

EVERSLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL



SCHOOL POLICY

Attendance

25th September 2018

Implemented:

Autumn Term 2019

Date for review:

Eversley Primary School Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

Eversley Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Aims

- To maximise attendance of all children.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated at the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

- **Governors**
 - To monitor attendance.
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
- **Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher**
 - To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
 - To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
 - To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.
 - To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
 - To hold meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- **Class Teacher / LSA**
 - To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
 - To record the reasons for absence given to them on the appropriate recording sheet.
 - To respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of registers by Office Staff.
 - To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

- **Office Staff**
 - To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
 - To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
 - To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason.
 - To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each day / week.
 - To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
 - To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
 - To make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**
 - To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
 - To support the whole school response to attendance through meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.

Administration

- The School uses Attendance Manager provided by SIMS to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are returned to the School Office after the closure of the registration period.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

Absence

Absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or un-authorise the absence. Such circumstances may include:

- Urgent medical/dental appointments
- Family bereavement
- Days of religious observance, to be agreed beforehand by the Headteacher
- Illness – If it is a prolonged illness or it causes regular absences, some form of medical evidence will be required. Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and where possible on each subsequent day of absence

Where Office Staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will, wherever possible, contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence. If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher will be informed.

Any child not in school, without reason for absence, after 5 days will be highlighted as a child missing from education and the LA protocols will be followed. If a child leaves the school we will await confirmation from their new school or after 20 days pass case onto EWO and delete from roll.

There may be other reasons when a child may have their absence from school authorised. For all such absences of an exceptional nature, parents/carers are asked to request permission in writing to the Headteacher as early as possible prior to the occasion.

Requesting Leave of Absence

The school considers it important to discourage parents from removing their children from education for any reason as absences may have a negative impact on the pupil's educational attainment and progress.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations has removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

If parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance of taking it, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised. If the pupil fails to attend school within 10 school days immediately following the date the pupil was due to return and the school has no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any other unavoidable cause and **both the school and the Local Authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is** the pupil can be removed from roll and referred to Children Missing Education (CME).

The decision whether or not to authorise an absence should be justifiable and the reason for rejection must be recorded and conveyed to the parent(s) in writing. A letter refusing a request should explain the reason it is not deemed to be an exceptional circumstance and that a penalty notice may be issued if the absence is taken without the school's permission.

In a small number of cases the school may have concerns about a pupil's welfare, in these circumstances the school will seek support from the Local Authority.

A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education.

Penalty Notices

The Headteacher may decide to apply for a penalty notice. If this is the case the Local Authority expects the application for the penalty notice to be sent to them within 2 weeks after the pupil's return to school following the unauthorised absence.

A penalty notice will be considered by the LA if:

- There have been 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to a leave taken during an academic year;
- and**
- Attendance is below 90% during the preceding 12 weeks *before the leave was taken*; or
 - The leave was taken during the month of September; or
 - The leave was taken during tests or examinations; or
 - It is the second leave of absence taken in any one academic year; or
 - The pupil is in Year 6 or Year 11

Although the responsibility for authorising requests for leave of absence lies with the school, it is the EWS legal intervention panel who will make the decision on whether to issue a penalty notice based on the evidence supplied by the school.

The school will ensure parents are aware of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued, which could lead to prosecution for non attendance if they fail to pay. This information is included in school literature.

Reporting to Parents and Carers

All absences both authorised, unauthorised absence and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year within their child's report.

In order to give parents/carers a benchmark to their child's attendance to other children in the school and nationally the following Ofsted grades will be used:

100 - 99%	Outstanding
96% - 98%	Good
94% - 95%	Requires Improvement
90% - 93%	Inadequate
Below 90%	Cause for concern

Rewards

- Children who achieve 100% attendance at the end of the year are presented with an attendance reward.
- Class point system for attendance with classes in 1st, 2nd and 3rd place receiving a certificate weekly and 1st place receiving the attendance cup. Half-termly winners are rewarded.
- Individual reward charts to target children with low attendance, if appropriate.

Attendance Codes

The following codes will be used to indicate the reason for absence:

L	-	Late (between 9.00 and 9.25)
U	-	Late (after 9.25 – unauthorised absence)
M	-	Medical – hospital admission, dental, optician, hospital, doctors.
C	-	Other authorised absence – general illness, bereavement, family reasons.
H	-	Authorised holiday absence.
G	-	Unauthorised holiday absence.

Lateness

- Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at 9.00 am, will be considered as late (L).
- Pupils arriving after 9.00 must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Pupils arriving after 9.25 am will be recorded as U. This will be considered an un-authorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example a doctor's appointment.
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Attendance data will be collected monthly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with: incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence; periods of un-authorised; patterns within particular groups of pupils and all children with attendance below 85%. This data will be discussed with the EWO as part of the regular monthly meetings.
- A member of senior staff and the EWO will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually.
- Attendance figures will be reported to the governing body annually.

A summary of this policy is produced as a parents' guide leaflet.

The school will review this policy annually and update accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice.

Annex A

ESSEX CODE OF CONDUCT

PENALTY NOTICES FOR PARENTS OF TRUANTS AND PARENTS OF PUPILS EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23

The purpose of this local code of conduct is to ensure that the powers are applied consistently and fairly across the local authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the scheme.

The Government requires Local Authorities to issue a code of conduct
The Essex code has been agreed following consultation with:

- Essex Local Authority – Missing Education & Child Employment Service
- Representatives from Governing Bodies and Headteachers of Essex Schools
- Essex Police Service

in accordance with the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2007, Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) section 23 subsection (1) and Sections 103 to 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006; Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
Anyone issuing a penalty notice to a parent* of a child of statutory school age on roll at an Essex school, must do so within the terms of this code.

Legislation

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 inserts into the Education Act 1996 Section 444A and Section 444B enabling authorised personnel to issue penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444 and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a child of compulsory school age 'fails to attend regularly' at the school where he is a registered pupil, his parent is guilty of an offence. On the 6th April 2017, in the case of Isle of Wight Council v Platt the Supreme Court judgement ruled that the word 'regularly' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not present during school hours in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusions. Section 105 of the Act enables a penalty notice to be issued under Section 103.

Authorisation to issue penalty notices

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority (LA). It has been agreed that the Missing Education & Child Employment Service, on behalf of Essex LA, will usually issue penalty notices. The Service will administer the scheme from any funds obtained as a result of issuing penalty notices.

Headteachers (and deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers authorised by the head teacher) and police, and persons accredited by the police are all able to issue the notices under the Act, although there is no requirement for them to do so. In Essex it has been agreed that the Police will not issue penalty notices to parents of truants, but persons accredited by them may do so. Schools will not generally issue penalty notices but where a Headteacher (or their designated deputy) or accredited person decides that a penalty notice is to be served, they must email ME&CE.legal@essex.gov.uk to ascertain if there is any current legal action. A response will be sent within 24 hours. This will avoid a penalty notice being issued when the Local Authority is instigating legal intervention proceedings for irregular school attendance.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

Penalty Notices apply to pupils of statutory school age which finishes in year 11. Essex partners have agreed to use penalty notices for the following circumstances:

Penalty notices for irregular school attendance /leave of absence **

Penalty notices may be issued where there has been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the previous ten school weeks. This includes unauthorised late arrivals, coded U, which count as unauthorised absence for the whole session.

In addition to the above criteria, due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, penalty notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised leave of absence during the first two weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for truancy/unauthorised absence
Discretion will be used to enable up to two penalty notices to be issued to each parent for each child within a twelve month period. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Missing Education and Child Employment Service legal intervention process will be used.

Pupil identified during a school attendance and exclusion sweep

School attendance and exclusion sweeps take place in Essex and children stopped are often with parents condoning the absence.

If the Headteacher does not authorise the absence of a pupil stopped by a Local Authority Investigation Officer and Police Officer on a sweep and there has been at least 10 unauthorised absences for that pupil during the preceding 10 schools weeks, school will issue a warning letter to the parent within 14 days. If there are any further absences that are not authorised by the head teacher, during the next 6 schools weeks the school will complete a request, signed by the Headteacher (or their designated deputy), for issue of a penalty notice and send to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service . The Missing Education and Child Employment Service may then issue a penalty notice.

Number of Penalty Notices which can be issued for pupils identified during a school attendance and exclusion sweep.

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve month period for pupils identified on a school attendance and exclusion sweep. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Missing Education and Child Employment Service legal intervention process will be used.

Excluded children

When a child is excluded from school, the parent will be responsible for ensuring that their child is not found in a public place during normal school hours on the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion. (Section 103 Education and Inspections Act)
The excluding school must have issued notice to the parent informing them of their duty and warning that a penalty notice could be issued.

Where there is more than one person liable for the offence, a separate notice may be issued to each person. Where a pupil is present in a public place in the first five days of a fixed period exclusion the Essex Local Authority would issue a penalty notice if the school is in their area. Where the child has been permanently excluded, it would be the authority where the child resides.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for exclusion

Essex will issue a maximum of 5 penalty notices per parent for each child during a 12 month period.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for unauthorised leave of absence

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve month period for unauthorised leave of absence. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Missing Education and Child Employment Service legal intervention process will be used.

Payment of Penalty Notice

The penalty for each parent is £60 for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice (service by post is deemed to have been effected, unless the contrary is proved, on the second working day after posting the notice by first class post).

All penalties are paid to the LA and revenue generated is retained to administer the system and contribute towards S444 prosecutions.

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period Essex Missing Education and Child Employment Service will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice. The prosecution is not for non-payment of the notice but is a prosecution for irregular school attendance – Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1)

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice.

Withdrawal of Penalty Notice

A penalty notice can be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Where it ought not to have been issued i.e. where it has been issued outside the terms of the local code of conduct or where the evidence does not support the issuing of a penalty notice
- The notice contains material errors
- Where it has been issued to the wrong person or the parent can prove it was delivered to the wrong address

Co-ordination between the LOCAL AUTHORITY and its local partners

The Missing Education and Child Employment Service and its local partners will review this Code of Conduct regularly.

** **All** those defined as a parent under Section 576 Education Act 1996 are parents for the purpose of these provisions. This means that all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law. Parent means each and every parent coming within the definition (whether acting jointly or separately) and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to parent in the singular.*

As with prosecutions under Section 444 Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence.

Revised July 2017 for implementation from 1st October 2017

Revised November 2017

** truancy/unauthorised absence is absence from school without permission or good reason and the absence is unauthorised by the school.

Annex B

DfE "The link between absence and attainment at KS2 - 2013/14 academic year"

The analysis of the link between overall absence ...and attainment when taking prior attainment and pupil characteristics into account showed that, for each KS2 and KS4 measure, overall absence had a statistically significant negative link to attainment – i.e. every extra day missed was associated with a lower attainment outcome.

