

ETTINGTON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reviewed September 2023



Learning for Fullness of Life

TRUST – RESPECT – LOVE

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY



ETTINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY: UPDATED ANNUALLY

Introduction

Building on the theological concepts that God created the earth and everything in it, we provide opportunities to appreciate God's creation of the world and how EVERYONE was made in God's image (Imago Dei) and loved, valued, celebrated and represented. As a school, we aspire to live out God's plan for all to flourish. We believe in providing our children with varied opportunities to use and develop the gifts and talents they have been blessed with, to ensure they embrace "Life in its fullness" (John 10:10).

Our Attendance policy at Ettington Church of England Primary School is based upon our Christian Values system of Trust, Love and Respect. Our aim is that all children live life in all fullness and that they can trust each other, respect what God has given them and ultimately love and be loved.

Our Policy aims to ensure that all pupils who attend our school are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities provided for them by attending school regularly.

Aims:

- To maintain the overall high percentage of pupils attending school
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, carers, teachers and other staff and Governors
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance in order to raise attendance
- Raise level of achievement
- Maximise opportunities both in school and in later life

Policy Statement

The school will take all steps necessary to monitor attendance. The School Business Manager at our school takes responsibility for confirming with staff reasons for pupil absence, and shares this information with the Headteacher on a regular basis. The Headteacher in turn, may contact the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) team in the event of a concern over a child's attendance at school.

By law a child is expected to attend school on every day that it is open unless he/she is unwell, or has a medical appointment.

Reasons for children's absences can be communicated to school by letter, email, telephone or personal visit.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return – by 9.00am
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Bringing your child to school before and returning them after a hospital or other medical appointment
- All appointments made during school hours parents are required to provide evidence of this
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

School shall take various measures in order to safeguard children by:

- Following up unexplained absences after registration, with a phone call and/or Text Message on the first morning as soon after registration closes (see appendix A)
- Reminding parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, and the Home-School agreement
- Publishing our attendance rate on the school website
- Acknowledging and rewarding good attendance
- Publishing your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Letting you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance
- If we continue to have concerns consider a referral to Warwickshire Attendance Service from the Local Authority, who can support the school with attendance issues

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill or requires medical treatment/care, family bereavement, family wedding, religious observance.

We realise that there are *rare* occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are *not* permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory
- Parents are unwell (*call us, we can help to get your child to school*)
- Transport issues
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Unapproved Holidays

Unauthorised Absences may be reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you under the S444 Education Act 1996 if your child has unauthorised absences. It is our expectation that all pupils will maintain 96% attendance or more.

There are 3 stages to improve attendance:

Stage 1) A supportive letter sent to inform Parents/ Carers that attendance is a concern as it is now below 96% and we would like it to improve or move to higher support at stage 2.

Stage 2) Approaching Persistent Absence at 90%, a further letter to invite Parents/Carers to a meeting will be sent, where barriers to attendance can be discussed and support offered.

Stage 3) If there is no improvement, without valid reasons, a referral will be made to WAS if attendance does not improve and medical evidence may be required to explain illness from now on or the school will **not authorise** absence.

Punctuality

- The morning bell rings at **8.50am** when we expect all children to line up on the KS1 playground.
- Staff bring the children into the school at **8.55am**. The side gate to the playground will also be closed at this time to ensure our pupils are safe and the school grounds are secure.
- The class register will be taken by each Class Teacher at **9.00am**.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality, a reminder letter will be sent out to any parent if the number of late arrivals (after morning registration at 9.00am) is high or if the number of incidents of lateness is quickly increasing over time.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety if not collected or the school contacted by school closing time.

Lateness

- All children arriving after **8.50am**, when the gate is closed, **must be accompanied to the school office by the parent /carer**, where they will be signed in by a member of the Admin Team.
- Any child arriving after the register has been taken at **9.00am**, but before **9.15am** (when the register closes) will receive a 'late before the close of register mark' on the system.
- Any child arriving after **9.15am** will receive an 'unauthorised' mark on the system.
- Lateness is monitored regularly. Where children have persistent lateness problems the Head teacher may invite the parents into the school to a formal meeting.

Holidays and Term Time Leave of Absence

The Government have issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; See Appendix D. Parents do not have entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Application for Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Head Teacher, under what are considered exceptional circumstances.

- No holidays will be authorised in line with the new Government Regulations, unless the circumstances are considered to be 'exceptional circumstances'.
- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term-time will need to fill in an application form in advance; this must be obtained from the Headteacher, who will discuss the circumstances behind the request with them. Please notify the school office if you require a form and they will inform the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher will consider your request and advise you of her decision in writing.

- If the school does not agree and you take your child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised.
- If your child takes unauthorised leave in any academic school year then the school may refer the unauthorised absence to the Attendance Team within the Local Authority. The Attendance Team may then investigate the absence further, considering if a fixed penalty fine should be issued to the parent(s).

Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom.

The school has a Leave of Absence During Term Time Statement (See Appendix E) which is published to all parents on a termly basis within our newsletter and available on the school website.

School outings / visits / residential trips

Opportunities for children to attend these activities are provided. If they do not go, the children **are expected in school**, where alternative arrangements will be made for them

The Headteacher **will not authorise** absence if the child does not attend school during this time, unless there is a valid medical reason (*a bad cold is not acceptable*) or medical certificate provided or there are exceptional family circumstances

Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the year parents will be kept informed of school expectations and procedures through newsletters

The school employs strategies to encourage good attendance

- Each week the Class with the highest attendance receives a weekly Attendance Award
- At the end of each term the children with 100% will receive acknowledgement and a certificate in the Celebration Assembly
- At the end of the Academic Year children with 100% attendance will receive an award and acknowledgement in the end of year Award Assembly. Children with almost 100% attendance (99%) will also receive recognition and a certificate.

Procedures

- Registers of all classes are kept in the school office and monitored by staff daily
- The Attendance Governor, Mrs Yolanda Franklin, visits monthly to discuss attendance data
- Log kept of children who arrive late
- Log kept of all children daily for whom no notification for absence has been made and of phone calls made
- Log kept of phone calls received from parents and reasons given
- Log kept of children who leave the school site and return during the school day, for any reason, including appointments

The Headteacher and Business Manager will review attendance (which includes all absences and lateness) at the end of each month and each child will be looked at individually. If attendance drops below 96% it may be necessary to implement the following:-

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make no provision for holidays in term time. The regulations state that Leave of Absence in term time should only be authorised under special circumstances.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

“Every day counts...”

Appendix D

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

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence can be referred to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).

- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

APPENDIX E

Reminder for Parents – Leave of Absence During Term Time

As you will all be aware, current attendance regulations stipulate a Headteacher may not grant a leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

It is for the Head Teacher to decide what he/she views as 'exceptional' and it is at their discretion if the circumstances warrant the leave to be granted. If the leave is granted, the Headteacher is able to determine the number of school days a child can be absent for.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may result in legal action being taken against the parent(s), by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Failure to make an application for leave in advance can also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence can be referred to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service of Warwickshire County Council.

Where a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and not paid within the required timeframe as set out on the notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal proceedings under S444 Education Act 1996.

Parents are asked to respect the new regulations under which the school must work and if there is a need to take a child out of school during term-time, an application or request must be made in advance and make clear how the circumstances are exceptional.