



**Being safe, being
respectful, being *our* best**



Ready Robert



**Resilient
Rosie**



**Resourceful
Roy**



**Reflective
Rhianna**



**Responsible
Ruben & Ruby**

Earith Primary School: Attendance Policy

LAST REVIEWED: JULY 2023

NEXT REVIEW DUE: JULY 2024

**PERSON RESPONSIBLE: MR T ABBS,
HEAD TEACHER**

RATIFIED BY LGB: MARCH 2023

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Ethos, Vision and Values

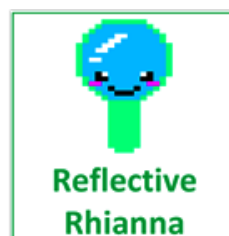
Ethos & Values

Our biggest asset and number one priority is our children. We focus on their development through high-quality teaching that provides a rich, broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum, full of enjoyable and memorable learning experiences.

Everything we do as a school encourages each child to achieve their very best so that all pupils, in close partnership with parents (and other key stakeholders) reach for the highest levels of personal achievement and development possible. We genuinely care about each member of our school and view Earith Primary as an integral part of the community.

We firmly believe in promoting, developing and actively celebrating pupils' accomplishments through our school Core Values – the 5Rs. These learning behaviours, we feel, will help our young people thrive, not only through their time at Primary School, Secondary School and in the wider world of work, but help them to become aspirational and well-rounded, active citizens of society.

Our school values are based around the 5 Rs of:



These values are embedded throughout school life, and all children, from Early Years to Year 6, understand our expectations in displaying these values, both during learning and playtimes. Everyone has a stake in our school behaviour code, which also underpins our values:

Being Safe

Being Respectful

Being *our* best

Vision

Our vision is to be an inspirational school, providing children with the best learning experience it can offer. This experience will be achieved through a high-quality curriculum, including the very best quality of teaching and learning/education; effective leadership; excellent pupil and adult relationships; grounded in pastoral and inclusive practices and with access to an ambitious provision that supports the pupils' social, emotional and physical wellbeing.

Ethos, Values & Vision – its link to attendance

'The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn' (DFE: Working together to improve school attendance: May 2022)

Our ethos and values are a *lived feature* of our school, which extend beyond the basic foundations of this statement.

Our ethos, our values and striving towards our vision has created the positive school culture we have today. We understand that barriers to accessing education can be wide and complex, and are specific to individual pupils and families. However, our school culture attempts to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships between *all* parents, pupils, staff and other key stakeholders of our school, making ***'improving school attendance, everyone's business.'*** Therefore, aspirations for persistently high attendance is an integral and crucial part of our culture.

High attendance is essential for pupils to get the very most of their educational experience, including their wellbeing, attainment and wider life chances.

We actively promote the importance of high attendance and its impact on attainment. All stakeholders of our school should consider the relationship between low attendance and missed opportunities of learning in a wider sequence of lessons which can create gaps in children's curriculum skills and knowledge.

Indeed, ***'the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.'***

A proportion of our pupils also fall into a 'vulnerable' category. We also recognise that, for these pupils, regular attendance is an important protective factor, providing us the best opportunity for needs to be identified, understood and supported.

1. Aims

We are committed to raising school attendance through our whole-school culture that values high attendance, through:

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

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 Body

The governing body 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 Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The governor with responsibility for attendance at our school is Rebecca Wilderspin

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
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Thomas Abbs (Head Teacher) and can be contacted at head@earith.cambs.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Head Teacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Debbie Rudwick and can be contacted at office@earith.cambs.sch.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 by 9am each day.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record them in SIMS
- Check ParentMail for absence postings and record them in SIMS
- Transfer calls/arrange appointments from parents to the Head Teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance, where applicable

3.7 Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time: doors open at 08:45. Registration at 9:00 latest. Gates are locked just after 9:00. Arriving late has an impact on children's ability to settle into the morning routine, including lost learning opportunities. It also impacts on staff's time: teachers, office, and kitchen, for example.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return. (If using ParentMail/email, parents must give a specific reason for the absence).

- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments e.g. medical for their child are made outside of the school day
- Understand and support the school's culture of attendance as described in this policy

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

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 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:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (For pupils of compulsory school age).
- 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.

School starts at 8:45 and registration will be completed by 9:00. The register will be kept open until 9:30. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:05.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office or by posting a specific reason for their absence on Parent Mail/email.

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 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 will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

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

However, we encourage parents 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.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence, but with a minimum of 10 days' notice. Parents should complete a 'Leave of Absence' form. Refer to section 5 for 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

The Head Teacher and/or Attendance Officer may challenge patterns of lateness either verbally or via written communication.

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 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 may decide to undertake a home visit.
- 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
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving a Local Authority Attendance Officer

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will inform parents, either verbal or written communication, about their child's attendance and absence levels where there is a cause for concern.

Attendance figures are included in every child's End of Year School Report. Positive patterns of attendance may also be shared by teachers during Parents' Evenings.

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.

As the Head Teachers can only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 10 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or by

asking for a copy at the school office. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head Teacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- instances of irregular attendance
- Holidays taken in term time
- Where a suspended/excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If applicable, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAEO) for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a penalty notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We recognise at Earith Primary School that attendance is a continuing responsibility and process that is never 'solved'. As a school, we work hard to continuously communicate and promote the benefits of high attendance through multiple means and channels. For example:

School Values, Ethos & The Curriculum

As a school, we have worked hard to ensure we have created a caring school culture, values and ethos that supports high attendance. Our curriculum is inclusive, broad and balanced, made up of many exciting events, visitors, trips and other opportunities which makes learning and above all, coming to school fun! This supports a culture of high attendance.

Weekly Celebratory Assemblies & Displays

Attendance is a focal feature of our weekly celebratory assemblies to pupils, staff, parents and those watching at home (filmed) where we explicitly make the link between high attendance and our 'Curriculum Champions' - progress and achievement.

Through this channel, the Head Teacher raises awareness to school stakeholders of what poor, good and exceptional attendance looks like (in percentage terms), before announcing the whole-school attendance from the preceding week.

In order to incentivize and motivate pupils and parents, this information is shared on a whole school display in the appropriate 'RAG-rated' columns. Any week which falls into the 'green' column (beyond expected/good), all pupils are awarded with an additional break time. This strategy ensures attendance is viewed as a collective responsibility, further embedding the school ethos, values and therefore culture. Pupils feel excited and value this award when it happens. It also serves as a visual reminder to pupils throughout the school week.

Additionally, the weekly attendance figure for each class, from the preceding week, is then shared in reverse, winning order which creates additional excitement for our pupils. The winning class receives the attendance cup in their class for the subsequent week. A child/ren are picked to come up to the front, '*hold the cup high and hold the cup proud*'. The presence of the attendance cup in the classroom also serves as a visual reminder for the children in class to further support and reinforce a culture of high attendance.

A pupil from the winning class also receives a copy of their class logo, which is then added to a second whole school display in the hall. This display simply depicts the rolling, winning class each week; it ensures pupils of all ages and abilities can visually see how many times their class has won the attendance cup each week throughout the year, further embedding our culture of high attendance.

[100% Attendance Equals 100% Learning](#)

This motto is used in various correspondence and chanted readily by children in school. It further supports our aspirations for high attendance, not to mention the correlation between attendance and attainment.

[100% Attendance Letters](#)

100% attendance letters are sent to individual pupils at the end of each term, thanking them for their efforts. This also serves as a reminder to motivate those currently 'on track' for 100% attendance at the end of the academic year.

[End of Year Assembly](#)

Any pupils with 100% attendance at the end of the Academic Year are awarded a special certificate, letter from the Head Teacher and a gift voucher. Actively promoting positive attendance throughout the year in some of the ways described gives the best possible chance of maximizing the number of children who receive this award at the end of the year.

[Weekly Newsletter](#)

The attendance data shared in each week's weekly celebratory assembly also translates into the week's newsletter, which again, reinforces key messages of whole-school and class-level attendance, raising awareness for parents and stakeholders. Newsletters are sent out via ParentMail and appended to the website, with a direct link to the homepage for ease of access.

The newsletter is also used as a vehicle to provide stakeholders with additional, key messages linked to attendance from the attendance team. For example, by highlighting particularly pleasing results and thanking parents for their efforts, or for simple reminders around school protocols, systems, or culture.

[Low Attendance Letters](#)

Specific letters linked to low attendance may be sent to individuals/parents. These will provide the child's cumulative attendance percentage in-year and will serve as a reminder of what good/expected attendance looks like as well as the consequences of low attendance.

[Improving Attendance Letters](#)

Letters highlighting improving attendance, following periods of low/persistently absent attendance, may also be sent to individuals by/at the Head Teacher/Attendance Team's discretion. This strategy uses positive reinforcement as the main driver to raise aspirations to continue a pattern of improvement.

Specific Attendance Letters for All

Specific attendance letters may be sent to all families in order to further explain, introduce or raise general awareness of attendance linked to school policy or in response to external influences or events. For example, following the return of pupils from COVID, or following a period of low attendance linked to another illness – resetting expectations for high attendance.

Prospectus/Information for Parents

The importance of high attendance is also communicated yearly, with key messages, as part of the school prospectus/Information for parents. This is further referenced on the newsletter as a prompt for school stakeholders to read and available on the school's website.

School Leadership

The attendance Team is made up of Senior Leaders within school as well as a governor with a responsibility of attendance and safeguarding. This ensures stakeholders at a senior level are proactive at analysing in-school data; work together to strategically raise the profile & awareness of high attendance, and monitor the impact of any strategies at our school.

External Support & Challenge

Within our Trust, and from the Local Authority, opportunities for support and challenge are utilized in order to improve outcomes for attendance. These may include, but not limited to: audits, scrutinizing policy/ies, support for individual attendance cases; administration support, training, for example.

The Attendance Policy

Ensuring all stakeholders have access to, have read and understood this policy, ensures a transparent and consistent approach in everyone working together to improve our culture of attendance.

Other Documents

Positive attendance is a protective characteristic and improves outcomes (academic and wellbeing) for pupils in more vulnerable categories. For example, SEND and Pupil Premium. It therefore remains a key feature in other documents such as the school development plan and the Pupil Premium Strategy each year. This ensures it remains a key, ongoing priority each year for respective school stakeholders.

7. Attendance monitoring

Due to the small size of the school, combined with our knowledge of the children, their parents and their needs, we are able to quickly identify attendance concerns. We address emergent barriers, taking into account individual circumstances and what we feel will work best for improving attendance outcomes for that family/child at that particular time.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data monthly 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 body as appropriate.

7.2 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders as appropriate/required
- Use data to facilitate discussions with families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 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
- Where appropriate, hold 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
- Signpost/ provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, where applicable
- Use some/a combination of the strategies described in Section 6
- Monthly meetings between the Head/Senior Leader & Attendance Officer e.g. to discuss strategies for addressing those persistently absent and/or on track to be

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, yearly by Thomas Abbs & Debbie Rudwick (Head Teacher, Designated Senior Leader and Attendance Officer). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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