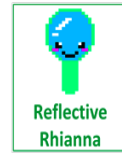




**Being safe, being
respectful, being *our* best**



Earith Primary School: Attendance Policy

LAST REVIEWED: AUGUST 2024

NEXT REVIEW DUE: AUGUST 2025

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

Senior Attendance Champion

The senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Thomas Abbs

tabbs@earith.cambs.sch.uk

Attendance Contact: Day-to-Day Basis

The school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Debbie Rudwick

office@earith.cambs.sch.uk

Attendance Contact: Individual Support with Attendance

The school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance:

Thomas Abbs

tabbs@earith.cambs.sch.uk

Attendance Governor

The name of our linked Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is:

Rebecca Wilderspin

Ethos, Vision and Values

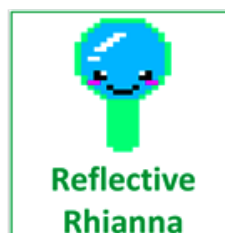
Ethos & Values

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 5Rs 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.

[The Law & The Department for Education \(DFE\)](#)

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. **It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education. Parents have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open.** We expect that all children will achieve 100% attendance but recognise that there may be exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence, or absences relating to persistent health issues. It is the Head Teacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

Aims

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school's awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Earith Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The Senior Attendance Champion responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is Thomas Abbs (tabbs@earith.cambs.sch.uk).
The governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is Rebecca Wilderspin.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance report to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Promote, celebrate and incentivise school attendance (see below):

Promoting, Celebrating & Incentivizing School 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 coherently planned; 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 incentivise 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. We also share our weekly attendance position, in comparison to other schools in Cambridgeshire.

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 100% Attendance](#)

Any pupils with 100% attendance at the end of the Academic Year are awarded a special certificate and a book voucher during an assembly at the start of the Academic Year. This strategy ensures we celebrate the individual whilst also motivating these pupils, and all other pupils at the start of the New Year. Any pupils who have left (previously Year 6s for example), will receive a special letter from the Head Teacher. Actively promoting positive attendance throughout the year in some of the ways described gives the best possible chance of maximising the number of children who receive this award.

[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 electronically 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.

Parents' Evening

Class teachers may celebrate positive attendance figures with parents during Parents' Evening.

Information for Parents

The importance of high attendance is also communicated yearly, with key messages, as part of the Information for Parents document. 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 utilised in order to improve outcomes for attendance. These may include, but not limited to: audits, scrutinizing policies, 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.

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised Absences

A morning or afternoon absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as:

- Illness or a medical appointment. The pupil is expected to be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending on where the appointment falls within the school day and the pupil's health.
- Religious Observance - only day(s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to.
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised Absences

Are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Pupils who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session; shopping trips; hair appointments, visiting family, taking part in a protest or birthdays.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Their own or family birthdays.
- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Head Teacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Day trips.
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Coding is always at the Head Teachers discretion.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below is a 'persistent absentee'.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

Absence Procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about

attendance on a day-today basis is **Debbie Rudwick** (office@earith.cambs.sch.uk): **01487 841868**

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Earith Primary School are:

Gates open: **08:35am**

Registration/school starts: **08:45am**

Registration closes: **09:00am**

End of the school day: **3:15pm**

We monitor and review all pupils' absences, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

• **If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures**

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 09:30am
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff
- Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence before 09:30am
- The school can agree with parents/carers to contact on the second day of absence if it is unlikely the pupil will return after two days and in cases where 48 hours sickness absence is required.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide some medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons.

If your child is absent, we will:

Contact you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us. Outcomes of any phone conversations will be logged on to the pupil's electronic school record. Staff will complete the registers in accordance with the correct use of registration codes ([see appendix 2](#)).

- If we cannot contact parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home, and a home visit may be made for safeguarding.
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education."

If absence continues, we will:

- Contact you if your child's attendance is 93% or below (*on-track* to be persistently absent); lower/causing concern and/or where punctuality is a concern
- If deemed appropriate, arrange a meeting with you to discuss the situation
- Create a personalized action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child.
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

[Lateness](#)

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work/morning tasks and important messages from their class teachers

How we will manage lateness:

- The school day starts at **08:35** when the side gates open and children can begin to come into the school playground
- Classroom doors are open by/at **08:45**
- Registers are taken at **08:45** onwards
- The gate will be locked at **09:00**
- Pupils arriving after **09:00** are required to come into school via the school office. They must sign in and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded.
- **At 09:00 the registers will be closed.** In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – ‘U’, but this will **not** count as a present mark, and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with Thomas Abbs (Senior Attendance Champion) but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time.

[Understanding Barriers to Attendance](#)

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as a School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, all partners may be invited to attend a meeting to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils; however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE’s statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

See [Appendix 1](#) for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

For more detailed support on removing barriers to support school attendance, please speak directly to Thomas Abbs (Senior Attendance Champion: tabbs@erith.cambs.sch.uk).

[Local Authority attendance support services](#)

Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absences and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, then under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically takes care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. **The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive** and can be made up of a combination of **any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers)**. **The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.**

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A **second Penalty** Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a **third offence** is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such

a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and that all parents who are on the holiday are allowed the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving school, other than at the end of year 6 parents/carers are required to inform the headteacher in writing. This must provide school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, there should be at least 2 contact details available for each pupil.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Children Missing in Education

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, your child is at risk of losing their school place with us.

Elective Home Education

It is a parent's right to be able to withdraw their child from school to educate them at home if they wish to. There are legal responsibilities parents/carers must fulfil if they wish to educate their child at home, which are monitored by the Local Authority. Please speak to Thomas Abbs in the first instance if you are considering this option.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Appendices



LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM: (PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY)



Extract from September 2024 Earith Primary School Attendance Policy:

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*, which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. **The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive** and can be made up of a combination of **any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers)**. **The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.**

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A **second Penalty** Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a **third offence** is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and that all parents who are on the holiday are allowed the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

Please complete the table below:

Name of Child	Absent from:	Absent to:	Total No. of school days absent	Reason for absence

Please sign below that you have read and understood the above information.				
Signed		Print Name		Dated

You will receive an email confirming receipt of this application and how this absence will be recorded.

Appendix 1: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19th August 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.</p>

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners, understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school- whenever they live or are educated. Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p> <p>(If parents feel the school and or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)</p>	<p>The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.</p> <p>The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.</p> <p>Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making.</p> <p>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.</p> <p>Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>

Appendix 2 – School Attendance Codes From Working Together to Improve School Attendance August 2024:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

New Guidance - Chapter 8	Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Pupil Registration Regulations 2024 Reference
Attending the school	/	Present at the school - morning session	Attending	Regulation 10(2) Table 1
	\	Present at the school - afternoon session	Attending	Regulation 10(2) Table 1
	L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Attending	
Attending a place other than the school	K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority <i>Schools must also record the nature of the educational activity</i>	Attending approved education activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(5) and 11(9)(b)
	V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2 and 11(9)(c)
	P	Participating in a sporting activity	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(11) and 11(10)
	W	Attending work experience	Attending approved education activity	Regulation 10(2) Table 2, 10(11) and 11(10)
	B	Attending any other approved educational activity <i>Schools must also record the nature of the educational activity</i>	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(5), 10(11) and 11(10)
	D	Dual registered at another school	Not counted as a possible session	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(9)(a)
Absent – leave of absence	C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(2)
	M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(11)
	J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(4)
	S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(5)
	X	Non-compulsory school age	Not counted as a	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and

New Guidance - Chapter 8	Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Pupil Registration Regulations 2024 Reference
		pupil not required to attend	possible attendance	11(7) or (8)
	C2	Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(6)
	C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(11)
Absent – other authorised reasons	T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	I	Illness	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Q	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3, 10(12) and (13)
	Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school sit being unexpectedly closed	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(10)
	Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(14)
	Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause <i>Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause</i>	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(6)
Absent – unauthorised absence	G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3, 10(7), (8) and (9)
	O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(9)(b)
	U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(8)(b)
Administrative codes	Z	Pupil's name entered in advance of start date	N/A	N/A
	#	Planned whole school closure – no session to take place	N/A	N/A