



Ecton Brook Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date of Last Review: September 2020

Date of Next Review: September 2022

Index	Page
Title page	1
Index	2
1. Aims	4
2. Attendance	4
3. Acceptable absence	5
4. Authorised absences	6
5. Unauthorised absences	6
6. Holidays	7
7. Home-School Partnership	7
8. Procedures	7
9. Attendance data provided to class teachers	7
10. Awards for good attendance	8
11. Lateness	8
12. Education Welfare Service	8
13. Staff Guide to Registers and associated Procedures	9
13.1. Introduction	9
13.2. Marking the Register	9
13.3. Reading the Register	9
13.4. The first day response procedure	9
Confirmatory signatures	10

1. Aims

- To emphasise the importance of, and secure, maximum attendance at School to enable pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunities.
- To make explicit to all relevant parties the School's expectations for attendance levels.

- To promote a consistent approach across the School to all matters relating to attendance.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents, pupils) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are authorised.
- To stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

2. Attendance

Regular attendance at School is vital. Without it, the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; absence results in missed learning.

It is a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at School. Irregular attendance results in pupils not fulfilling their true potential, being placed at risk and being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. Therefore we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our pupils.

Attendance is a national priority and we submit data electronically (both in an aggregated form and on an individual pupil basis) every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school. National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and high academic performance.

3. Acceptable absence

Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period. What is sought are unbroken weeks (i.e. those where the pupil is marked present on all ten sessions); pupils should not have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the School.

4. Authorised absences

The Department for Education (DfE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- Leave of absence authorised by school (exceptional circumstances e.g. bereavement, serious illness)
- Excluded but no alternative provision made
- Holiday authorised by the school
- Illness (not medical or dental)
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious observations
- Study leave
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence.

There are other absences, such as “Approved Sporting Activity”, that can be authorised and there are events affecting families, some unforeseen, which necessitate absence from school and professional discretion is needed to be used in these cases about whether the absence can be authorised.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum: routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.

5. Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those where school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence:

- Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher
- Reason for absence not yet provided
- Absence from school without authorisation
- Arrival after the register closed

The Department of Education guidelines state that the following activities would classify as unauthorised:

- minding the house;
- caring for relatives;
- awaiting repair people;
- shopping;
- a birthday or family celebration.

We ask parents to notify the School in writing, well in advance of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the School would view the

reason for absence as valid or not. Individual cases would need to be judged on their merits and fine judgements will have, on occasions, to be made.

The Department of Education guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the School that judges whether an absence is authorised or not.

6. Holidays

We strongly discourage holidays from being taken in term time. This message is conveyed in our Prospectus and in the Home School Agreement. The DfE guidance makes it clear that each case should be considered on its merits and approval should not be automatic.

The School does not authorise holidays unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

7. Home-School Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the School and home to work closely together. Our expectations are in our Prospectus and the Home-School Agreement, and communicated in newsletters. To this end, we ask parents:

- to ensure their child arrives on time for morning and afternoon school;
- if their child is ill, to notify the school on the first day by 9.00am with an estimation of the likely length of absence;
- to provide a written note on the first day the child returns to school, which is kept for our records and authenticates the telephone message;
- to inform the school at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude to school;

8. Procedures

The School:

- contacts home on day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home by 9.30am
- contacts home and takes action promptly over any unexplained absences
- pursues promptly any concerns that parents provide that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in, school
- involves the support services to help pupils re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances
- regularly and consistently reminds pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- rewards good or improving attendance.

9. Attendance data provided to Class teachers

Classes are checked daily for non-attending pupils and throughout the school year, Class teachers are provided with attendance data for each pupil upon request. This information alerts class teachers all to pupils and families causing concern as well as providing us information for awards.

10. Awards for good attendance

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance.

11. Lateness

Lateness is defined as arriving in the School building after the beginning of the morning or afternoon sessions. This is closely monitored and addressed with the parents by means of letters, monitoring and parent meetings.

12. Education Welfare Service

The School works very closely with the Education Welfare Officer, EWO, regarding pupils who are giving cause for concern. The EWO visits homes, sees and supports parents and pupils in School and is a vital component in our efforts to secure high attendance. The EWO is available to assist parents where difficulties arise and can be contacted via the School or at the Education Welfare Service.

In extreme cases the Education Welfare Service is able to initiate legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their responsibility of getting their child to School. Before a case goes to court, Parenting Contracts would be drawn up setting targets for attendance levels. There may also be interviews, which could lead to a fixed penalty notice. The prime aim of all action is to get the child attending school on a regular basis.

13. Staff Guide to Registers and Associated Procedures

13.1. Introduction

Registers are important legal documents and we rely on accurate completion in order to pursue any concerns as well as for data analysis.

13.2. Marking the Register

Class teachers are responsible for the initial enquiries about absences and communicating concerns to the Key Stage Leader, SENCO or Head Teacher. It is imperative that the data entered is accurate. There should be a mark for every pupil. Staff should enter either 'present', 'absent' or 'late'. Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care and it is vital that the information recorded is accurate.

13.3. Reading the Registers

The Register data is read every morning and entered onto the online attendance system by the Attendance Officer or designated person. The School operates a policy of first day response regarding absence.

13.4. The first day response procedure

- Registers are entered onto the online attendance system and a daily printout is produced listing the 'First Day Absence' and 'Session Absence'.
- classrooms are checked to establish if the children marked as absent have since arrived at School late and the reason noted.
- contact home and take action promptly over any unexplained absences
- record reason for absence on the online attendance system or details of any messages or action taken
- communicate any issues / concerns to Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safe Guarding Lead and discussed during the weekly safeguarding meeting and decide the steps to take in each individual case.

Confirmatory Signatures

Signed.....Head Teacher

Signed.....Governor

Approved on.....

To be reviewed on.....