miss school frequently will undoubtedly have gaps in their learning which may impede their progress and the ability to engage in lessons. This in turn has a knock on effect for their ability to concentrate and their behaviour. Children who do not understand the lesson will frequently behave inappropriately to cover their inability to engage with the work. Frequent absence has a profound and cumulative effect on achievement.

Legal position: 'Every child of a compulsory school age, who is a registered student of a school, must attend school regularly'

The Court has determined that 'Regular' attendance means that which is 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school' (Isle of Wight Council v Platt, 6 April 2017 [Supreme Court - 2017] UKSC on appeal from 2016 EWHC 12 (Admin)).

It has been underpinned by the principles established in the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from both the DfE advice October 2014 and the Local Authority.

Although parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance, the governors and staff will work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure students are encouraged and supported. Procedures in this policy will ensure that this happens and that children do not slip through the net.

Aims and objectives

This policy ensures that all staff in our school are fully aware and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

What we do to maintain good attendance and punctuality among our children:

1. Raise awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and students.

2. Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and on time.
3. Equip children/young people with the skills needed to take responsibility for school attendance and punctuality appropriate to their age and development.
4. Maintain clear effective communication channels on school attendance matters.
5. Develop and implement procedures for identifying, reporting and following up cases of poor attendance and lateness.
6. Support students who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
7. Develop and implement procedures to follow up non-attendance in school.
8. Establish a safe environment where students can:

Be Healthy
 Stay Safe
 Enjoy and Achieve
 Make a Positive contribution
 Achieve Economic Wellbeing

PROCEDURES

Pupils learn best when parents and staff work in partnership to maximise pupils' attendance at school and everyone is clear of expectations and procedures. We expect that as soon as your child starts their education at Easthampstead Park Community School you will abide by our Attendance Policy.

The staff have an obligation to enquire and challenge the reasons for pupils' absences and/or lateness and do insist on written evidence for any such absences. There is also an expectation that the staff report concerns over absence and lateness to the Headteacher. The school may send letters to parents or carers as to their child's current attendance level, unexplained absences or lateness or any other concerns.

Our school will undertake to follow the procedures set out in this policy below:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes
- To maintain appropriate attendance data
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school to all staff, parents and students.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which will give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up all absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school on the first day.
- To discuss with parents what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence (only the school can authorise absences, not parents)
- To strongly discourage any unnecessary absence through holidays taken in term time.
- To work with parents to improve attendance and punctuality.
- To refer attendance statistics to the Local Authority as required.
- The Governing Body understands it will fulfil its responsibilities and may appoint a nominated Governor or panel of Governors for attendance issues.
- All staff should be aware that they must report any attendance or punctuality concerns to a named person in your school, probably the attendance officer.
- Advice can be sought from the LA where necessary.
- If a student on the Child Protection register is absent for two days without explanation their Social Worker is notified.
- If a student is in public care (LAC) the carer, social worker and education co-ordinator will be involved appropriately.

- To work closely with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in applying the revised Code of Conduct and Protocol for the Issuing of Fixed Penalties Notice appropriately.

Attendance Expectations

We expect that all students will:

- ✓ Attend regularly
- ✓ Attend all lessons
- ✓ Attend punctually. The school day starts at 8.40am. Students should aim to arrive at 8.30am
- ✓ Attend prepared for the day.
- ✓ Discuss with parent/carer or member of staff any problems that prevent them from attending regularly and punctually so that they can be addressed promptly.

We expect all Parents and Carers will:

- ✓ Be aware of their legal duty to ensure that their son or daughter attends school on a regular full time basis – Section 7 Education Act 1996
- ✓ Ensure that their son or daughter arrives punctually and prepared for the day
- ✓ Ensure they contact school on the first day of absence and thereafter on a daily basis. Messages should be left before 8.30am on the absence/sickness line number 01344 304567 option 1 or Absence Line on 01344 390829 or email attendance@epschool.org
- ✓ Provide a doctor's certificate or note for a prolonged period of illness
- ✓ Contact the school if a problem occurs that may or has resulted in their son or daughter not wanting to attend school.
- ✓ Be prepared to attend attendance meetings to discuss support for their son or daughter
- ✓ Arrange holidays outside of term time and medical appointments outside of school hours where possible.

We expect that school staff will:

- ✓ Provide a welcoming and calm atmosphere for students
- ✓ Keep an accurate register for registration and for all lessons
- ✓ Contact parents or carers on the first day of absence where no prior explanation has been received, logging this on SIMS intervention.
- ✓ Where parents and carers cannot be contacted a follow up letter will be sent/text message/e-mail, for this reason parents or carers must inform the school immediately if contact details change.
- ✓ Monitor students' patterns of attendance and letters may be sent to parents if attendance falls below expected levels
- ✓ Inform parents or carers by letter or telephone if attendance becomes a concern
- ✓ Make initial inquiries of parents or carers where a student is not attending school regularly and
 - Address any issues that are preventing regular attendance and draw up an attendance action plan with Head of Year, Attendance Officer and Family Support Adviser
 - Register their concern where absences are unexplained or unjustified
- ✓ Refer to Education Welfare Officer (EWO) students presenting irregular and/or unjustified absences.
- ✓ Celebrate good and improved attendance through assemblies, postcards home and reward days.

Reintegration

We all realise that returning to school following a period of absence can be very difficult for some people, whatever the reason for their absence. In these situations, school staff will plan carefully

with parents, carers and students, together with any relevant agencies about how best to support the student's return to school.

REGISTERING STUDENTS

Opening and Closing of the Attendance Register

Registration will take place at the start of each morning session at 8:50am and in each individual lesson. All registers will be taken electronically using the School Information Management System (SIMS). Lesson registration enables patterns of internal truancy to be identified which may suggest problems with a particular subject, or wider issues. The number of minutes late each month is monitored.

There is an expectation that all students will arrive on time. Students arriving after 8.40am and before 9.00am will be regarded as late and will receive an L code in the register. Students arriving late should enter the building through the main entrance and report to Welfare to sign in. They will be directed to their class and may be required to make up the time lost. Attendance after these times is in law regarded as an absence and will be coded as U. Afternoon registration is taken at 3.00pm – 3.10pm and there is no allowance for lateness. Staff with concerns about attendance will refer these to the Attendance Officer who will then liaise with the Assistant Head of Year. Sanctions will be imposed on students who are persistently late to school or lessons and school/department detentions will be issued. Parents or carers may be invited into school to attend a meeting, to discuss any problems relating to lateness which are affecting a student's ability to benefit from the education offered.

Students who continue to be persistently late may be at a disadvantage when a reference for college or employment is required as this will reflect their poor punctuality.

The register provides the daily record of attendance of all students. It is a legal document that may be required in a court of law as evidence, for example in prosecutions for non-attendance. Student's registers may be view on SIMS learning gateway.

The main codes used are those laid down by the DfE from September 2006 (Updated October 2016):

- / present AM
- \ present PM
- O unauthorised absence
- I authorised absence for illness
- M authorised absence for medical/dentist appointment
- C authorised absence for other circumstances
- L late arrival before register closed
- U late (after register closed)
- G family holiday not authorised by Deputy Headteacher
- V education visit
- B educated off site

ILLNESS

Parents and carers are encouraged not to keep their sons or daughters off school with minor ailments and to limit time off for visits to doctors and dentists as far as it is reasonably practicable.

DENTAL AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents and carers are asked most earnestly not to arrange these during school sessions, except in cases of urgency, so that considerable interference with school work is avoided. Please do not keep students out of school for a whole half day session unless absolutely necessary.

If an appointment in school time is unavoidable please advise the Attendance Officer in advance of the date via a letter or email to attendance@epschool.org or the Absence Line on 01344 390829. On arrival at school or when leaving school, all students must sign in and out at Welfare.

If your son or daughter becomes ill during the school day, he or she must ask for permission to go to the school medical room and, if necessary, parents or carers will be contacted for their son or daughter to go home. Students must never contact parents and carers directly to make arrangements to go home.

Where a student is likely to be absent from school due to serious illness or treatment the school may involve outside organisations in order to support the student's academic progress.

Only the school can authorise absence, on the basis of information provided by parents and carers. Where explanations are not felt to be acceptable, the absence will remain unauthorised and parents and carers informed.

HOLIDAYS – Leave of Absence

School holidays are published a year in advance on the school website and by the Local Authority, we therefore do not see any reason for parents and carers to need to take their son or daughter out of school during term time. Therefore, in the interest of your son or daughter's education, the Headteacher, **will not be prepared to grant leave of absence at any time** for family holidays, family visits, holidays with friends or youth organisations or outside sporting clubs in school time. There is strong DfE evidence that students who are absent from school for any length of time regularly underachieve in their school work, assessments and examinations.

If a family feels that absence **under exceptional circumstances** in term time is required, then a "Leave of Absence" form must be collected from reception and returned to the Attendance Officer. You may also email the Attendance Officer at ann.mullett@epschool.org. Requests should be made at least **two school weeks in advance**, so that appropriate consideration can be given and a response made. On receipt of the application the Headteacher, will decide whether to authorise the absence and will take into account the following when making that decision.

- The school would not normally grant leave of absence under exceptional circumstances to students in Years 10, 11 12 or 13 who will be undertaking internal or external examination courses or assessments.
- The level of attendance of the student concerned (not below 97%)
- Leave granted will not exceed five school days in any one year.

Permission will not be granted for any leave of absence during any public examination period (for example GCSEs, A Levels), mock examinations internal school examinations or controlled assessments.

If a student is taken out of school at any time for the purposes of a holiday, or similar, the school is obliged to inform the Education Welfare Officer who is empowered to take further action. This may result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice and fine for each parent or carer for each student's absence.

The Headteacher's decision in response to any application for a leave of absence during term time will be made within 7 school days of receiving the said application.

If under exceptional circumstances permission is granted, then teachers are not expected to set work individually for a student who is away from school. It is the responsibility of the student to copy up any work from another student or contact his or her teachers directly.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

The Headteacher reserves the right to follow EWS guidelines and as such may seek to refer a parent or carer to the EWS for consideration of a FPN if their child's attendance meets the criteria after previous consultation has been had regarding the school's concern over attendance issues.

Referral may result in prosecution proceedings or a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued in accordance with Bracknell Forest Council's 'Code of conduct and protocol for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices'.

As a school we agree and endorse Bracknell Forest Council's "Code of Conduct and Protocol For The Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (Revised June 2017).

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice may be issued to each parent for each child. THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If an issued Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within the prescribed time limit for payment, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates' Court for an offence contrary to Section 444 Education Act 1996, (failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil of compulsory school age), in the same way as if the Fixed Penalty Notice had never been issued.

The purpose of the Fixed Penalty Notice, where it is considered appropriate for such Notice to be issued, is to give a parent the time limited opportunity to avoid prosecution for a substantive offence contrary to Section 444 Education 1996. Any such prosecution following non-payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice will be for a substantive offence contrary to S. 444 Education Act 1996, rather than for non-payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the less serious offence contrary to S. 444(1) Education Act 1996 (being the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and /or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £1,000.00.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the more serious offence contrary to S. 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 (where the parent knows that the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and the parent fails without reasonable justification to cause that child to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and / or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £2,500.00 and / or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or else any such community based Sentence as deemed appropriate by the Court.

In addition, in all cases where one of the substantive offences is proved, the Prosecution will seek an Order for the Defendant to pay a contribution towards the Prosecution Costs of the case, including investigation costs, the application for which will be served upon the Defendants at the time of the relevant Court proceedings.

In addition, when a Court passes a sentence, it must also order that the relevant "Victim Surcharge" be paid by Defendants. Revenue raised from the Victim Surcharge is used by Central Government to fund victim of crime services through the "Victim and General Fund". The amount of the Victim Surcharge to be paid by Defendants depends on the type of Sentence imposed and, in the case of

an adult offender receiving the maximum level of Sentence applicable for the type offences covered by this Attendance Policy, may result in a Victim Surcharge of up to £170.00 per Defendant / parent.

In addition to any other Sentence imposed, the Court has the ancillary power to impose a "Parenting Order", not exceeding 12 months in duration, on parents, where the Court considers such an Order appropriate. Any person found guilty of failing without reasonable excuse to comply with the requirement of a "Parenting Order" or with a direction of the nominated Responsible Officer in respect of it is liable to Breach proceedings and, in the event of conviction for the same, to a fine, not exceeding £1,000.00, and or any other non-imprisonable Sentencing option available to the Court in such case.

Authorisation for term time leave will not be given for the following reasons:

- Availability or cost.
- Extended holiday at the beginning or end of the term.
- A term-time booking made in error by the parent or another person.

Any absence that has not been authorised may be referred to the Education Welfare Service and, where the criteria for doing so is met, may result in prosecution proceedings or a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued per parent per child.

There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which every child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. Parents should ensure that family holidays are taken during school holiday periods only.

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their school. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Date reviewed:

November 2017

Responsibility for Implementation and Review:

Student Support Committee

Date of Next Review:

Autumn 2019

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1. STRATEGIES, INTERVENTIONS AND SYSTEMS IN PLACE WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Procedure in place:

- Recording and publishing data on students who are regularly late
- Regular spot check at gate to identify regularly late students
- Punctuality addressed in tutor period and in tutorial programme
- Detention for persistently late students (3 times in a week)
- Termly reward 100% with postcard
- Identify and work with students whose attendance is causing concern (pre-referral)
- Individual attendance targets set and shared with students and parents (action plans)
- Tutors given weekly information on attendance in their group
- Competition to form regular part of feedback in assembly
- Attendance information is shared with assistant head of years (AHOY) and Head of Years (HOY) on a **WEEKLY** basis
- Attendance information is passed to tutors by Attendance Officer (AO) on a **WEEKLY** basis
- Note required for all absences, written, phone calls or checked e-mails
- Calls home on first day of absence for students open to EWS
- Appropriate students referred for LSC support
- Refer to EWO students whose attendance is a cause for serious concern
- LA and IT to provide support and updates for attendance system
- ½ termly report to governing body on attendance
- Regular contact between school and Education Welfare Service
- Liaison between school and Local authority
- Letters to parents identifying regularly late students
- Regular print out of students whose attendance has fallen below 95%
- Letter to parents whose attendance has fallen below 95%
- half-termly assemblies to recognise 100% and excellent attendance
- Calls home on third day of absence for selected students
- Students placed on attendance report
- Liaison between student support and SENCo for poor attenders on register
- Data used to identify poor attenders who are underperforming
- Data used to identify poor attenders who are also lesson disrupters
- Produce specific attendance action plan for external agencies
- Attendance figures are reported to the Local Authority on dates advised for census.

2. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TUTOR

1. Overview of student attendance
2. Register taken and saved on time
3. Keep register up to date and ensure accuracy
4. Collect absence notes from students and pursue these notes via the diary
5. To phone parents on third day of absence for identified students
6. Alert Assistant Head of Year and other appropriate staff regarding concerns and absence patterns after initial intervention by the tutor has failed. See appendix two
7. Monitor individual attendance targets through tutorial programme
8. Discuss with parents any attendance or punctuality concerns
9. Identify regular late students for Assistant Head of Year
10. Set 10 minute detentions for late students

11. Create a supportive ethos within tutor time to encourage students to attend.
12. Question students who are present but were absent from previous lesson stressing the reasons students need to be accounted for

3. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHER

1. Take register for every class within first 20 minutes
2. Question students who are present but were absent from previous lesson stressing the reasons students need to be accounted for
3. Monitor and report patterns of absence to tutor, head of department and assistant head of year.

4. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ATTENDANCE OFFICER (AO)

1. Manage school attendance data
2. Provide individual attendance targets the report cycle
3. Provide attendance data for reports
4. Manage school attendance data
5. Provide attendance data for reports
6. Overall responsibility for monitoring attendance
7. Phone parents of students on first day alert
8. Check AM and PM registers are taken to alert Attendance Officer/Assistant Headteacher where procedures are not followed
9. AO identifies all students on school action and above who have attendance problems
10. AO has calendared meetings with Assistant Headteacher and AHOY where such students can be discussed and appropriate action taken
11. Identify and monitor students whose attendance is a school concern (pre-referral)
12. Liaise with Welfare letter for students below 95% attendance
13. Discuss and refer as appropriate all attendance concerns of students below 95% to EWO
14. Hold regular meetings with EWO following procedures laid down in service agreement
15. Produce data for bi-weekly meetings between Attendance Office and EWO
16. Distribute standard letters as required from above meeting, (Monitoring, Broken weeks etc) Identify and review students whose parents need a telephone call on first day of absence (updating Welfare)
17. Provide attendance data for tutors, SENCo and AHOY/HOY on a weekly basis
18. Produce ½ termly list of students with 100% or excellent attendance
19. Liaise with Welfare list of 100% and excellent attenders

5. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADMIN/WELFARE

1. Students who arrive after 9.00 am report to welfare office
2. Adjust register code for all students who arrive after 9.00 am
3. Track lesson attendance of students identified by Attendance Officer or Directors
4. Inform Tutor/AHOY of students suspected of truancy
5. Phone parents of students who have left site without permission
6. Phone parents of students who have three days of absence as requested by tutor
7. Check lesson registers are taken and provide data to HoD for follow-up
8. Produce letter for students with Unauthorized Absence
9. Produce termly letter and certificates for 100% and excellent attendance

6. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EWS

1. For full details see annual agreement held by the Finance and Personnel Manager

2. Meet regularly with the Attendance Officer
3. Identify pre-referral cases and agree
4. Identify 'live' cases and set an action plan for improvement
5. Agree with the school students to progress to fast track

7. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASSISTANT HEAD OF YEAR

1. Overall responsibility for monitoring attendance and punctuality within the cohort
2. Monitor lates and truancy, and ensure tutors set detentions – see Appendix One
3. Identify students who are regularly late, write to parents and set detentions
4. Operate 'check out' system for regular offenders
5. Manage appropriate distribution of above letters
6. Check progress of cohort against school target
7. Publicise and reward attendance competitions in assembly
8. Refer students to in house support (LSC) as required (link into pre-referral)
9. Liaise with Attendance Officer over standard letters for poor attenders (Monitoring, broken weeks etc)
10. Identify and list students whose attendance is a serious concern and are referred to EWO as "Live cases" – see Appendix Two
11. Identify and review students whose attendance in lessons needs tracking
12. Liaise with SENCO for attendance issues for students on register
13. Ensure attendance targets and issues are covered in tutorial programme
14. Keep overview of progress against school targets
15. To ensure attendance is on fortnightly tutor meeting agenda.

8. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

1. Overall responsibility for attendance and attendance targets for the school
2. Liaise with LA on attendance issues including the setting of targets
3. Attend, with Attendance Officer EWS attendance network meetings.
4. Report half-termly to the governing body on attendance
5. Raise awareness of attendance through the school website and newsletters
6. Produce a specific attendance action plan as required by external agencies
7. Liaise with the system manager regarding technical support and development of attendance systems in school
8. Produce data linking underachievement and disruption to attendance.
9. Liaise with Education Welfare Service via Attendance Officer
10. Review service agreement annually
11. Ensure attendance features in Support plan
12. Identify students whose poor attendance leads to underachievement and disruption
13. Meet with EWS termly to discuss attendance issues
14. Keep overview of response to the above students
15. Report to Deputy Head on attendance issues raised at LA inclusion meetings

9. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEADTEACHER

1. Headteacher receives updates and reports from Assistant Headteacher in charge of attendance
2. Responds to all parents who request a holiday during term time
3. Reviews and decides on fixed penalty notices recommended by AHT/AO.

APPENDIX ONE

Specific Consequences

Lateness

- Tutors arrange sanctions for students who arrive late – 10mins.
- 3 lates in a week and students will serve a school detention with a text message being sent home.
- Continual lateness will result in School detention and contact with parents via telephone and recorded on SIMS + letter home from AO.

Truancy

- From one lesson will result in a department detention.
- From more than one lesson will result in a School detention or time in inclusion to catch up on work missed after school 3.10 until 4.10
- Persistent truancy will result in contact with parents and the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer.

APPENDIX TWO

Patterns of attendance should be monitored by the tutor and discussed with their tutees. Attendance data will be provided at the fortnightly tutor meeting to assist with this.

AHOY should be alerted to any concerns, particularly for these students who fall below 95%, who will monitor their progress and refer to the EWO if there is no improvement.

1. REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Students are recognised in assembly.

2. ATTENDANCE COMPETITION

The Inter-Tutor Attendance competition (The EP Cup and Plate) is publicised and reward in assembly.

3. HOLIDAY REQUEST

The school does not authorise holidays during school time.

Leave of absence forms are completed by parents and returned to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will respond to all requests.