



Attendance Policy and Procedures

This policy was adopted on 5th March 2015

Signed on behalf of Emmanuel Community School

Review date:

Emmanuel Community School



Attendance Policy

Introduction

We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is the parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, children and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this ECS will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in a regular school newsletter;
- Report to parents/carers at least half-termly on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents, children and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

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

PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

All our PA children and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent, parents/carers must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – parents must do this even if they have already telephoned the school;

If a child is absent, the school will:

- Telephone or text the parents/carers on the first day of absence if they have not telephoned the school;

- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Head Teacher if absences persist.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. So parents are requested to make sure the school always has an up to date number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and lose out on valuable time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving children disrupt lessons; this can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school opens at 8.00am for breakfast club.

Children are expected to be in school by **8.50am** if not attending breakfast club.

Registers will be marked by **9:00am** and children will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if children arrive 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 they have an unauthorised absence.

If a child has a persistent late record, the parents will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but parents will be encouraged to approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and parents will be strongly discouraged from taking children away in school time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take time off in school time to go on holiday.

Leave for holiday in term time will not be agreed to especially under the following circumstances – such as:

- When a child is just starting the school. This is very important as the child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods.

- When a child's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a child's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

In line with the government and local authority recommendations, the governors have decided to issue penalty notices to parents for taking unauthorised leave of absence during term time.

Penalty notices will involve the recipient paying a fine, currently set at £60.00 if paid within 21 days or £120.00 if not paid within 28 days.

Where an authorized absence has been dealt with by way of penalty notice and the penalty notice has been paid, it is not possible for a parent to be prosecuted for the same period of unauthorised absence under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 or for the same instance'.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school will set targets for attendance and every child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes will be displayed in the school.

There will be minimum threshold level for school attendance and we will keep parents/carers updated regularly about progress to this level and how their child's attendance compares.

Through the school year absences and punctuality will be monitored to show where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter.

Those People Responsible for Attendance Matters in the School will be:

Attendance Officer
A named member of the Leadership Team

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are required to commit to working with parents and children as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Things Emmanuel Community School Staff will do to Improve Attendance

1. Make children and parents/guardians feel welcome. Welcome every child at the door. Make a point to say hello to every parent, guardian, and/or child we see in the halls and outside. Make it our business to know their names.
2. Create an environment that helps children feel successful in something, no matter how small it may seem. Award academic achievement and attendance letters/certificates as we will do for athletics, sports, skills and behavioural improvement.
3. When children are absent, immediately talk to their parents/guardians -- not simply their answering machines. Make a personal phone call in the evening, or call parents or guardians at work during the day.
4. When children return following absence, we will immediately talk with them about why they were gone. Let them know we are aware, and that we care that they are at school.
5. Forge a relationship with local businesses where children may congregate when truant. Encourage and support business leaders to help us keep children in school during school hours. For example, create a poster for businesses that states, "...We support Children in school and will not serve anyone under 16 during school hours"
6. Forge a relationship with local law enforcement. Make them our allies in showing the community, families, and children that school is the place to be. Support and liaise with community police officers to return children to school.
7. Provide a wide range of activities for children during breaks and lunch.
8. Empower and expect adults to take action when they think a child may be truanting.
9. Reward and recognise good attendance, not just perfect attendance. Post large signs announcing the daily attendance for the day. Publicly reward individuals, classes and the whole school when children's attendance increases or meets set goals.
10. Make school a place where children feel safe and respected. Involve children in the planning and implementation of curriculum, as well as in the life of the school.

Serious incidents of misbehaviour leading to fixed period or permanent exclusion

General Duties

1. Subject to the exceptions in paragraph 4, The Emmanuel School Trust (TEST) shall act and shall ensure that the Head teacher shall act in accordance with the law on exclusions as if the Academy were a maintained school. For this purpose, reference in the law on exclusions to the Head Teacher and Governing Body shall respectively be deemed to be the Head teacher and Governing Body of TEST.

2. Without limiting the generality of paragraph 1, TEST shall ensure that the Local Authority in which the Academy is located and, where the pupil concerned resides in the area of a different Local Authority, the Local Authority in which the pupil is ordinarily resident is informed of an exclusion decision in the same circumstances, and within the same timescale as a/the head teacher of a maintained school is required to inform the Local Authority (or Local Authorities) of an exclusion.
3. Subject to the exception in paragraph 5, TEST shall ensure that the Head teacher and the Governing Body of Emmanuel Community School have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance on exclusions when excluding, or reviewing the exclusion of a pupil and in relation to any appeals or review process as if the Academy were a maintained school.
4. TEST shall make arrangements for enabling appeals against, or review of any decision of the Governing Body to permanently exclude a pupil in accordance with the functions assigned to the Local Authority in relation to a maintained school. TEST shall ensure that appeal/review panels are impartial, and are constituted in accordance with the Secretary of State's guidance. TEST Trust shall comply with any decision of an appeals panel, or direction of a review panel.
5. The exception to the duties imposed under paragraphs 1 and 4 is: The Governing Body of TEST is not expected to seek the advice of a Local Authority officer when considering exclusion, although a Local Authority officer may attend any meeting to consider an exclusion (including an appeal hearing or review) at the request of a parent.