



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Policy Creation & Review	
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Ratified by Governing Body	September 2021
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Next Review Date	September 2024

Ellen Wilkinson Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

This Policy has been agreed by the Governors, the Headteacher and Attendance Manager of Ellen Wilkinson School. It represents our commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achievable, and achieved by many children. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor Attendance and Punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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. Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is parents'/carers' legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.
- These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

4. Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all children attend as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To discharge the school's duty to safeguard its pupils to be best of its ability
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of Newham's children and young people and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood.

4.1 Policy objectives

- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of children
- To reduce persistent absence
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement
- To maximise the potential of every individual pupil

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

If you have a link governor for attendance, or a committee responsible for attendance, add details of their role in the monitoring of pupil attendance.

5.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

5.3 The Attendance Manager

The school Attendance Manager:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

5.4 Class teachers/cover supervisors

Class teachers and cover supervisors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

5.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

They also transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

5.6 Parents/carers

Parents must report all school absences on the first day, ideally using the Studybugs app. Alternatively they can call the main school number 020 7511 9414 or email info@ellenwilkinson.newham.sch.uk.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence by 9am on the first day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return - alternatively report via Studybugs (app can be downloaded if parents do not already have access)
- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child, and inform the school immediately of any changes
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

5.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to **'Attend school every day and on time.'**

6. Promoting Attendance

The Governors, Headteacher Attendance Manager and staff will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These include newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance, focus on every Friday assembly, certificates and medals. Regular attendance drop in sessions for parents, targeted attendance meetings for parents of pupils identified as having lower than the expected attendance percentage, irregular patterns of attendance.

Please note that only exceptional circumstances will be considered by the Headteacher for term time leave, further details are in section 7.3

7. Authorised Absence

Authorised absence indicates absence which is authorised by the Head teacher or Attendance Manager.

7.1 Reporting absence

As a school we accept telephone/ verbal messages from parents or carers, however we strongly recommend that parents use the Studybugs app to report absence and the reasons for it. This records straight to our absence recording system.

If the reason is medical, we do request this is followed up by a letter/email for medical evidence (i.e. prescribed medicine label, doctors / medical appointment card, prescription, appointment text message confirmation). Please note the school cannot accept medical evidence from abroad.

When an explanation is received computer records are updated to note this information within the computerised system.

7.2 Medical appointments

Medical appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible. If a pupil does have to attend an appointment during school hours then they should return to school as quickly as possible on that day. If your child has a mid-morning or early afternoon appointment, then they can come into school as normal and be collected in time for their appointment, they will be signed off site once collected, and signed back in on their return. Please inform the school of this prior to the date.

7.3 Term time leave requests

We cannot authorise applications by parents or carers of pupils to take annual family holidays during term time. If you request leave due to **exceptional circumstances** a term-time leave application form **MUST** be completed in all cases in advance (ideally 3 weeks if possible). The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

We also strongly encourage parents to discuss this with the Headteacher. No arrangements should be made prior to consent from the school as pre-booked plans are not considered an exceptional circumstance. Please note a maximum of 5 days only can be agreed for exceptional circumstances and that in the majority of cases they are unlikely to be agreed in the week prior to a school holiday.

7.4 Religious Observance

Term time leave can be taken for a day which is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. Please note that additional days will not be authorised and this includes a Monday absence if the celebration took place at a weekend. Requests for this leave should be made via email or telephone call.

8. Unauthorised absence

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- The school does not receive a reason for absence,
- If families take leave (including holidays) during term time without authorisation from the school
- Birthday celebrations
- Going shopping
- Minding younger siblings
- Staying at home because family members are unwell
- Arriving at school too late for a registration mark
- Truancy

8.1 Consequences of Poor Attendance /Punctuality

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school or who have taken unauthorised leave, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

- A Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice it rises to £120 per parent, per child which has to be paid in 28 days of receipt of the notice. If not paid at all, court action may be initiated by the Local Authority.
- The school may ask the Local Authority to initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
- Action may be taken (under the Children Act 1989) to protect the welfare and development of the child.

8.2. Reluctant attenders/school refusal

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and we will do everything possible to address any concerns. Colluding, even with the best of intentions, with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that usually has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine school phobia.

9. School Procedures

9.1 . Recording attendance and punctuality

Registers are taken twice a day.

Year 6

Children should be in school for 8.30. The main pupil gate will close at 8.35. The morning register is taken at 8:30 and closes at 8:35am. Pupils arriving before the end of the Registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence.

The afternoon registration period starts at 1pm and ends at 1.05 pm.

Reception - Year 5

Children should be in school for 8.45. The morning register is taken at 8:45 and closes at 8:50am. Pupils arriving before the end of the Registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence.

The afternoon registration period starts at 1pm and ends at 1.05 pm.

Please note that for the last half term of year 5, children move to the same start times as year 6.

Only the Headteacher or Attendance Manager can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (unauthorised absence). Absence notes received from parents/carers will be kept for the remainder of the academic year; or longer if there are concerns that require further investigation or legal action. If a pupil is persistently late the School's Attendance Manager will arrange to meet with the family as soon as the pattern is identified.

9.2 First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness etc. If the school does not receive notification, a text/telephone call on the first day of absence will be made by the school to try to ascertain the reason. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived.

If the child is still absent on the second day without contact from the family, a telephone call will be made to the home, if no telephone contact is made a home visit will take place. If no contact can still be made, a letter will be posted through the door asking the parent to contact the school. (This is in line with safeguarding procedures)

The family may be asked to come to school for a meeting. If there is still no contact following the delivery of the letter a Child Missing in Education (CME) concern will be raised with the Local Authority Attendance Management Service.

9.3 Continuing Absence

In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made. Any child who is absent without explanation and who has a pattern of erratic attendance of 90% and below, or persistent lateness after registers close will be investigated further and parents required to attend a formal review meeting with the Attendance Manager. This process may include visit to the home, targets set for improvement, sources of support signposted if needed, and ultimately court action or a Penalty Notice recommended if there is no improvement.

9.4 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the Safeguarding team, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

9.5 Persistent & 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.

Regular trawls of the registers are made to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA) or severe absence (SA). This may also include any patterns in absences. The Attendance Manager will be

responsible for identification of any emerging concerns, and putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers, but if the pattern continues the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In cases where there appear to be issues requiring outside intervention to support the family and the child, referral's may be made for external agencies to remove the barriers to attendance. All PA & SA pupils and their parents will be subject to a monitoring period which may include allocation of additional in-school or external support. Examples of unjustifiable reasons for absence from school would be:

- Going shopping with parents, birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark
- Truancy

9.6 Punctuality

When parents complete the admissions forms for a new enrolment they are advised that school starts for children at the following times:

- Year 6 - 8.30 am
- Reception to year 5 - 8.40 am
- Nursery - 8.30 am (for first sessions) & 12.30 for second session

Children enter through the allocated gates at their given time. Families with siblings should use the youngest child's gate. Please note for safeguarding purposes parents & carers should supervise their children until they enter the school gates (unless in year 6). The gates close 5 minutes after opening and any child after this time is classed as late. All late arrivals must therefore go to the main reception at the front of the school where a late mark will be recorded.

9.7 Children Missing Education (CME)

Procedures for trying to trace children who cease to attend without prior notification are covered in detail in the CME Policy and Procedures. However, if, after ten days continuous absence school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will refer the child's details to the Local Authority for it to perform further checks that are not available to school. If after 21 days continuous unauthorised absence, their whereabouts cannot be traced, they will be removed from the school roll.

9.8 Non starters

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a ten-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to the local authority CME team for further checks.

9.9 Vulnerable Children

Children who are Looked After (CLA), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Manager. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home, a home visit and/or contact with any allocated social workers in order that a same-day visit can be made. For Looked After Children the Virtual School will also be informed. Where applicable, the Local Authority Attendance Management Service will also be contacted. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The Attendance Manager monitors attendance on a weekly basis. Data is discussed quarterly at the schools Safeguarding meetings to see if there is any further support that can be put into place to help improve an individual's attendance and punctuality. This may be more frequent depending on need.

Attendance figures are reported to the Governing Body termly in the Head teachers Report and submitted to the DFE annually.

10.1 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the Attendance Manager and the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Remote Learning Policy

Appendix 1 - Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	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

Authorised absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
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 I- (with sub code)	Illness Confirmed case of coronavirus (Covid-19)	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness This code is used for pupils who are absent due to testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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

Other

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 longer on admission register	Register set up but pupil has left the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 - COVID ADDENDUM

Context

Please see below the amendments to this policy that will be reintroduced in the case of a recurring national pandemic or in the event of a local area or school based extended closure. Please note that these are subject to change depending on the nature of the event. Any changes will be communicated in writing to parents.

Remote learning

- Remote learning will be put into place in the case of any closures (from day 2) or if children have been instructed to isolate or shield.
- It is expected that a child will engage with online learning daily during this period, unless they are too unwell to do so. In this case the school should be notified so it can be recorded as sickness.
- Failure to Zoom in without notifying the school will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- See remote learning policy for further details.

Child and family are quarantining due to returning from abroad

- The school will support a simpler version of remote provision in this instance.
- Failure to Zoom in will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- This is because the choice to travel abroad yet not allow enough time for quarantine before the return to school date is usually within a family's control.
- **In general we expect parents not to travel without ensuring that quarantine can be observed during holiday periods too.**

(7.3) Holidays

- **In general we expect parents not to travel without ensuring that any quarantine requirements can be observed during holiday periods too.**

COVID Related codes

COVID Related codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
I - (with sub code)	Confirmed case of coronavirus (Covid-19)	This code is used for pupils who are absent due to testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

Y

unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances)

Where a pupil is shielding, self-isolating , or the pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their risk assessment says that their needs cannot be safely met in school



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