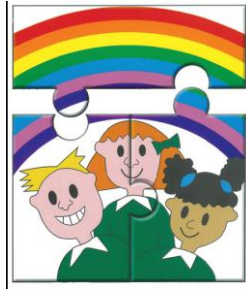



Emersons Green Primary School



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Ratified: by Full Governing Body	Date: July 2023
Signed – Chair of Governors: 	Next Review: July 2024

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

Emersons Green Primary School

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.
- There is an emphasis on a partnership approach and that securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the responsibility of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners. The school will listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them. There will also be a strong emphasis on sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe. This will include any children arriving at or leaving the school.
- There is a link between attendance and standards. Nationally, the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.
- South Gloucestershire guidance places an emphasis on a partnership approach with families under a flow chart that covers expectations, monitoring, listening and understanding, facilitated support, formalised support and finally enforcement.
- The school will develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance, a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand, accurately completing admission, attendance registers and follow-up any daily absence. Attendance and absence data will be regularly analysed to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- There is an emphasis on developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance including senior leadership involvement and a designated champion for improving attendance. There are some good points in the guidance that recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils, the attendance policy should account for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts.
- There may need to be bespoke, individual approaches in relation to pupils with medical conditions or special education needs and disabilities. Pastoral care may need to be put in place where needed, those affected by anxiety about school attendance.
- Part-time timetables must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any part-time timetables will be reported to the LA, through the regular reporting system.

- All schools are legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum data and information must include: every time a pupil's name is to be added to, or deleted from, the school admission register outside of standard transition times (including the statutory reason for deletion) and the name and address of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has missed school for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised. With the vast majority of schools, we receive this information through your management information systems but for those where we do not, we require this no less frequently than once per calendar month.
- The Governing Board will monitor attendance to ensure that school leaders fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The Governors will ensure that attendance training be provided to relevant staff.
- The LA will also monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School, as relevant.
- The school will make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution, after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are: Parenting contracts; education supervision orders; attendance prosecution; parenting orders and fixed penalty notices.

Purposes of this policy

- 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 staff to instruct them how to do this, using the Arbor electronic data-management system.

Systems and Processes

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 9.30 am or 1.45pm 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.

Reporting to parents/carers

We report children's attendance to parents/carer at least 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 Early Help Support forms, or SEND Annual Review paperwork.

The Headteacher sends letters out in Term 2, 4 and 6 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 there being 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 provided 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▪ Other educational opportunities, as agreed by the school▪ Self-isolating due to Covid▪ Awaiting Covid CPR test▪ 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.

The process for action that may be taken is outlined in Appendix 1

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 may use 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.
- Part-time timetables must only be used over a short-term period and are not considered a long-term solution. The timetable and any phasing into school must be agreed between all parties.
- Any pupils on a part-time timetable will be reported to the LA through the Children Missing Education reporting system.

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

Appendix 1 – Stages of Parental Contact

STAGE	THRESHOLD	ACTION/CONTACT
Stage 1	<p>Where there are no prior concerns regarding attendance in previous academic year: Year to date broken weeks greater than 5% OR 5 or more broken weeks in an old-style term (e.g. T1-2, T3-4, T5-6),</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>Attendance less than 95% with no clear, valid explanation (e.g. single illness).</p>	Attendance Letter 1 - explaining that attendance has fallen below the school's expected threshold, offering support and informing parents that attendance will be monitored more closely for the next two terms.
Stage 2	<p>Two terms or more > 5% broken weeks AND/ OR Attendance less than 95% with no clear, valid explanation (e.g. single illness).</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>Attendance less than 95% AND >5% or more broken weeks in the previous academic year.</p>	<p>'School Attendance Meeting' held with parents & HT/. DHT to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discuss impact of missed learning investigate reasons for absence and solutions set attendance targets consider creation of Individual Health care plan notify parents of possible Fixed Penalty Notice Set review period
Stage 3	<p>Continued broken weeks</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>insufficient improvement in attendance since last School Attendance Meeting</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>Attendance less than 90%</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>10 or more broken weeks in the previous academic year despite School</p>	<p>Further School Attendance Meeting with HT and/or Education Welfare Officer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discuss impact of missed learning investigate reasons for absence and solutions explain final, short review period before start of legal process (Attendance Panel Meeting) notify parents of possible Fixed Penalty Notice.

	Attendance Meetings during this period.	
Stage 4	<p>Continued broken weeks AND/ OR insufficient improvement in attendance since final School Attendance Meeting</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>Attendance less than 90%</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>10 or more broken weeks in the previous academic year despite final School Attendance Meetings during this period.</p>	<p>Attendance Panel Meeting Held.</p> <p>Advise parent/carer that a panel meeting will take place.</p> <p>School Attendance Panel meeting takes place (Letter sent to arrange)</p> <p>Parents warned about possible legal action if attendance doesn't improve</p>
Stage 5	If no improvement after 4 weeks of Attendance Panel Meeting.,	<p>Attendance Panel review chaired by LA representative.</p> <p>LA considers beginning legal process for non-attendance.</p>