



Eastbrook Secondary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of Issue:	September 2023
Issued By:	Headteacher
Review Date:	September 2024

If printed, copied or otherwise transferred from this website this document must be considered to be an uncontrolled copy. Policy amendments may occur at any time. Please consult the Policies page on the website for the latest updates.

Table of Contents

Eastbrook School Attendance Policy Introduction	3
Aims	3
Legislation and Guidance	3
Roles and Responsibilities	4
Recording Attendance	6
Unauthorised and Authorised Absence	8
Attendance Monitoring	9
Monitoring and Review-Policy	10
Links with other Policies	10
Appendix 1-Coding	11
Appendix 2-Our Three Step Process for Challenging PA and SA	14
Appendix 3-Our Policy and Guidance on Home Visits	15

Eastbrook School Attendance Policy

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's learning and regular absence will seriously affect their progress. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Students should never have unauthorised or unexplained absences, and should aim for 100% attendance. Any student whose attendance is below 95% would be a concern for the school.

Authorised absences can also be of concern to the school, particularly if they result in an attendance of below 95% across the year.

The school has targets to improve attendance and students have an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

We regularly update pupils and parents on the attendance of pupils and update staff and governors regularly on whole school attendance figures and trends.

1. Aims

Our primary aims are to:

- Encourage students to attend school always, through building a positive culture around attendance.
- Remove barriers to attendance for those pupils whose attendance does not meet our standard.
- Ensure that students are effectively safeguarded through ensuring their consistent attendance.
- Improve the quality of students' learning and outcomes, by ensuring they are in school.
- Build strong relationships with families and our community to improve school attendance
- Ensure that students, families and staff, see punctuality and attendance, as equally important.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of '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 pieces of 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)
- 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board 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

3.2 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

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance at secondary is; Nicholas Hewitt nehwitt@eastbrookschoo.org and at primary; Evan Hollows hollowse@eastbrookschoo.org

3.4 The attendance officer and team:

The school attendance officer and attendance team are responsible for:

- Receiving calls from parents surrounding attendance, for instance explaining an absence.
- Sending group calls to parents on the first day of unauthorised absence.

- Making phone calls to any parents who do not respond to Group call messages.
- Making home visits if required.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/ The designated senior leader when to issue fixed-penalty notices The attendance officer is Jo Archer and can be contacted via ArcherJ@eastbrookschoo.org
- Supporting pastoral leaders in the issue of letters to parents, organisation of and conducting of, certain meetings with families and students.

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors/pastoral leaders

Class teachers/form tutors/pastoral leaders are responsible for:

- **Class Teachers**
 - Recording attendance for each school sessions that they are responsible for students, promptly and without exception.
 - Using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school registry, within the first 5 minutes of any taught session.
 - Logging any concerns surrounding patterns of poor attendance as safeguarding concerns.
- **Form Tutors**
 - Holding weekly conversations surrounding both individual attendance and form/year group attendance, through our designated weekly attendance slot at form time.
 - Delivering the pastoral curriculum surrounding attendance during designated sessions.
- **Pastoral Leaders**
 - Building a positive culture surrounding attendance through assemblies, resources in our pastoral curriculum and the issuing of rewards.
 - Supporting the attendance team and senior leaders in contacting parents, meeting with parents, and agreeing attendance support plans with students and their families.

3.7 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 9am 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 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Provide evidence to validate periods of absence, such as medical notes, if requested by the attendance team.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time (Secondary/Sixth Form)

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the school day and at the start of every session for secondary. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Attending an approved-on site intervention.
- Receiving any alternative provision off site.
- Currently removed from lessons but on site, owing to a safeguarding or behaviour concern.
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes. We will also record:
 - Whether the absence is authorised or not
 - The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
 - The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.35am. The register for the second session will be taken at 14.15 pm and will be kept open until 14.45pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school registry staff (see also section 7).

- Please contact the **Registry Office** as soon as possible on the first day of absence; this can be done by:
- Phone call: 020 3780 3609 then press 1 or dial ext 2008 or 2009
- Email: attendance@eastbrookschoo.org

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or the absence is longer than 3 days, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence as documentation, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unless we have a concern.

- All appointment cards, letters or doctor's notes can be emailed directly to attendance@eastbrookschoo.org

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

- All appointment cards, letters or doctor's notes can be emailed directly to attendance@eastbrookschoo.org

Parents can complete a leave of absence to request a planned absence from the Headteacher for any absence requests during term time. This can be downloaded from the school website or collected from the school reception.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Students who arrive late to form time or lessons, will be given a **45 minute detention**, for each instance of lateness. Students who arrive after **8.35am** are considered late to school.

Persistent lateness will result in students being placed onto report with their Heads of Year, and may result in an attendance and punctuality plan being required of students and families, by senior leaders and the attendance officer.

Registers close at **9.35am**. Pupils who arrive to school after this time without a valid reason or prior agreement with the school, will be marked as present for those periods which they attend, but will still be given an unauthorised absence mark for the **am** period.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Groupcall the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

- Parents can check their child's attendance records at their own convenience via the Arbor app.
- Parents will receive half termly notification of their child's attendance via their child's half termly reports.
- Parents will receive a printout of attendance figures during parents evening. Parents can access this information live via their Arbor log in, at any time.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as "circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen".

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 as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or the school reception. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or 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 to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates, assembly celebrations and outings/events.

7. Attendance monitoring 7.1

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is when a pupil has an attendance of below 90%, and severe absence is when a pupil has an attendance of below 50%:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Send letters to those at risk of persistent absence.
- Employ pastoral support for students who count as persistent absentees.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Ensure that students who are PA and who's attendance does not improve following a two-week review period from the issue of warning letter 1, meet with pastoral leaders, and agree an attendance support plan, involving their families.
- Ensure all students who are SA have dedicated attendance plans, resulting from meetings between the family and attendance officer.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DFE is updated, and as a minimum annually, by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, governors, and headteacher.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy

APPENDIX

Appendix 1

Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
Q	On site pastoral intervention	Pupil is on site and receiving intervention or support from a pastoral leader.
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
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
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
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
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
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
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
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 halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day
---	------------------------	--

Appendix 2

Our Three Step Process for Challenging PA and SA

Stage 1

- All students whose attendance is below 90% are reviewed weekly by the Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Attendance Officer. Those students who do not have a legitimate medical or personal need, are issued 'Attendance Warning Letter 1'
- The attendance of students who have received this letter is reviewed over the two weeks following the delivery of this letter. If attendance is found to improve in this time, action is paused until further absences occur.

Stage 2

- If attendance is not found to improve in this period, students and their families are required to attend a meeting with their Head of Year, in which an attendance support plan is signed. These plans offer a range of support and interventions as well as fixed review period of between 2 and 4 weeks, in which a student and their family, must engage with what has been approved, for further action to be paused.
- If during the period of this plan, attendance is improved, action is paused until further absences occur.

Stage 3

- If attendance does not improve during this period the students and their family will be required to meet with the Attendance Officer and Senior Leader responsible for attendance. Further interventions and support can be discussed at this meeting, however, this will be the final opportunity prior to elevation to a fixed penalty notice, for families to engage with the school's support plan. Attendance will be reviewed for a further 2 weeks following this point.
- If attendance improves after this point, action is paused until further absences occur.
- If attendance does not improve after this point, the school will work with the LA to issue penalty notices to parent/guardians in light of their legal obligation to ensure the child's attendance at school.

Appendix 3

Our Policy and Guidance on Home Visits

The Law and Best Practice

- Home visits are not required by statutory attendance law.
- However, they are good practice when concerning the welfare of students with sudden or substantial changes in their attendance or who qualify as severely absent and or who are classified as 'vulnerable' students.
- As such the attendance team regularly schedules home visits for students whose attendance is of significant concern, or who are vulnerable pupils.

When and Why Home Visits are Conducted

- Visits will always be conducted within school hours and on school days.
- Visits will be conducted when no contact with a family has been made for 3 consecutive days and the student has been absent.
- Visits beyond this point will be made based on needs assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- They will involve external agencies such as social workers.
- Visits are scheduled to address sudden changes in the attendance of pupils, sustained periods of non-attendance, or when a welfare concern arises, to check on the welfare of a pupil.
- Visits are conducted to gather information about the welfare and whereabouts of a student, to offer support and information to families and to gather information for sharing with other agencies, such as social care.
- Visits are also conducted to remind families and students of the school's desire to support and remain in contact with them, regardless of a student's historic attendance.

How Home Visits are Conducted

- Home visits are led by a member of the attendance team, usually the attendance officer, or a senior leader.
- Home visits are always conducted in pairs, to ensure the safety of staff.
- When conducting home visits the staff involved will attempt to verify the welfare of the student, not to conduct meetings, or challenge those at the home, regarding their attendance.
- Staff conducting home visits will not usually enter the home, and will never enter other than briefly, when invited, and only into communal spaces.
- Staff may provide information and documentation whilst on a home visit, if appropriate or required.
- Home visits take place at the discretion of the attendance officer and the Senior Leader responsible for attendance. For instance, if information is presented suggesting that a home visit may not be safe to attempt, the aforementioned may determine not to attempt a visit, even if the attendance criteria for a visit have been met.

- A generic Risk Assessment for home visits exists, and is reviewed by the attendance officer before making a home visit to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place and that any additional risks have been considered.