

Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential

Introduction

At Essa we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. We value all of our pupils and will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try and resolve any difficulties.

At Essa we recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our attendance policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on safeguarding, bullying and behaviour. The policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Missing days of learning in succession (or over a period of time) makes catching-up more of a challenge for the pupil, and often they can find themselves falling behind. Absence from school, whether authorised (valid reason) or unauthorised (no valid reason) affects an individual's ability to form positive peer and adult relationships and develop social skills. The habits of regular and punctual attendance are important in their own right: they enable individuals to participate in social organisations and shared arrangements, to take on commitments, and to contribute at work as well as at school. Regular attendance at the Academy is also a legal requirement.

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent
90%	19 days	4 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education(Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of the absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This must be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness – Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of prescription/letter.

Medical/Dental Appointments – Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. If parents insist on taking their children to appointments during the school day, the child may be given an unauthorised absence. Parents must show the appointment card to school at least a day before the appointment.

Other Authorised Circumstances – This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances e.g. visiting a parent in prison or social worker contact time.

Excluded (No alternative provision made) – Exclusion from school is counted as an authorised absence. For exclusions of more than half a day, the child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Family holidays and extended leave – Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school for the purpose of a holiday and are made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during the academic year, which none of our children can afford to do. To this end, holidays during term time will be unauthorised.

Parents wishing to take their child on a family holiday during term time must complete a 'Request for leave of absence' form **before** travel arrangements are made. The Principal will request to see the return tickets alongside the form. Requests will be considered individually and will take the following into account:

- The pupil's general attendance record
- Pupil's educational needs
- Proximity of assessments and national testing

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the absence still occurs, the absence will be unauthorised. A Penalty Notice will be issued if absence extends to 10 days or more in a term.

If a pupil fails to return following a holiday and contact with the parents has not been received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

Religious Observance – Essa Pack acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods and this necessitates a consideration for authorised absence. Due to the cultural nature of our school, the school promises to make every effort to close in celebration of Eid al Adha/Eid al Fitr, in accordance with the diary dates specified by the Muslim Council of Britain, ensuring that children are still accessing 190 days of education during the academic year. Parents must request permission in writing at least a day in advance. In the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day to be designated for any religious observance. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Late Arrival – Registration is from 8:30am-8:40am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as late but present for the session (L). The number of minutes late will be logged. The register will close at 10:00am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (U), but the partial absence will not be authorised.

Any child arriving from 8:40am must be brought to the office by a parent/carer to be signed in. Children will be given a red late slip to take to their class teacher.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupils/family members birthday
- Shopping for uniforms/shoes
- Had a late night
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend
- Illness of a parent/carer/sibling
- Holidays
- Passport renewals

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- Transfer between schools
- Failure to return from extended leave after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)

Essa Academy will follow Bolton Local Authority Children Missing Education protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Roles and Responsibilities

At Essa Academy we believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

As such the **Governing Body** will:

- Ensure that the importance of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the EFAT Board and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leaders within the school.
- Monitor the schools attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Local Governing Body meetings
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance frequently to identify causes and patterns for absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The **School Attendance Team** will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed every year
- Ensure all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader for attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Local Governing Body and on a half termly basis for the lead governor on attendance

- Ensure systems to monitor, record and report the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Where necessary employ a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families

All school staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to monitor, record and report the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Where necessary, work with the school's Attendance Team and other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families

The school requests that **Parents and Carers** will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there, taking a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this up with a note/medical evidence
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences (make appointments for doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours)
- Ask the school for help in their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any changes in circumstance that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school: take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with the school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both home and school
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bags and uniform the night before
- Avoid taking their child on family visits during term time.

Using Attendance Data

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. This level of data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (appendix 1).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Essa Primary will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Support Systems

At Essa we recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children. The school will implement a range of strategies to

support improved attendance. Details of current strategies are listed in Appendix 1. Strategies used may include:

- Reward systems
- Discussions with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Pupil voice activities
- Family learning
- Behaviour support

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Essa Primary will consider and use legal sanctions.

Legal Interventions

Prosecution – where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 44 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is in a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. A parent found guilty of this offence can be **fined up to £2500** and/or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purposes of a holiday or family visit in term time and the absence has not been authorised by school
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence

A Penalty Notice gives the parents the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. A penalty notice will be requested for each parent and for each child within a family unit. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Bolton Local Authorities Penalty Notice protocol.

Punctuality

Punctual arrival at Academy registrations in the morning and afternoon, as well as to lessons, is important as this instils good working practices in students both inside and outside of the Academy. It also portrays a serious approach to studying and making the greatest use of opportunities available to them.

Pupils are expected to arrive before 8:35 a.m. every day to begin with a prompt start and arrive promptly (and register) to all lessons to enable maximum learning.

The following actions will be taken if a pupil is late:

- Form Tutors will be aware of latecomers and will inform the Progress Leaders and Attendance Lead who has lead responsibility for attendance.
- The Attendance Lead with lead responsibility for attendance will monitor and follow up absences, including appropriate support and sanctions
- Possible external agency involvement (Early Help, health professionals) will be triggered when support and sanctions have made no significant improvement
- Subject teachers and subject leaders will take appropriate action with persistent latecomers to lessons

- Parents/carers will be informed by Attendance Team, Form Tutors, Progress Leaders of students arriving persistently late to lessons.

Sanctions for lack of punctuality

Sanctions for repeatedly lateness include:

- Whole school detention (after school)
- Weekday detentions by senior staff
- Detentions during social times
- Pupils accruing 10 unauthorised late marks (U code) may receive a penalty- warning fine
- Sanctions for repeat lateness to class include:
 - Subject area detention in the first instance;
 - Weekday detentions by the pastoral staff if persistently late to class.
 - Social time detentions