



Policy Updated in Accordance with DfE Statutory Guidance: 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (Effective from 19 August 2024)

INTRODUCTION

At Easingwold Community Primary School, we recognise that regular and punctual attendance is vital for high pupil achievement and well-being. In line with the latest DfE guidance, we aim to work in partnership with parents, carers, and external agencies to embed a whole-school culture of good attendance, ensuring all pupils can access the full curriculum and thrive.

Our aspirational school target remains 97% attendance, and we encourage families to work with us to achieve this through proactive communication, support and collaboration.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Foster a safe and welcoming school environment where all children feel safe and valued and want to attend.
 - Promote excellent school attendance and punctuality, reducing persistent absence (below 90%) and lateness.
 - Ensuring school data is at least in line with national data.
 - To ensure children who do not come to school are safeguarded.
 - To ensure children who are missing from education are safeguarded.
 - To ensure children get into good habits early that will support them throughout their education and into work.
 - Ensure that attendance is monitored daily and action is taken promptly.
 - Communicate clear expectations and procedures to all stakeholders.
 - Use data effectively to identify and support pupils with attendance and punctuality concerns.
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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Carers

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Contact the school before 9:00am on the first day of absence and provide a valid reason.
- Provide documentation for recurring illness (e.g. GP/consultant letters if requested).
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- Attend meetings if requested regarding attendance concerns.

School Leaders

- Lead a whole-school approach to improving attendance.
- Appoint a designated attendance lead (Mrs Parratt).
- Monitor attendance daily and share data termly with Governors.
- Analyse data to identify patterns and intervene early.
- Ensure daily registers are submitted to the DfE and local authority.
- Develop individual support plans in partnership with families and external agencies.

- Liaise with the local authority on absence and punctuality concerns and children missing education (CME).

Governors

- Annually review the attendance policy.
- Monitor termly attendance data and ensure resources support implementation.
- Ensure legal duties are fulfilled under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Appoint a link Governor for safeguarding and attendance.

Class Teachers

- Promote the importance of good attendance in class.
- Record attendance promptly and accurately in registers.
- Refer concerns about absence patterns to school leaders.
- Welcome children back from absence with support as needed.

Office Manager

- Complete daily first-day calling by 9:30am.
- Log and update attendance data in ScholarPack.
- Ensure accurate use of revised DfE attendance codes (August 2024).
- Communicate concerns to the school leaders and liaise with parents.

Pupils

- Aim for 100% attendance and arrive by 8:50am at the latest.
 - Sign in at reception if arriving after this time.
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FIRST-DAY CONTACT PROCEDURES

1. Parents must notify school by 9:00am if a child is absent.
 2. Office Manager to check registers and match absence notifications.
 3. If no reason is received, first-day calling will be made.
 4. If no contact is made by 9:30am, the Headteacher is informed.
 5. If contact remains unsuccessful, a home welfare visit may be conducted.
 6. Cases of unknown absence will be reported to the police if a child is potentially missing.
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PERSISTENT ABSENCE

- Pupils with attendance below 90% are classified as persistent absentees.
 - Early intervention includes letters, meetings, and support plans.
 - Attendance hubs and multi-agency support may be accessed where appropriate.
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LATENESS

- Pupils arriving after 8:50am must sign in at reception.
- Registers close at 9:00am. Arrival after this is marked as unauthorised unless supported with evidence (e.g., medical).
- Persistent lateness will be monitored and addressed with parents.

EDUCATION OFF-SITE

- Pupils attending local authority-arranged provision will be marked using the correct DfE codes (e.g., K).
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TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS

- Holidays during term time are not authorised unless under exceptional circumstances.
 - Applications must be made 6 weeks in advance using the school form.
 - Examples of exceptional circumstances:
 - Service personnel returning from deployment.
 - Employer-imposed leave restrictions with documented evidence.
 - Bereavement or serious family crisis.
 - All decisions rest with the Headteacher.
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PENALTY NOTICES (from August 2024)

- Unauthorised absence of 5 days (10 sessions) will trigger a Fixed Penalty Notice.
 - Standard fine per parent per child:
 - £80 if paid within 21 days.
 - £160 if paid within 28 days.
 - Non-payment may result in court prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000.
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SCHOOL CLOSURES

- In adverse weather, parents will be notified via text, school website, and BBC Radio York.
 - If the school must close mid-day, staff will remain until all children are collected.
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The Attendance Process:

If a child's attendance or punctuality is a concern this Local Authority School Attendance Support Pathway will be followed:

School Attendance Support Pathway - Legal

Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction:

Statutory intervention by the Local Authority (LA) for school attendance can be required for the following reasons:

- Long term poor attendance
- Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (holiday)
- Being seen in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion
- A child of compulsory school age not registered at a school or suitably educated otherwise

2.0 Long term poor attendance

Prior to legal action being taken by the LA for long term school attendance issues, there is a requirement for schools and the LA to have implemented some or all of the following assessments and strategies.

Early Intervention

Early intervention strategies can consist of telephone calls to parents, letters, home visits or meetings in school with support plans implemented. Schools should follow the Ladder of Intervention and/or liaise with their Locality Hub Manager if concerns regarding the child's progress continue. The child and family can be supported by an Early Help Assessment being completed and a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting can be convened when support is required from more than one agency. Advice can be sought from an Early Help Consultant as to when it would be appropriate to make a referral to the Children & Families Service. *(Early intervention strategies to address barriers to school attendance are not part of the formal legal process therefore not dependant on unauthorised absence having occurred).*

School/LA Formal Attendance Procedure (Fast track)

The School/LA Formal Attendance Procedure represents the commencement of legal process therefore there must be some unauthorised absence recorded on the school register to proceed. The commencement of the procedure is at the discretion of the school on a case by case basis, however, the threshold for the LA to take legal action is 10 unauthorised sessions in the previous four month period. This means that a PACE Formal Caution Interview (*Stage 3 – see next paragraph*) cannot be held until this threshold has been reached.

The following actions should be taken by the school and the Local Authority to implement the Formal Attendance Procedure if there continues to be no improvement in the child's attendance or lack of engagement with support available by the child and/or parent(s):

Stage 1 - Initial Warning letter issued by the school with Flowchart and Information for Parents enclosed

Stage 2 - Attendance Panel Meeting held by the school with Support Plan/Parenting Contract, attendance targets and recommendations agreed as an outcome. *(A Review Meeting may be held if some progress is made).*

Stage 3 - PACE Formal Caution Interview/LA Panel Meeting arranged by the Local Authority's Attendance & Enforcement Officer following consultation with relevant parties. The parent and a senior member of school staff will be present and the interview and subsequent Panel Meeting will be chaired by the Attendance and Enforcement Officer for the area.

Each parent will be interviewed separately. The child is not interviewed as the offence is committed by the parent. The Interview is for gathering evidence rather than support and only the following legal disposals will be considered by the school and the LA as an outcome:

- NFA/Review Meeting to be arranged
- Notice to Improve *(a Penalty Notice will be issued if any further unauthorised absence occurs within the time scale of 15 school days)*
- Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution under the Education Act Section 444 (1) or (1A)

NB: *Legal action cannot be taken when a child is LAC*

3.0 Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (holiday)

Penalty Notices will be issued for unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time if there has been a minimum of 10 sessions in a block or accumulative over a 10 week period.

There is no requirement for the Formal Attendance Procedure to have been implemented for a Penalty Notice to be issued for unauthorised leave, as this only refers to a specific type of absence, rather than on ongoing issue which the family may need support to address.

To meet the criteria for the issue of a Penalty Notice, the leave of absence would have been requested by the parent, refused by the school as the reason given did not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances, then taken without the school's permission. If the leave was not applied for then it would automatically have been taken without the permission of the Headteacher who has full discretion regarding authorisation of the absence. If the Penalty Notice is issued in accordance with the LA's Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices, and not paid, a prosecution through the Magistrate Courts may be pursued by the LA.

4.0 A child being seen in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion

A Penalty Notice can be issued in instances when a pupil is seen in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion, whether fixed term or permanent, without a justifiable reason. ***N.B: School premises are not a public place for this purpose (see Section 547 - Education Act 1996).***

Parent(s) must have been notified in writing of the exclusion and the above requirement. The person who observed the child will be required to complete a Witness Statement. Both documents should be forwarded to the LA to request a Penalty Notice to be issued. CCTV footage can be used for this purpose.

If the Penalty Notice is issued in accordance with the LA's Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices, and not paid, a prosecution through the Magistrates Courts can be pursued by the LA.

5.0 A child of compulsory school age not registered at a school or suitably educated otherwise

School Attendance Orders can be issued by the LA in instances when a child of compulsory school age is identified as not registered at a school or not being suitably educated otherwise in accordance with their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, i.e by Elective Home Education (EHE). The Order requires the parent(s) to register their child at a school and, if not complied with, the LA can pursue a prosecution through the Magistrate Courts or apply for an Education Supervision Order through the Family Courts (***also see CYPInfo – Children Missing Education & Elective Home Education***).

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains compliant with DfE guidance and best practice.

Reviewed Sept 25