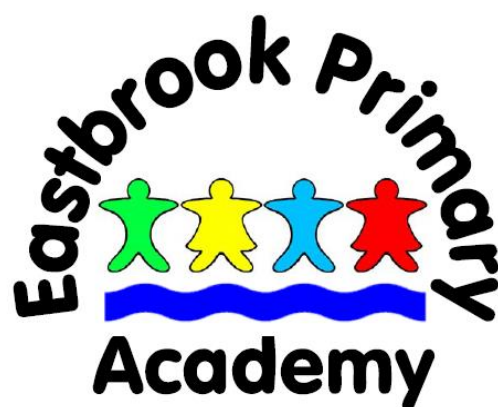




Attendance and Punctuality Policy



| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Written by | Julia Sherlock |
| Reviewed by Governors | December 2017 |
| Date for Review | December 2019 |
| Signed – Governor | |
| Signed – Headteacher | <i>J. Sherlock</i> |

Introduction from the Adur Family of Schools

As a locality group of schools, we acknowledge the considerable effect good attendance and punctuality has on a child's learning and his/her educational outcomes. We follow government and Ofsted guidelines regarding attendance.

All the Adur schools agree to:

- Promote high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Work in partnership with parents
- Have clear procedures for dealing with pupil absence
- Have rigorous systems for safeguarding pupils through absence checking procedures.

The above statement has been formulated by all the schools within the Adur family of schools:

Shoreham Academy, Sir Robert Woodard Academy, Buckingham Primary, Eastbrook Primary, Glebe Primary, Globe Primary, Herons Dale Primary, Holmbush Academy, North Lancing Primary, Shoreham Beach Primary, Sompting Village Primary, St. Nicholas and St. Mary's Primary, St. Peter's Primary and Swiss Gardens Primary.

Aims

Eastbrook Primary Academy aims to promote, among pupils and their parents, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance. Success at school starts by being present and punctual if children are to obtain maximum benefit from the many opportunities the school provides. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Absences can also affect a child's relationship with other children and his or her ability to form lasting friendships. It can affect a child's confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.

| Attendance | Description | Approx. days lost per year | Approx. weeks lost per year |
|------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 98-100% | Excellent | 0-4 | Less than 1 |
| 96-98% | Good | 5-9 | 1-2 |
| 93-96% | Satisfactory | 10-13 | 2-3 |
| 90-93% | Unsatisfactory | 14-18 | 3-4 |
| Below 90% | Persistent Absence | More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions | More than 4 |

We will work with parents to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted on as soon as possible. The academy target for all pupils is **96% or better**.

Legal Framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

- The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable
 - a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
 - b) to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- A person begins to be of compulsory school age
 - a) when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and
 - b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.

- A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year.
 - a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
 - b) if they attain that age on that day, or
 - c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

Eastbrook Primary Academy is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance and punctuality policy accordingly.

Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Tell their class teacher or the school office of any problem that may hinder them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure their child attends daily and on time
- Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and/or their child in school
- Telephone school on the first day of any absence to inform school of the reason
- Indicate when their child can be expected to return to school, or phone each additional morning their child is absent
- If attendance becomes a problem – work with the school to ensure an improvement
- Give serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or necessary to request term time absence
- Make a written application for any term time leave of absence prior to proposed dates.

The headteacher will:

- Monitor attendance regularly and contact parents if attendance is causing concern
- Follow appropriate guidance and share information with the LA, and other schools, to minimise the risk of a child going missing from education (Annex A Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016)
- Consider requests for authorised absences
- Ensure action is taken in response to any difficulties reported which impact on attendance (e.g. bullying/behaviour)
- Ensure parents are advised of the school's expectations during the induction meetings for new parents
- Remind parents regularly in newsletters of the importance of good attendance and time-keeping
- Celebrate good attendance in assemblies and in newsletters
- Report key attendance figures to the Governing Body.

School Link Assistant (SLA) will:

- Oversee day to day attendance where there is cause for concern, working closely with parents/carers to improve attendance of individual pupils
- Monitor pupil attendance, reporting concerns to the headteacher/SENCo in the weekly SLA meetings
- Investigate reasons for absence, exploring any underlying cause either at home or school
- Liaise with outside agencies as appropriate to improve attendance
- Work with class teachers to agree and implement strategies to re-engage pupils with emerging attendance issues

- Work with the SENCo to plan reintegration programmes for pupils who have been absent for longer than usual
- Contact the Pupil Entitlement Investigation (PEI) Team for advice/support as needed:
Email pei@westsussex.gov.uk Phone 033 022 28200

Class Teachers will:

- Prepare and deliver stimulating and enjoyable learning for all pupils
- Register pupils at the start of each morning and afternoon session (electronically via SIMS)
- Alert the SLA of any children demonstrating an unsettled pattern of attendance
- Report percentage attendance at parent consultations and in pupils' Summer Reports
- Ensure all absence notes are passed to the attendance secretary
- Work with the Senior Leadership Team and SLAs to agree and implement strategies to re-engage pupils with emerging attendance issues.

The Attendance Secretary will:

- Print weekly registers
- Make calls to parents when first day absence contact has not been made by parents
- Record attendance data accurately using agreed codes
- Record late arrivals and reasons
- Ensure reasons for absence are recorded accurately
- Prepare standard letters to inform parents when a child's attendance is giving cause for concern and is thus being monitored
- Meet with the headteacher fortnightly, reporting attendance issues and taking the agreed action
- Provide attendance reports when requested and ensure DfE attendance returns are accurate.

The governing body will:

- Be responsible for the monitoring of overall attendance, ensuring that the school's attendance figures remain high (current target 96%+)
- Ensure the policy is carried out effectively
- Review the policy every two years or earlier if considered necessary.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school. Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised until the school is satisfied that I should be authorised. ***Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that while calling the school or providing a note for an absence complies with safeguarding procedures, it does not automatically mean an absence will be authorised.***

Examples of Authorised Absence

- Illness
- Hospital/dental/doctor appointments for the pupil which can't be made outside school hours
- Major religious observations
- Visits to prospective new schools
- External exams or educational assessments.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence

- Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park
- A birthday treat
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Looking after other children/family members

- Medical appointments for other family members
- Truancy
- Parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- Absences that have never been properly explained.

Religious observance

Eastbrook Primary Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will consider authorising absence for these times. Parents will be aware of these dates and should request the absence in the normal way by giving the school a written request in advance.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Amendments to the 2006 Government regulations (appendix 1) make it clear that the current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child for a family holiday or extended leave of absence during term time. Any application for leave must be in 'exceptional circumstances' and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. As a school we are bound by this guidance and the headteacher is no longer able to authorise any holiday during term time. Any application for absences of this nature must be made in advance, and in writing.

If you feel your request could be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' a completed request form must be sent into school for the attention of the headteacher before the holiday is booked.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include: a short absence (usually a day) to attend a close family wedding, funeral or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent) or to attend a special family reunion or a special religious/cultural festival.

Please note that where a request is made and is authorised, it will only be on the understanding that the following evidence will be requested and is provided:

- Any required trip abroad – proof of flight details, including a proposed date of return. If flights have to be changed by an airline which directly affect the return date, then proof of this will also be required.
- Funeral – a copy of an order of service.
- Attendance at an event – proof of this, either a ticket or programme that includes a list of attendees.

If you decide to allow your child to be absent without authorisation this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and a fixed penalty of £60 (or more) may be issued by the Local Authority. More information on the issuing of Penalty Notices is available from the West Sussex Council Website.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent' absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level can be doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached this mark or is at risk of moving towards this mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed immediately.

These pupils are tracked, monitored and supported carefully by an identified member of the office staff, in consultation with the headteacher. We also combine this with academic monitoring where absence affects pupil outcomes. Meetings are arranged with the parents and headteacher if attendance does not improve and an action plan is agreed.

Absence Procedures

Our arrangements for the notification of absence and seeking approval for absence.

Reporting absence (with the exception of term time leave of absence)

- On the first day of their child's absence parents are asked to send in a written message or telephone the school, on 01273 874050, by 9.30am.
- If it is unclear how long the child will be absent from school parents are asked to contact the school on a daily basis to record the absence.

Illness and Medical/dental appointments

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- Parents are asked to inform the school in advance if their child has a medical appointment.
- Children should attend school around the appointment wherever possible.
- Children will not be allowed to leave the premises unless they are collected by an adult, or it has been agreed in writing.
- An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is required.
- If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last symptom. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- In the case of repeated absences, the school will require a written explanation of why a child has been absent. The office will request this when it is needed.

The DfE provides additional advice in its School Attendance Document (October 2014) which states:

'Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.'

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner.

- If no note or telephone call is received from parents, we will endeavour to contact parents within the first hour of the first day of absence.
- The first day contact book will be completed.
- A first day absence letter will be posted to the child's registered address or a text message will be sent if we are unable to make contact by telephone.
- Subsequent attempts will be made if no contact has been possible and the absence continues.
- Children's absence will be monitored by the school office and a school letter will be prepared and sent if absence becomes a concern.
- If absence continues to be a concern the parent will be invited in to discuss their child's attendance or they may be referred to the school nurse.
- If the child has persistent absence, advice will be sought from the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team (formerly known as the Education Welfare Service).

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Eastbrook Primary Academy as soon as possible.

For safeguarding reasons, a pupil will not be removed from the school roll until we are satisfied that an alternative school or alternative provision has been found. The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school.

Punctuality matters too!

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day he or she can miss work or important information. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; they can feel embarrassed. This can encourage absence.

The school day starts at 8.50 and we expect your child to be lined up ready to enter school by this time, so children should be in the playground by 8.45. The school gates open at 8.40. Registers are completed by 9.05 and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.25 the registers will be closed in accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence. This could lead to a penalty notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the School Link Assistant to resolve the problems but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

19 days lost a year through being late = 90% attendance = Persistent Absence.

Some strategies to support improving punctuality

Night time routines



- Encourage children to pack their school bag before going to bed, ready for the next day.
- Getting to bed earlier.
- Setting a time for a television, iPad, computer, mobile phone and other devices to be turned off.

Morning routines



- Setting the alarm for a time that allows all morning routines to be carried out without making them late for school.
- Having breakfast before leaving home, so there is no need to call in at the shop on the way to school.
- Encourage them to leave home at least five minutes earlier than they think they need to.
- Meeting a reliable friend to walk to school with.
- Coming to school for breakfast club if available.