

Emersons Green Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Draft to Governors:	October 2020	Draft to staff:	October 2020
Ratified: by Full Governing Body	October 2020	Next Review:	October 2021

Equality Statement

At Emersons Green Primary School we are committed to ensuring equality and opportunity to all members of our school community. In regard to safeguarding, the school always aims to ensure that no one is treated less favourably than anyone else. The Equality Act 2010 defines these responsibilities. In regard to this, this Policy, including all of its procedures and systems will have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Be aware of this duty to have due regard when making decisions or taking action in order to assess whether that action will have implications for people with protected characteristics
- Consider equality implications before and at the time that this policy is developed and reviewed and keep these implications under review on a regular basis

It is unlawful to discriminate in the following areas, termed protective characteristics. (all Safeguarding policies, procedures, systems and actions must take this into account):

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual orientation

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ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Rationale

- Regular attendance and punctuality are important if children are to take part fully in the life of the school and to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by the school.
- We recognise that attending school regularly and punctually is vital to the educational process and encourages a good pattern of work.

Purposes

- To encourage good attendance and discourage lateness.
- To monitor patterns of absence and take actions to seek improvement if appropriate.
- To identify unauthorised absence and take appropriate action.
- To establish a common school procedure for filling in registers.
- To differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To work closely with parents or carers to ensure good attendance or punctuality and offer support or advice as needed.

Success Criteria

- A low level of unauthorised absence is maintained and will be below LA average.
- All registers are completed correctly and promptly.
- Parents/carers are made aware of their responsibilities for attendance and punctuality and are involved in the discussion if the attendance and punctuality cause concern.
- The school provides all support required to ensure pupils have good attendance and punctuality.
- The Governors continues to be satisfied by the efforts made by the school to maintain high levels of attendance.

Guidelines

- We accept our role in partnership with parents/carers.
- Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance and punctual arrival in the morning and collection at the end of the school day.
- The School's responsibility is to support attendance and examine problems that may lead to non-attendance. To do this we keep a register of attendance at the start of every morning and afternoon session. These registers are legal documents and must be kept for three years after the date on which they were last used. Care must be taken to record information accurately.
- Registration is done electronically. There are separate guidelines for teaching staff to instruct them how to do this, using the SIMs electronic data-management system.

Late Arrival / Early Departure

- A child arriving late or leaving early may seriously disrupt not only his/her learning but that of other children.
- Late arrivals or early departures will be monitored by the Headteacher. If a child arrives after 8.50am (when registration starts) OR leaves before midday OR leaves before 3.15pm then they and their parents/carers will report to the office, where a record is kept of the fact and noted, in case of an emergency. This will include the time of arrival / departure, the reason for being late/leaving early.
- If a child arrives between 8.50 and 9.00 or between 1.15 and 1.25 pm an L code will be used – this means the child is recorded as Late. If a child arrives after 9.00 am or 1.25 pm a U code will be used. A U code is an unauthorised absence.
- Parents/carers must inform school by 9.30 am if a child is absent from school.
- Some children may have agreed personal timetables which differ from these above times. These timetables must be agreed with the Headteacher prior to the start of the timetable and reviewed regularly with a member of the school senior leadership team. These timetables may be because of agreed educational activities that take place off the school site or for medical/health reasons.

Covid addendum:

We are now operating with a staggered start time system in the morning and end of the day:

Class	Entry/exit door	Entry time by	Exit time
Red Reception	Reception classroom door	9am	3pm
Orange Year 1	Y1 classroom door	8.50am	3.20pm
Yellow Year 2	Y2 classroom door	8.40am	3.10pm
Green Year 3	Key Stage 1 Cloakroom door	8.50am	3.20pm
Blue Year 4	Key Stage 2 Cloakroom door	8.40am	3.10pm
Indigo Year 5	Green playground door	8.50am	3.20pm
Violet Year 6	Year 6 classroom door	8.40am	3.10pm

Pupils will not be considered L unless they arrive after the school gates shut (9am). Pupils will not be given a U until 9.15 am unless a flexible timetable has been individually agreed with the Headteacher.

Reporting to parents/carers

We report children's attendance to parents/carer at least attendance 3 times per year. Each child has their current attendance listed on the report forms used for Autumn and Spring Learning meetings. In addition, overall attendance and absences are reported on the annual report for each child that is sent home.

Pupils who have additional needs may have attendance reported on paperwork relevant to their need, for example Single Assessment Forms, or SEN Annual Review paperwork.

The Headteacher sends letters out in Term 4 to parents of any pupils whose attendance is less than the 90% attendance threshold. These letters are written individually and list the specific reasons for that pupil's absence. This is essential as we have a number of children in our school with significant medical needs whose absence is low through no fault of their own. These letters are also designed to challenge those parents whose child's attendance is particularly low without an authorised reason (such as illness or medical appointments).

Unauthorised absence

Types of absence:

Examples of Unauthorised Absence:-	Examples of Authorised Absence:-
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Truancy▪ Shopping, birthday treats or trips▪ Late arrival after register has closed▪ Illness of siblings/parent▪ Holiday taken during term time▪ Where the reason given for absence is not given or not judged as acceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Illness (including medical and dental appointments)▪ Days of religious observance▪ Some sporting activities▪ Other authorised circumstances agreed by the school▪ Self-isolating due to Covid▪ Shielding due to Covid

An unauthorised absence could also include where the Headteacher feels a child is being kept home without good reason or where a child is late and the parent/carer fails to provide an acceptable explanation or if they are later than 9.15 am or 1.25pm. This will be recorded and monitored, by the Headteacher, and, where a pattern emerges or concern arises, the school will take action i.e. invite parents into school for a school attendance meeting.

Holiday or absence requests

- Parents/carers should take note that there is no automatic right to holiday leave for pupils in term time.
- Whether authorised or unauthorised, we require that parents/carers inform us of all holidays or absences in writing.
- No holiday absence will be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances. A fixed penalty notice may be requested by the school and issued by the LA if the absence exceeds 10 sessions (5 days).
- In exceptional circumstances parents/carers can write to the Headteacher requesting leave of absence. The Head teacher will take time to explore with parents/carers why such leave of absence is necessary. Where such leave is sanctioned it constitutes authorised absence.
- Due to the inclusive nature of our school we have several pupils whose medical needs or disabilities mean their parents can only arrange holidays through organisations that specialise in meeting the needs of those individuals. In order to meet these needs, those organisations are not always able to guarantee that absences can occur in school holidays. For that reason, as long as parents/carers provide evidence that the holiday meets this criteria, it may be authorised as an exceptional circumstance.

Pupils on part-time timetables

- Some pupils may have authorised part-time timetables. These are normally because of a regular agreed activity outside of school or because of significant medical needs. All pupils who have a part-time timetable will have it agreed by the Headteacher before it can begin. Pupils will be registered as being present if the pupil arrives in school at the agreed time AND the agreed time constitutes the majority of one session (half-day). This means a pupil on an agreed part-time timetable may not always be arriving before 9.15, but may be marked as present.
- For fire safety purposes, pupils on a part-time timetable have a separate, paper register to sign the pupil in and out, kept in the school office. In the event of a fire, this register will be taken to the assembly point along with other registers.

Medical appointments or sickness

- While we appreciate that appointments have to be taken when they are available, parents/carers are encouraged to make them after school or during the school holidays. If this is not possible, an appointment should be made so that the child misses as little school as possible and preferably at the end of the school day. Parents may be asked to provide evidence of appointments e.g. a letter or Doctor's note.
- If a pupil is absent for 5 days or more with sickness, we do request that medical evidence is provided by the parent/carer in order to authorise the absence as illness. This should be a letter from a doctor or other health professional involved with the child.
- Some of our pupils have significant medical needs or disabilities. This is taken into account when measuring attendance and considering whether a child has good attendance.

Fixed Penalty Notices

In line with government regulations, all schools can request a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued for pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality is of significant concern. These Fixed Penalty notices are considered a last resort as we are keen to work with parents/carers to support their child's attendance.

There are 2 sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent in one or more of the following circumstances where more than 10 sessions (5 days) of absence are recorded in 7 school weeks (i.e. 70 sessions):

1. where unauthorised absences are recorded.
2. where more than 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday are recorded and;
 - a) the parent has not informed the school; or
 - b) the leave was not authorised; or
 - c) the child did not return on the agreed date .
3. where the child is persistently late arriving at school after registers have closed.

4. where a combination of more than 10 sessions of a) to c) above have been recorded.

The fine is £60 (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. For example, a two - parent family taking 2 children out of school for an unauthorised holiday would be liable for a total of £240 if paid within 21 days or £480 between 21 and 28 days. The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted - details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full **before the 28 days** allowed, the authority is required to commence legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

If proven, this could result in a fine of up to £1,000 under Section 444 (1), a Parenting Order or other sanctions at the Magistrates disposal. Parents/carers are strongly urged to seek legal advice if they are considering not paying the Penalty Notice.

Right of Appeal:

There is no immediate right of appeal against the Penalty Notice but if you believe it to be incorrectly issued to you, you should contact the Senior Education Officer immediately:

Amanda Roberts - Senior Education Officer

Tel: 01454 866100

Email: amanda.roberts@southglos.gov.uk