

Eardisley CE Primary School



Attendance Policy

November 2022

Introduction

At Eardisley CE Primary School, we aim to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them: every day counts! If allowed to remain unchecked, persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupil's progress and achievement. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved.

We expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to create a happy, values-based and rewarding environment for all children where the children want to come. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. Through our home-school agreement, parents agree to ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance.

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Eardisley CE Primary School by;

- encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- promoting good attendance
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- acting early to address patterns of absence
- building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- we also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Our principles that underpin our strategy:

- an approach to support and challenge, rather than be judgmental
- know the child and know the family
- use regular, effective communication

- use systems that efficiently monitor and improve outcomes.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance: Part 6 of The Education Act 1996 Part 3 of The Education Act 2002 Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments) Page | 3 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.

Why Attendance Matters

Pupils attend for 190 days each year – a total of 38 weeks

Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance

14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance

20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance

30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

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
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- leading attendance across the school
- offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- having an oversight of data analysis
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The school attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- monitoring and analysing attendance data with the headteacher
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- providing regular attendance reports and advice to the school
- Working with the headteacher to address attendance issues.

Class teachers

- class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office using SIMS twice a day.

School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- contact parents when children are absent and no information has been received
- check the class attendance registers.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every day on time contact the school to report their child's absence before 9.15 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return.
- provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

Recording Attendance

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by the office staff. All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes, the office staff check the messages. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, then the school will telephone parents to check on why a pupil is not in school. Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Monitoring of Attendance

The Headteacher monitors the attendance of pupils each week. Where the head feels it appropriate, parents/carers will be notified by letter when their child's attendance drops below the School's target of 97%. If attendance drops below 90% a 2nd letter may be written informing parents/carers and the head may invite the parents to an Attendance Panel meeting to discuss ways of improving attendance. The school will refer a pupil to the Educational Welfare Officer if a child's attendance drops below 85% and there is no satisfactory reason for this drop in attendance. Returns of school data are made annually to the DfE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

Attendance Targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Governors at the first Governors' meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years and national attendance data.

Punctuality and Lateness

School Begins	8.55am
Gates Open	8.30am
Morning Registration	8.55-9.15am
Afternoon Registration	1-1.10pm
School Finishes	3.10pm (KS1) 3.15pm (KS2)

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the beginning of the school day. The Headteacher monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. Children may arrive at school from 8.40 am, at which time there is supervision on the playground or, if very wet, children can go straight to class. Registration is called at 8.55 am and again at 1.00 pm. Registers will close at 20 minutes after registration times. A pupil that arrives after this time will be marked as 'Unauthorised Late' unless the school have previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Headteacher will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to the School Attendance Adviser.

4.Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence and it is a statutory requirement for the headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. If a child is absent from school for whatever reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible. The normal routine is to telephone the school on the first morning of absence. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed. Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 say that Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of

Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated, and at least six weeks in advance of the anticipated date. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

For sickness

If a child is very unwell and unable to be at school, we ask that parents/carers call the school on the first morning of absence by 9.15 am. If a child has been sick or has had diarrhea it is important they stay at home for 48 hours.

Please note that the school is able, with written permission, to administer Calpol for low-level illness, so that a child may come to school as normal. We would encourage children to be at school unless they are very unwell.

The school is not obliged to authorise any illness that they do not believe to be genuine. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence of continued sickness or encouraged to consider GP consent. Where there are concerns about the level of attendance due to illness, the school may request a note from the GP.

For other absences

Permission for special occasions, such as weddings must be requested in advance, in writing to the Headteacher. Valid Reasons for absence may include:

- close family bereavement
- emergency medical or dental appointments can be authorised. family bereavement may also be authorised.
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. if necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers roma, english and welsh gypsies, irish and scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and

has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Medical Appointments in School Time

Wherever reasonably possible, we request and expect parents to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time. If this is not possible please give as much written notice as possible with a copy of the appointment slip.

Legal Sanctions for Leave of Absence

Leave of absence requests of 10 sessions (5 days) or over (at one time or over the course of a year) are required to be reported to the Local Authority and parents may face a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or other legal action. The Fixed Penalty Notice is £60 per parent per child which rises to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days. There is no appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. Failure to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice may lead to legal proceedings under the Education Act 1996 section 444(1).

Please be aware that the Local Authority would not usually issue more than one penalty notice to any one family. Therefore applications for a second leave of absence may incur legal actions such as court proceedings.

Sanctions for Unauthorised Absence

Where there are unauthorised absences and attempts to support have been unsuccessful or not engaged with, the school may refer to Herefordshire Local Authority.

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account: The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year, one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission, where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Children Missing Education

Children Missing Education (CME) is the term used to describe compulsory school age children who:

- Are not on a school roll and
- Are not being educated in another way (for example at home, privately, or in

alternative provision) or

- Have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time and we do not know their whereabouts.

Parents and the council both have duties in relation to children missing education:

- Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education and
- The council has a duty to establish and record what that education is, and to assess whether it is suitable to meet the child's needs CME is not persistent absence.

Examples of CME include:

- Children of compulsory school-age whose family have never approached the Local Authority (LA) for a school placement or formally registered to Elective Home Educate (EHE)
 - Families who are missing and their destination is unknown
 - Cases where the family have not taken up the allocated place and the child has not started at any school
- Families who inform the school that they are relocating and fail to give any further details
- Families whose home address is empty and clear indicators show that no-one is living at the address
- Children not previously known (movers in) who may be vulnerable and need additional support in securing a school place
- GRT children who do not start at the nominated school, or are travelling, and have not provided a return date to the LA
- Children who have failed to return from leave in term time and all avenues to trace them have been exhausted by the school and the LA
- Children where there is suspicion the family have moved abroad.

Safeguarding concerns

If there are any safeguarding concerns or if a child is known to social services, a referral to Herefordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) should be made straight away. A CME referral cannot be submitted before 10 consecutive days of absence. During this time the school is expected to carry out investigations to locate the pupil. The local authority will have a further 10 days to investigate the CME enquiry. A CME safeguarding checklist (vulnerability assessment) is completed as part of this process. In line with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 regulation 8 (h), a pupil cannot be removed from the school roll until 20 days have passed. This procedure does not replace school attendance policy, the issuing of penalty notices for non-attendance or the 'In Year Fair Access' procedure.

Monitoring and Review

All teaching staff are vigilant about attendance and report unexplained absence without delay. The headteacher carries out daily and weekly checks and half-termly reviews. Particular attention is paid to any children about whom there are safeguarding concerns and/or who are identified as being vulnerable. Attendance is reported to governors in the Headteacher's termly Report. We as a school have a duty to inform parents of their child's attendance and how this can impact upon their performance. Attendance is

shared with parents at parent meetings and through the annual report. Parents will be informed of their child's low attendance level and may be invited to discuss their child's attendance when:

- A child continues to be absent for more than 3 consecutive days without explanation (school will have made strenuous efforts to contact parents/carers in this time and will contact the police as a matter of safeguarding if no explanation is found).
- A child's attendance drops below our agreed attendance target of 97%.

Parents may be invited to an Attendance Panel review meeting when:

- A child's attendance falls into the Persistently Absent category of 93% and/or
- Where a pattern of unauthorised absence persists or attendance does not improve, despite the school's involvement, this may result in legal proceedings.

If a child is absent without explanation for ten consecutive school days the school will inform the Children Missing from Education (CME) Legal Officer at Herefordshire Local Authority and police as a Safeguarding priority.

Procedures:

- Long term medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence (either a letter from a consultant doctor or photocopy of medical prescriptions) where appropriate. GP consent may be requested if a pupil has high levels of authorised absence through sickness and a parent will be invited to an informal meeting and may be requested to complete a GP consent form that will enable an appointed person from school to enquire if the pupil has attended the surgery but not to share any confidential information.
- Lateness – where lateness becomes an issue the matter will be discussed with the parents and this will be monitored and a record kept. We monitor punctuality and will often conduct a punctuality sweep.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Herefordshire Local Authority Education Legal Officer who will also try to resolve the situation by agreement. However, if there is still no improvement in attendance a referral may be made for a Penalty Notice or take legal proceedings.

Support for Parents and Carers

The Early Help Assessment (EHA) is a way of working out what extra support a child may need. It is a consensual process and involves holding meetings with the school and, if necessary, with other agencies to make sure that help is provided as quickly and effectively as possible. With parental agreement,

the appropriate agencies are invited to meet with the parent to have a conversation to identify the child's needs and strengths and a plan of action is put in place which can help to improve attendance where there is a medical or logistical difficulty as well as any other areas such as learning behaviour or family support issues. In addition, the headteacher/SENCO will work with pupils and their families to support school attendance.

Where there are concerns, the school also liaises with and refers on to other services, such as Children's Services in order to monitor and protect children.

Data Analysis

The school collects and stores attendance data using the management information systems (SIMs). The school provides attendance data to the DfE, using SIMs to send data about the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DfE as part of the annual publication of school statistics. The school uses the attendance data to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils. Where attendance is a concern, the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender. The school uses attendance data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and to take action to address and improve those areas. The school will use data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support.

Incentivising Good Attendance

We hold firm to the notion of promoting good attendance - through our supportive, values-based culture, and keeping attendance in a good profile. We have a whole-school reward system for attendance that celebrates high attendance without discriminating against children who, through no fault of their own, have sometimes not been able to be in school.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Contacts

Role	Staff Member	Contact Details
Absence Reporting Contact	Mrs J Clark Mrs S Taylor	admin@eardisley.hereford.sch.uk 01544 327262
Senior Responsible Attendance	Leader for Mrs B Knight	bknight@eardisley.hereford.sch.uk 01544 327262

For detailed support on individual attendance needs	Class Teacher and/or Mrs B Knight	Class Dojo bknight@eardisley.hereford.sch.uk 01544 327262
---	-----------------------------------	--

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Code	Definition
/	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
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
G	Unauthorised absence holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
N	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
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
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
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
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
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday