

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The Eden School



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Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2024-2025

Purpose:

This policy outlines The Eden School's approach to ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality. It follows the Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE 2022) guidance and aims to ensure that attendance is monitored effectively, absences are recorded promptly, and students are encouraged and supported to attend regularly.

- **Date of last review:** July 2024
 - **Author:** Head of Pastoral and Inclusion
 - **Date of next review:** July 2025
 - **Owner:** Senior Leadership Team
 - **Approval:** Board of Governors
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1. Introduction

Every child of compulsory school age has a right to a full-time, efficient education, and regular school attendance is crucial in ensuring they benefit from the educational opportunities available. Irregular attendance can lead to underachievement and impede social development. **The Eden School** takes the responsibility to promote and monitor regular attendance seriously and views it as a shared responsibility between the school, students, and parents.

2. School Attendance Vision

At **The Eden School**, we recognise that high attendance is vital for academic success and the overall well-being of students. When a pupil's attendance falls below **95%**, we investigate the reasons and take action to address them. Our key goals include:

- Maintaining the **highest possible overall attendance** percentage, minimising unauthorised absences.
 - Creating a **positive learning environment** where students are motivated to attend regularly and punctually.
 - Ensuring all members of the school community understand the link between good attendance, safeguarding, and academic success.
 - Putting in place **systems for monitoring attendance** and providing support when issues arise.
 - Helping students develop lifelong habits of **good attendance** and punctuality.
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3. The Law

In accordance with **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**, children aged 5-16 must attend school regularly. **The Eden School** is required to keep two types of registers:

- **Admissions register:** The school roll.
- **Attendance register:** This must be taken twice a day—once at the start of the school day and once during the afternoon session. It should accurately reflect whether each pupil is present, absent, or engaged in an approved educational activity.

Absences must be marked as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**, with only the school able to authorise an absence based on the reason provided by parents/carers.

4. Expectations

4.1 Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school **every day**.
- Arrive on time and ready for the first session, which starts at **8:50am**.
- Catch up on any missed work due to absences.

4.2 Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Contact the school by **9:15** on each day of absence, explaining the reason, and provide a written note upon the child's return.
- Avoid booking holidays during term time.
- Keep the school informed of any issues affecting their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Keep the school updated with current contact details.

4.3 Staff are expected to:

Staff at **The Eden School** are expected to:

- **Promote and encourage good attendance** through positive reinforcement and support.
- **Accurately record attendance** using the school's system (e.g., SIMS) at the start of each session.
- **Contact parents** if a student is absent without explanation, following up on the first day of absence.
- **Address any attendance concerns** by communicating with parents/carers and working collaboratively to resolve issues.

- **Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** regarding any safeguarding concerns linked to poor attendance, including unexplained or frequent absences.
 - **Monitor attendance trends** in their class or year group and ensure timely intervention when concerns arise.
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4.4 Policy Alignment with Other Key School Policies

The **Attendance and Punctuality Policy** works in conjunction with several other key school policies to support a holistic approach to pupil welfare and achievement:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:**
Attendance monitoring is a key part of safeguarding. Persistent or unexplained absences may be indicators of underlying safeguarding issues (e.g., neglect, abuse), and such cases will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for further investigation and action.
 - **Behaviour Policy:**
Good attendance is linked to positive behaviour, and attendance concerns are addressed as part of the school's pastoral care and behaviour management strategies. Students with poor attendance will receive targeted support to help improve their engagement with school.
 - **SEND Policy:**
For students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), attendance is closely monitored. Any barriers to attendance are addressed in collaboration with parents and external agencies, ensuring that these students receive the necessary support to attend school regularly.
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5. Attendance Monitoring and Interventions

At **The Eden School**, improving attendance is a **whole-school initiative**. Attendance is tracked daily, weekly, and half-termly, with systems in place to recognise good attendance and address concerns.

5.1 Attendance Officer:

- Ensures registers are kept up to date.
- Contacts parents on the first day of absence, with priority given to vulnerable students.
- Communicates regularly with Heads of Year (HoYs) and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) about students causing concern.
- Monitors persistent lateness and unauthorised absences, issuing sanctions such as detentions if necessary.

5.2 Heads of Year (HoYs):

- Actively monitor the attendance and punctuality of their year group.
- Contact and meet with parents to discuss attendance concerns and encourage improvement.

- Praise good or improved attendance.

5.3 Positive Reinforcement:

To encourage high attendance, the school uses:

- Weekly announcements for classes with the highest attendance.
- Certificates and rewards for students with excellent attendance or significant improvement.
- End-of-term awards and recognition.

5.4 Working with External Agencies

At The Eden School, we recognise that some students face complex barriers to attendance that may require additional support beyond the school's resources. We work closely with local authorities, social services, health services, and other relevant external agencies to ensure that students and families receive the holistic support they need.

For students facing challenges with mental health, long-term medical conditions, or safeguarding concerns, we engage with Early Help services and social workers to develop personalised intervention plans.

Attendance issues that may indicate safeguarding concerns are referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who coordinates with social services and external agencies to address underlying issues.

The school ensures that attendance data is shared with external professionals, including social workers and local authority representatives, where appropriate, to support multi-agency efforts to improve attendance and well-being.

5.5 Support for Pupils with a Social Worker

Pupils with a social worker often face additional challenges that may impact their attendance. At **The Eden School**, we work closely with social workers to ensure that these pupils receive the necessary support both in school and at home.

- Attendance data for pupils with a social worker is regularly shared with social services, and any concerns regarding attendance are communicated promptly.
- The school prioritises early intervention and offers additional academic and pastoral support to ensure these students remain engaged and are able to attend regularly.
- Meetings between the school, the social worker, and the family are arranged as needed to address barriers to attendance and to develop a clear plan for improvement.

6. Absence Procedures

Parents/carers must notify the school by **9:15** on the day of an absence and provide a written explanation upon their child's return. Absences can be authorised or unauthorised based on the reasons provided:

6.1 Authorised Absences:

- Illness.
- Medical appointments (with documentation provided).
- Religious holidays.
- Family bereavements (in exceptional circumstances).

6.2 Unauthorised Absences:

- Holidays taken during term time without approval.
- Shopping trips or haircuts during school hours.
- Minor ailments without a medical explanation.

For frequent absences due to illness, medical evidence (e.g., a doctor's note) may be required to authorise the absence.

6.3 Support for Students with Medical Conditions

At **The Eden School**, we recognise that some students may have long-term or complex medical conditions that affect their attendance. We work closely with parents, healthcare providers, and external agencies to ensure these students receive the support they need to attend school regularly.

- **Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs):** For students with long-term medical conditions, an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) will be developed in collaboration with parents and healthcare professionals. The IHP will detail the student's specific needs, any medical support required during the school day, and adjustments to their timetable if necessary.
- **Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs):** For students with an EHCP, we ensure that attendance strategies align with the support detailed in the plan. This may include providing additional academic support or phased returns after long absences.
- **Phased Returns:** In cases where students have been absent for extended periods due to illness, we may arrange a phased return to help them reintegrate into school life and catch up on missed work.
- **Regular Reviews:** IHPs and any related attendance plans are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to meet the student's needs and are updated as necessary in collaboration with healthcare providers.

7. Lateness

The **Eden School** expects all students to arrive at school by **8:15am**. Students arriving after this time must sign in at reception and will be marked as late. Persistent lateness (six or more instances per half term) will result in interventions, such as detentions or parent meetings.

8. Pupils with Extenuating Family Circumstances

Parents/carers must apply for leave during term time through a **Term Time Absence Request Form** (Appendix 1). Leave will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Holidays during term time will not be authorised, and unauthorised absences may result in penalty notices being issued by the local authority.

9. The Attendance Service

If attendance concerns are not resolved through school interventions, the school may refer cases to the **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**. The EWO will work with families to improve attendance and may issue **penalty notices** for persistent unauthorised absences. The school works with the local authority to **fast-track attendance interventions**, ensuring early intervention and support.

10. Children Missing from Education (CME)

The **Eden School** is committed to safeguarding all students. Repeated or prolonged absences may indicate underlying safeguarding concerns, such as abuse or neglect. All staff are trained to identify signs of children missing from education and are required to report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The school will work with the **local authority's CME team** and, if necessary, the police to ensure the child's safety. A **Deletion Notice** will only be issued once the CME team confirms that all reasonable efforts to locate the child have been made.

11. Registers

Registers are legal documents that must be completed promptly and accurately at the start of each session. Teachers are expected to complete attendance registers within the first 5 minutes of every lesson.

12. Contact Information

Parents are required to provide up-to-date contact details, including three emergency contacts, to ensure the school can reach them in case of emergency or absence-related concerns.

13. School Targets

The **Eden School** aims to achieve an overall attendance rate of **97%**. Regular updates on school-wide attendance will be provided to parents, and students will be recognised for excellent or improving attendance. We understand that good attendance is key to **academic success** and work towards maintaining a supportive environment to achieve this.

Appendix 1: Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time

(For Exceptional Circumstances Only)

This form must be completed by the parent/carer requesting leave for their child during school term time. Please submit this form **at least two weeks** before the intended leave dates to allow time for processing.

Section 1: Student Details	
Student's Full Name(s):	_____
Date(s) of Birth:	_____
Form/Class:	_____

Section 2: Parent/Carer Details	
Parent/Carer Full Name(s):	
Address:	
Contact Number:	
Email Address:	

Section 3: Details	
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of Requested Leave	
Reason for Leave (exceptional circumstances):	
Dates of Absence Requested:	From: _____ To: _____
Number of school days requested:	
Address where family will be staying (if applicable):	

Section 4: Supporting Information	
Supporting documentation provided (tick if attached):	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Documentation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify): _____
Further details or notes:	

Section 5: Parent/Carer Declaration	
I confirm that the information provided is accurate and understand that unauthorised absence may result in a penalty notice.	
Signature of Parent/Carer: _____	
Date: _____	

School Decision (To be completed by the school)

Request Approved:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments (if applicable):	
Principal's Signature:	

Date:	
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Important Notes

- **Penalty Notice:** If the leave is unauthorised and taken, each parent may receive a penalty notice per child. The penalty notice is **£60** if paid within 21 days, rising to **£120** if paid within 28 days. Non-payment could result in legal proceedings and a fine of up to £1000.
- **Medical Emergencies/Death Abroad:** Documentation (e.g., death certificate) may be required for travel abroad for family emergencies.