Attendance Policy

Start Date: January 2019

Review Date: January 2021

Monitoring: Full Governing Body

AIMS

Eden Primary aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending school sessions.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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 legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 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. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Rationale

Parents have a clear legal duty to ensure regular full time attendance at school for registered pupils. Eden Primary will work collaboratively to maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance and consistent punctuality.

Provision for holidays in term time can only be agreed with the prior permission of the Head Teacher and can only be authorised under exceptional circumstances.

Our school aims to meet it's obligations with regards to school attendance by ensuring that pupils have excellent levels of attendance and punctuality in order that they are able to succeed and make good progress at school, maintain positive and consistent relationships, feel settled and secure in school and most importantly maximise their learning time and avoid gaps in learning sequences.

In order to do this we:

- Encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Teach children and their parents where needed, the importance of developing good habits of attendance and punctuality.
- Liaise with parents regarding attendance and punctuality concerns.
- Have clear procedures for recording and monitoring attendance and act quickly where issues arise.
- Set aspirational targets for high levels of attendance.
- Expect full attendance and excellent punctuality as standard.
- Recognise that encouragement is helpful and where necessary in individual cases make use of appropriate incentives and rewards.
- Set targets in the school development plan from year to year and use data with senior leaders and governors to monitor the effectiveness of our policy.
- Aim to have at least 96% attendance or above at all times.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. This is reported in the Head Teachers report to the GB at a termly meeting. The Governing Board also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head Teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The attendance officer

The attendance officer (who may be the Head Teacher):

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Administrative staff

Administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Attendance Procedures at Eden Primary

School Registers

By law, Eden Primary is required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register each year.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once at the start of the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Registers are usually marked online using Integris. Where this is not possible due to access or lack of expertise by cover teachers a paper register is provided and returned to the attendance administrator.

- Registers are taken promptly at 9.00am or 10 minutes after a staggered arrival time and at the start of the afternoon session each day.
- Any pupils not present at this time will be marked as absent.
- Late pupils need to report to the school office via the main entrance, sign in and then go to their classrooms independently.

- Pupils arriving after 9.30am when registration closes are marked as absent for that session.

The school must

- Follow up absences and identify authorised/unauthorised absences (this is at Head Teacher's discretion not that of the parent).
- Ensure any safeguarding actions are taken.
- Issue parents with a copy of their child's attendance record with the annual report.

Parents must:

- Ensure their children attend school on time each day.
- Avoid taking any holidays in term time and request permission in writing as far in advance as possible in exceptional circumstances.
- Keep children off school if it is essential when physically unable to attend due to symptoms of an illness and in the interest of not passing symptoms on to other children and staff according to guidance in Family Handbook.
- Schedule medical appointments outside school hours whenever possible.
- Request approval for absence such as medical appointments if it is known in advance that a child may need to be absent.

Unplanned absence

- Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00AM or as soon as practically possible
- Inform the school of the reasons for a child's absence by email to absence@edenprimary.org.uk or by telephone
- Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Medical or dental appointments

- Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required and permission needs to be granted by the Head Teacher for authorising these absences.
- Parents are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

- Parents should request permission for absence for medical appointments from the Head Teacher by email
- Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance.

Lateness and punctuality

- A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Following Up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

- A phone call is made to the parents of any absent pupils who have not notified the school on the morning of their first day of absence as soon as possible after the register is taken.
- If the initial attempt at first day of absence contact is unsuccessful we will continue on a daily basis until successful.
- Any safeguarding concerns are followed up ASAP.
- The administrative staff report any concerns regarding absence to the Head Teacher urgently (no contact possible on first day of absence, patterns of absence or lateness, lengthy absence above three days, etc) and are made aware of for which pupils close monitoring is essential
- Pupil attendance is monitored each half term and phone calls are made or letters are issued to parents of pupils who have had unexplained absences, frequent absences, or been late on more than three occasions.
- Pupils with persistent absence i.e. 10% or more, or who have a pattern of lateness are carefully monitored and the school will work closely with the pupil and their family to ensure attendance improves.
- Where the school's actions are deemed to have made limited impact and the attendance or punctuality is concerning, referrals will be made to Educational Welfare at Haringey.
- Letters warning parents of criminal prosecution are sent in a timely manner when there is significant concern about absence that is below 80%.
- Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents where attendance fails to improve.

Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Head Teacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

Granting approval for term-time absence

Leave of absence to pupils during term time is only permitted if the Head Teacher considers there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as serious illness or death in the family either at home or abroad, major close family life cycle events that require travel, etc.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for other **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes
- Flexi schooling requests for children under 5 years old

Types of Absence

Authorised absence may include:

- Genuine sickness (for up to 5 days, continuous or intermittent, after which the school will contact parents or carers to discuss the situation).
- Severe weather conditions which make the journey to school impossible.
- Religious observance.
- Interview at another school.

- Approved public performance.
- Approved education offsite

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Going shopping.
- Waiting on a delivery.
- Parents studies
- A family day out in term time.
- A child's birthday.
- Sleeping in after a late night.
- Unapproved holidays.
- Family visits.

All decisions on whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised remain the school's responsibility. We may mark a child's absence as unauthorised even if a reason has been given, if it is considered that the reason for absence is not valid.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- All staff in school act as role models to the children and should have excellent attendance and punctuality themselves.
- Attendance Officer (the Head Teacher) ensures registration procedures, monitoring of attendance and punctuality, clear record keeping, parent letters and referrals to appropriate staff/EWO are made.
- Class teachers promote good habits of attendance and will remind pupils and speak to parents regarding any concerns in the first instance.
- Middle/senior leaders incorporate teaching about good attendance into regular PHSE lessons and assemblies. Assemblies promote good attendance.
- Pupil progress review meetings are held each term with class teachers and senior leaders and any child with attendance concerns is raised at this meeting and appropriate actions put in place.
- A member of SLT is always at the door at the start of the day to encourage attendance and punctuality and may speak to parents of pupils with attendance concerns. They work closely with certain families to encourage good habits of attendance and plan strategies to motivate/support specific pupils, especially persistent absentee pupils.
- Senior leaders and governors monitor the schools attendance data and look for any specific patterns or concerns so that appropriate actions can be taken.
- Head Teacher approves any requests for leave of absence and makes the decision to authorise absences if there are exceptional circumstances.
- Other strategies for promoting attendance include : work closely with and individual family and child; someone meeting children at the door each day; putting in place supports and systems to incentivise school attendance and arriving on time including motivating tasks, additional responsibilities, etc; communicate regularly with parents; acknowledge improvements.

Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer/Head Teacher monitors pupil absence on a half termly basis.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each half 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance data is stored in Integris and reports are drawn every half term and as necessary on individuals, groups, wholes classes or the whole school.

When parents request permission for absence, attendance data is checked.

If a child's absence is below 95% the register is checked to understand reasons. Where there is concern parents will be contacted by email or by phone. Attendance will then be monitored and check for improvements.

Where no improvement occurs the Head Teacher will talk to the family to understand the issues involved and to promote and support improvement.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

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
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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 half-term/bank holiday/INSET day