

Attendance Policy

Edmund Waller Primary School aims to provide each child with a high-quality learning experience, developing their potential and encouraging independence and confidence.

We aim to promote self-esteem, respect for ourselves and each other, co-operation and care for the community.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents/carers have a legal duty as well as a moral obligation to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.

Parents/carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason (such as sickness) they should contact the school as soon as possible and before 9am on the first morning of absence. This may be done by telephone, note, in person or by email.

When a child returns to school after a period of absence a note should be brought in by the parent/carers to explain the absence. If a child has a medical appointment a note may be sent to school on the day prior to the absence, but we would ask that parents/carers make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

Term Time Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. Currently, there is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Headteacher, in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the Board of Governors. Each request is judged on an individual basis and is viewed in lien with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy and the Human Rights Act.

It is our policy that:

- Only in exceptional circumstances will holidays be allowed, and then only up to a maximum of two weeks. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application).
- A pupil's overall attendance pattern will be taken into consideration when a holiday request is received.
- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for term-time holidays need to put a request in writing submitted to the Headteacher who will consider the request and advise of her decision. A reply will be sent to the parent within 48 hours. Any further time than allowed will be unauthorised and parents risk their child being taken off the school roll.
- When an employer will only allow specific term-time dates for holiday the parent will be asked for a letter from the employer stating this.
- If the school does not agree and your child is still taken for a holiday, the absence will be unauthorised and a form will be sent to the Attendance & Welfare Officer informing them of the absence.

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- It should be remembered that the more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom. Children may also suffer socially.

Leavers

If a child is leaving, other than at the end of Year 6, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans, including date of move, new address, or at least the town you will be moving to; name of new school and start date, when known, and reasons for moving.
- Confirm the school has a current mobile phone number.
- Take the school's compliment slip so the new school can easily make contact and records can be transferred.
- Provide the moving date

Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and the above information has not been provided, and no contact can be made then your child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Social Care, Attendance & Welfare, the Policy and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Going shopping – buying new shoes, awaiting a relative's arrival at the airport
- Your child's birthday or anybody else's birthday
- Unapproved holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence

The following circumstances will be considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty notices:

- Parentally-condoned absences

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- Excessive holiday in term time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Unauthorised holiday

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £60 if paid within 28 days, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 42 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

School Responsibilities

The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.

Registers will be taken twice daily at the start of each morning and afternoon session. Any child arriving after the register has been called will be recorded as late for that session and after 9.30am an unauthorised absence is recorded for the morning. If a child arrives after the register has closed but their parent/carer provides them with a note detailing an acceptable reason to the school, they are marked as authorised absence for that session.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants will complete registers in accordance with the guidance they have been given.

Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality, the Headteacher should be informed. The school will alert the Headteacher if any child's attendance falls below the school average, currently 96%. If your child's attendance falls below 90% then it will be monitored regularly. 90% or below is categorised as persistent absenteeism and the Attendance Welfare Officer will check this, looking for improvement when they visit.

The school will contact by telephone or text, any parent who has failed to inform the school of the reason for an absence on the first day of absence.

All absence notes from parents/carers should be dated and initialled by the class teacher and sent to the school office to be held on individual children's files. Notes concerning absences about which there are concerns/queries should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher (who may then choose to speak to the parents/Carers concerned).

Where children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will, if requested, send material home so that they can keep up with school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, such as necessary stays in hospital, the school will contact the Education Welfare Officer so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given tuition outside of school.

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The Headteacher will regularly review attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the School's Attendance Officer and Governing Body. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and attendance service.

The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance (examples below):

- Feature the attendance in weekly newsletter, making mention of the classes with 99%+ attendance.
- The Headteacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters
- Parent friendly leaflet about punctuality and attendance