



Attendance Policy  
Endeavour Learning Trust

October 2023



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<b>Safeguarding Governor/ Chair of Governors</b>	Helen Dicker Chair of Trustees
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#### **KEY ATTENDANCE STAFF IN SCHOOL**

Mrs Heather Welsh	Attendance Officer
Miss Kathryn Haury	Designated Safeguarding Lead and Pastoral Team Leader

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\*Throughout this document we have used the term ‘families’ to refer to our pupils’ parents, carers or those that hold parental responsibility (PR)’, including the Corporate Parent for those to whom that applies.\*

# Attendance Policy

## 1. Statement of Intent

Endeavour Learning Trust is committed to ensuring all pupils have regular and full attendance and the importance of this is understood by pupils and their families. Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders make better progress, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for transitions from our schools into further and higher education, training and employment.

Absence may also mean that a child is more vulnerable to safeguarding risks, such as child exploitation.

As a trust, we work hard to create a culture where pupils want to attend and all our schools invest in working with families to identify and remove barriers to full attendance.

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and guidance:

- The Education Act 2002 (Non-attendance prosecutions via the local authority also come under the Education Act 1996)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Working together to improve school attendance (2022)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and latest amendment 2016

This policy relates to many other trust policies and, in particular, the following:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The board of trustees will have overall responsibility for:

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- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Promoting a culture where calm, dignity and structure encompass every space and activity.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Ensuring this policy is published on the school website.

## Our schools will:

- Ensure attendance is prioritised and given a high profile, acknowledging good attendance is everyone's responsibility. Attendance awards and incentives are in place to support attendance.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and protected time allocated to discharge those responsibilities, including follow up on any non-attendance with no contact on the first day of absence with a phone call and / or home visit.
- Consider each request for leave in line with guidance, decide whether some, all, or none of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision.
- Where there is uncertainty regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence, or to request further evidence to support the decision-making process.
- Act promptly to address absence and punctuality issues, in particular persistent absence, with a specific focus on immediate support for vulnerable learners.
- Seek advice and involve other external agencies if we believe there could be wider safeguarding issues surrounding the child.
- Communicate clear and transparent processes around management of attendance, including rewards and intervention, including legal action.
- Work closely with families and maintain regular communication where there are barriers to attendance, including home visits when necessary.

## Families will:

- Ensure their child/children attends school regularly and punctually.
- Inform the school of any reason why their child is absent or late.
- Work closely with the school where there are issues around attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure schools have up to date contact details for those with parental responsibility and emergency contacts.

## Pupils will:

- Always attend school for the duration of the school day, unless of an avoidable reason preventing them to do so.
- Attend school on time.

## Daily procedures:

Under the 2006 Education Regulations, the school is **legally** required to register students twice daily. Registers are marked in the morning between 8:50am and 9:00am and in the afternoon after the

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lunchtime period (12.30pm onwards depending on which year group the child is in). It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions.

School starts at 8:50am when all pupils/students should be in their form/classroom, in preparation for the register being taken. The register is taken between 8:50am and 9:00am, and is formally closed at 9:20am. At this time they should collect items for the day and make sure that they are aware of any changes / arrangements to the day's activities.

It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day and in the afternoon. Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues –e.g. Fire Drill.

Each year a school calendar is available on the website and through the App, which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school. A paper copy of this calendar is available in the school reception.

## **3. Types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from families.

### **Authorised absences**

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 causes.

### **Unauthorised absences**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. If a school has followed its attendance procedures and a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, the school may see seek advice from the local authority or request legal interventions.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from families before an absence is authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, appointment card or similar. Families should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence.

Whilst a pupil may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. All our schools will always work with families (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

Each school has a designated member of staff who monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Families are expected to inform school in the morning as soon as is possible if their child is going to be absent due to ill health or for any other unavoidable reason.

For pupils who are absent with no reason provided, schools will contact families to establish a reason. This may include home visits.

### **Persistent absence:**

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Attendance of 90% or below is considered to be in the persistent absence category. Pupils who are persistently absent will be monitored and schools will ensure that an individual plan to support them will be implemented.

In situations of persistent unauthorised absence, a referral will be made to the local authority to consider a penalty notice fine or legal proceedings for a prosecution under s.444 of the 1996 Education Act.

## Leave during term time

Any absence during term time can affect pupil's education and progress as much as any other absence. If leave is being requested for a holiday or extended leave abroad, approval should be obtained from the head teacher before making any bookings.

Leave of absence in term time **will not** be granted unless:

- a request for leave has been made in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides,
- and**
- the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the request.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and schools may request legal sanctions such as a penalty notice.

## Religious absence

Schools will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, eg Eid, and this will be marked as code R in the register. The day authorised will be that set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member.

## Pupils with medical needs who have difficulty attending school

Statutory government guidance: Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions emphasises the role of schools in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils, whether their condition is short or long term.

All our schools will work with families and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be in the form of specific support or resources used within school or by sourcing appropriate provision at another establishment.

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, staff and other support agencies will work with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

## Children missing education (CME)

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure they receive a full-time education.

If a pupil has stopped attending and her or his location is unknown, schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the pupil jointly with the local authority, before deleting the

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pupil's name from the register. In such cases, school should undertake a home visit, prior to a referral being made to the local authority Children Missing Education team.

## **4. Alternative provision**

There is a range of circumstances when pupils might be required to access educational provision at a venue other than their main school.

During the time that a pupil is attending an alternative provision, the main schools retains responsibility for overseeing attendance and safeguarding and will regularly communicate with the alternative provision to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the pupil, including attendance reports.

## **5. Punctuality**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. When pupils miss the start of the day, they can miss out on vital work and routines which can impact their learning significantly.

Where punctuality is an issue, staff will work with pupils and families to identify the reasons and look to implement support to improve punctuality.

If a pupil continues to be late after the registers close, there may be further sanctions under unauthorised absence.

## **6. Registers**

The Register is a legal document which must be completed fully and on time at AM and PM registration. Should a pupil not be in registration, they should be marked absent; however, if staff are aware of any appointments elsewhere, in or out of school, these should be recorded using the relevant code.

All schools follow the Department for Education guidance on the use of attendance codes and do not deviate from this.

Staff must take a register in every lesson. If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is missing from the lesson, then they should notify the Attendance Team and DSL immediately.

## **7. Strategies for promoting high attendance**

School Leaders promote a variety of strategies for high attendance. All schools refer to the strategies set out in the DfE guidance for improving school attendance.

[Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022](#)

All schools provide further details on the strategies they use to support pupils in the appendix of this policy.

Endeavour Learning Trust monitors Trust-wide attendance data to identify trends and patterns as part of our commitment to ensuring full attendance for all children. Attendance data is regularly reported on and shared with Trustees.



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## **8. Legal interventions**

Our schools will always work hard to establish and maintain an effective partnership with parents to ensure full attendance. Where attendance is a concern, schools will ensure appropriate support is identified and implemented, where appropriate and where possible. We expect that all families will engage positively with support and that attendance will improve as a result.

However, where this has not been successful, in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct, we may request that the local authority issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence.