

Easebourne CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Signature of Chair of Governors	
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“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

[Corinthians 13:13]

In a safe, loving environment built on the strong Christian values of **faith**, **hope** and **love**, we want our children to **ACHIEVE** excellence and a love of learning, fulfilling their potential, and to **BUILD** their life skills, experiences and dreams. We also seek to **CONNECT** our children with their learning, their wider community and the environment.

Easebourne CE Primary School is a welcoming and friendly place where everyone cares for one another. The school’s values of ‘faith, hope and love’ are at the heart of the community. At Easebourne we believe regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law.

Good attendance is central to raising standards in education. At Easebourne, we provide an ambitious, challenging and interesting curriculum for our children. To reach their full potential, our pupils need to attend school regularly and to be punctual. Through this policy we aim to meet our obligations with regards to school attendance by promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.

It is our aim that all children achieve a minimum of 95% attendance, apart from those with chronic health issues, both physical and emotional. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning and often develop large gaps in their education which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations.

Parental Responsibility (A ‘parent’ includes anyone who has parental responsibility for the day to day care of a child.)

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance of their children who have reached compulsory school age. Children should arrive punctually and appropriately prepared for the day; this includes ensuring they have had a good night's sleep and have eaten breakfast before coming to school.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school if their child has to be absent for a genuine reason such as illness, by contacting the school by 9.05am on the first day of absence.

School Responsibility

The school will promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued. If parents have any concerns they should speak to their child's class teacher in the first instance.

It is a legal responsibility that registers will be taken at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. The school will monitor attendance and respond to any concerns promptly.

A record of attendance will be sent home to parents annually with their report and termly highlighting any concerns using the traffic light system.

Red	Cause for concern	Below 94%
Amber	Not up to required standard	Between 94.01% and 94.99%
Green	Highly satisfactory	95% or above

We recognise that the greatest cause of absence is illness and are not asking parents to send their child to school when they are too ill to attend but are keen that parents realise the impact absence can have on a child's achievement.

There are 190 days in a school year and absences have the following impact:

- 95% = 9.5 days absent
- 90% = 19 days absent
- 85% = 28.5 days absent
- 80% = 38 days absent

Initially, concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the West Sussex Local Authority Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team.

Late Arrival (moved up)

Morning register opens at 8.50am and we expect children to be in class for that time. If a pupil arrives after this time a late mark will be entered. The register closes at 9.05am and anyone arriving after this time will be given an unauthorised absence mark. Registers are taken again at

12:45pm in the afternoon and close at 1.00pm. Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

All absences will be either authorised or unauthorised by the Headteacher. The West Sussex Local Authority, have the authority to either issue Fixed Penalty Notices and/or Court action to parents of children who take unauthorised leave. This is explained in the Unauthorised Absence section below. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, have removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. Leave requested for holiday or similar leisure purposes will not be authorised. The amendments make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances (see Authorised Absence section below). School holiday dates are published to parents/carers as early as possible. There are 190 days in the school year which means that there are 175 non-school days left for holidays and other leisure activities.

Authorised absence

Absence will not be authorised:

- during the first 2 weeks of September because of the importance of children settling into new class routines;
- during the first half of the Summer term for those children who are undergoing assessments (year 2 and year 6);

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. Leave may be authorised for exceptional circumstances at the Head Teacher's discretion. Leave of absence is granted on such occasions because the dates and times are unavoidable. The length of absence should be reasonable and suitable to the occasion.

Authorised absences may include:

- Illness, if the parent telephones the school to explain the absence - the school reserves the right to ask for clarification from a medical professional in exceptional cases;
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments;
- Recognised exams, e.g. music or dance;
- Approved sporting activity;
- Absence under licence issued by the Area Education Officer for a theatrical or other performance;
- Educational visits and residential;
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision;
- Important family occasions such as a wedding or a funeral occurring during term time
- Religious observation days set by the religious body to which the parents belong;

- Exceptional circumstances at the Headteacher's discretion – these will generally be rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Usually the period of leave granted would not be longer than 2 days but each application will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Unauthorised absences include:

- If no contact is made, or explanation provided, the absence will be deemed unauthorised.
- Holidays – parents do not have the right to remove a child of compulsory age for a holiday during school time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, have removed references to family holiday and extended leave. The amendments make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Leave requested for holidays or days out will not be authorised and parents may incur a fine.

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Legal sanctions

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, who will follow the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

Schools can refer parents to the local authority for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and when a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10 school week period; a school day is two sessions am and pm. This includes:

- Any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- A holiday in term time which has not been authorised by the headteacher. The Government has directed Headteachers may only grant leave for a holiday in exceptional circumstances.

If the Council are satisfied that an offence has been committed you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) which could be issued per child, per parent. Your local council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if you do not pay within 21 days. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

If the school refers a period of absence that is 15 consecutive school days or more; Pupil Entitlement Investigation may consider a FPN is not appropriate. In these instances the matter may instead be brought directly before the courts.

Promoting Attendance

We use a wide range of strategies for promoting attendance including:

- **Assembly** at the start of the year
- **PSHE lesson** on punctuality and attendance for each class
- **House Points** will be awarded termly to all children with 100% attendance
- **Attendance records** printed off and given to teachers to discuss at Parents Evening
- **Letters to parents termly** for those children with less than 95% attendance
- **Challenging parents** when there is reason to believe that the child is not ill but is extending or taking a holiday
- **Parents called in for meeting** with Headteacher or Class Teacher when publicised thresholds are crossed to discuss child's attendance, punctuality, academic progress and possible ways forward

Staff Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of responsibilities which individuals have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers;
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them;
- Providing background information to support referrals;
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns;
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness;
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance;
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence;
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues;
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised;
- Making referrals to the EWO service;
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software;
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence;
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made;

- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home;
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher;
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.