EASTCROFT PARK

Attendance Policy 2021

Eastcroft Park Attendance Team
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Philosophy

At Eastcroft Park Primary School we are committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. On the basis of equal opportunities, we will take measures to encourage regular and punctual attendance at school. Attendance at school is essential if children are to fully participate in the learning opportunities offered.

Regular absence from school breaks the continuity of a child's learning and consequently his/her progress is significantly limited. Consistent attendance is an essential foundation in order to achieve potential. Similarly, persistent lateness is disruptive to the individual child, the teacher and the rest of the class leading to loss of valuable teaching time. If allowed to go unchecked this could set a pattern for future behaviour and encourage disaffection.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance and punctuality are critical factors to a productive and successful school career. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure that all pupils adhere to maximum possible attendance. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Aims
We aim to take action to reinforce good attendance and to address non-attendance in a consistent and transparent manner.
To achieve levels of attendance we must ensure that: -

- We create a warm, welcoming atmosphere in which children are valued and encouraged to attend regularly and arrive on time.
- Pupils' reports include information on the pupils' attendance showing any unauthorised absence.
- The curriculum is appropriate to the needs and interests of all pupils.
- The pupils are motivated to attend regularly through positive encouragement and rewards. **(See Eastcroft Park Five Day Attendance Challenge Appendix 2)**
- The pupils are encouraged to arrive punctually.
- Structure and practice are established to support a whole school approach to raising attendance levels and dealing with non-attendance.

The school cannot work in isolation. The partnership of school, parents and the Local Authority is fundamental, with all involved accepting responsibility and working together to improve attendance for the benefit of the pupils and the community. **(See The 5 Partners Attendance Charter Appendix 1)**
Prompt action on non-attendance and accurate and consistent registration are important areas of child protection.

Expectations
We appreciate the vital importance of regular attendance at school.

We expect the following from all pupils:
That they will attend school regularly.
That they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.

That they will inform a member of staff of any problem that may hinder them from attending school.
Attendance is a crucial factor to a productive school career and so we will promote 100% attendance for each pupil.

We expect the following from parents:
To encourage their children to attend school.
To ensure that they contact the school as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend.
To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
To ensure that school have their up-to-date contact details (contact number and address).
Encourage pupils to arrive at school punctually and take appropriate action when this is not achieved.
Inform the school in advance, when a pupil has a medical/dental appointment but try to arrange it out of school hours. This will be deemed as 'authorised' absence.
Contact the school without delay if there is a particular problem, either in or out of school, which is or may affect regular attendance.
If their child is not able to attend school, they contact us on the first day to explain reason for absence.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:
Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
Initiatives to encourage good attendance on a weekly and termly basis. (See appendix 2)
The provision of a quality education through a relevant and stimulating age-appropriate curriculum.
Weekly register checks will note any patterns of lateness or absences and the school will contact parents by telephone or letter to engage their support in rectifying the problem.
Offer targeted help, from the Learning Mentor to children/families as and when appropriate.

Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating. Early help plans should have focused outcomes for children and families and should be actively planned with them. Plans should deliver evidence-based interventions, and clear thresholds for specific agency intervention e.g., social care, housing, mental health services. We see how early help can transform a child in school, not just what they are able to achieve academically, but how their personal, social and emotional development can thrive with the right support. We are committed to early help because it is the right thing to do for our children to give them the best start in life.

Punctuality
All children are to be in line for 8.40am ready to start the school day. Morning registration is at 8.50am. If your child arrives later than this, they will be classed as late and put on the late list. If your child arrives later than this, they will need to arrive through the main office and may be classed as late after registration closes. It is the parents/carers' responsibility to ensure that, if their child arrives late to school, they MUST come to the office and be accompanied by a responsible adult and marked into the late register providing a reason for lateness. It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day. Persistent lateness has a detrimental effect on your child's education.

Due to the measures put in place to reduce the transmission of the Covid-19 virus, start and end times for the school day have changed. The school gates are opened at 8.40 am and children go directly to their class. Gates are closed at 8.50 am.

Authorised and Unauthorised Attendance

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 shopping or for a haircut, going for a family day out, because it is your child's birthday, sleeping in after a late night, shopping for new school clothes or where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
Some absences may be "authorised absences" e.g., if a child is very ill, family bereavement, religious observance. These are authorised on an individual basis. Absences due to illness may require medical evidence.
We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Attendance Matters
Over a year if your child has:
Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance (Very Good)
14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance (Cause for concern)
20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance (Very poor, serious concern)
30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance (Major Concern)
If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.
If a child has below 90% attendance they are classed as a Persistent Absentee. On those occasions when a pattern of poor attendance or lateness is developing the Headteacher/Senior Leader will work directly with the family to seek solutions and the school attendance service will be informed.

Good attendance is important because:
Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and irregular attendance.
Regular attenders make good progress academically.
Regular attenders maintain good friendship groups.
Regular attenders have a positive attitude to learning and school.
Regular attenders have a positive transfer to secondary school.
Regular attenders are more likely to be successful later in life

Data Analysis
The school collects and stores attendance data using the management information systems (SIMs). The school provides attendance data to the DFE, using SIMs to send data about the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.
The school uses the attendance data to identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils. Where attendance is a concern, the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender. The school uses attendance data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and to take action to address and improve those areas. The school will use data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support.

Leave of Absence
From September 2013 Head teachers can no longer grant any leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
Parent/carers should refrain from booking family holidays during term time.
Dual Register
Some children may attend another school for additional specialist support. These children are on roll at our school but are placed on the registers of the specialist provision for accountability and health and safety reasons. We contact the specialist provision each day to check and monitor the child's attendance.

Educational Penalty Notice Warning and Fine

Parents/carers are committing an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly. In some circumstances parents/carers, as a last resort, may be prosecuted under section 444 of The Education Act 1996. An educational penalty notice is an early intervention strategy, which does not require an appearance in court whilst still securing an improvement in a child's attendance. Non-payment of a penalty notice will trigger, where appropriate, the fast-track prosecution process under the provision of section 444, of the 1996 Education Act. Educational Penalty notices are fixed at £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. All fines are collected and retained by the Local Authority.

Reasons for Educational Penalty Notices

- Clear and open truancy
- Parents and carers actively allowing absence
- If a child has 14 recorded sessions (7 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. (However, if a parent chooses to provide medical evidence this notice will be withdrawn.)
- Persistent late arrival in school (late after register closed) The Department for Education guidance in respect of registration period is 30 minutes, if for example the close of register will be 9.30a.m. A pupil arriving after this time may be marked as U (late after register closes) which is an unauthorised absence.
- Being found in a public place during an exclusion.
- Intervention strategies have failed to bring about an improvement in attendance

For more information please Knowsley Council Website
http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/revised-penalty-notice-code-of-conduct-absence-exclusion-150414.pdf

Responsibilities

For this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority, and convey to the pupils by their behaviour, the importance of the education being provided. This means ensuring that all staff arrive to lessons on time and are well prepared.

Parents or Carers should inform the school as soon as possible of the reason for a child's absence and provide any further information that may be required.

This may take the form of:

- ParentApp
- note sent into school
- phone call
- email
- leave of absence request
- personal contact
- Parents may need to provide medical evidence for longer absences of 5 days or

School Actions

We will encourage good attendance in school by:

- Accurately completing registers at the beginning of each session (morning and afternoon).
- Giving out an award in assembly each week for the class with the best attendance.
- Publishing the best attendance and punctuality in each year group in the school's newsletter and website.
- Performing regular attendance checks.

- Raising awareness of good attendance with leaflets home to parents/guardians. The leaflets are a visual reminder of the impact of poor attendance on a child's achievement.
- Giving out rewards to children with improved attendance in a half term.
- Giving out rewards (certificates, medals, trophies etc) for 100% attendance on a
- termly/annual basis.
- Giving pupils the chance to work with the Learning Mentor to improve attendance.
- Giving children attendance charts to focus their awareness (collect stickers for being in school and on time).
- Working in partnership with the LA through initiatives to promote attendance.
- Meeting and working with parents whose children's attendance causes concerns.

Absence Procedures
First Response
Where no contact is made to the school office, the Attendance Team will telephone the parent/guardian daily to obtain reasons for absence. Such calls are always logged, and the class teacher informed. They will inform the School Attendance Service of absences if at stage 3 or 4. We will undertake home visits to any child's home address if no contact is made to explain reasons for absence or if the child's irregular attendance is a cause for concern.

Letters
If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality, we will inform you by letter.

Attendance Panel Meetings
If your child's attendance drops to below 90% at any time you may be invited into school to meet with the Learning Mentor, member of Senior Leadership Team, school nurse and School Attendance Service.

School Refusal
Reluctant attenders/school refusal
You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse. School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that usually has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine school phobia.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?
Contact the Learning Mentor or Headteacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?
Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

*Throughout this policy the term **parent** is used to refer to an individual who falls within the definition of section 576 of the Education Act 1996. This includes all biological parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children's Act 1989); and*

any person who although not a biological parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and looks after, irrespective of what that relationship is with that child.

Anti-Bullying Policies and Procedures

Eastcroft Park Primary School has a clear zero tolerance with respect to bullying or similar behaviour. Attendance is closely related to behaviour, and both should be tackled using the staged approach to intervention. In particular, bullying and other forms of disruptive behaviour can lead to poor attendance from some pupils. Effective approaches to promoting and maintaining good rates of attendance, therefore, also include good behaviour management based on clear boundaries and a balance of sanctions and rewards.

https://www.eastcroftpark.co.uk/policies-documents/

Statement of Commitment from the Board of Governors

This Attendance Policy is approved and endorsed by the Board of Governors. All staff, pupils and their parents will be made aware of the policy. Every Board of governors meeting will include the topic of attendance. The Board of Governors takes an active interest in this area of the school's life. The head teacher oversees this area of the school's life and reviews details on a weekly basis and takes proactive action weekly. The Head teacher and Board of Governors are committed to ensuring that monitoring is carried out with respect to attendance and achievement. This information will be used as necessary to inform and change policies, procedures and practice to support each individual child.

Formulation of Documentation

This policy has been formulated and agreed following a whole school review of our attendance and punctuality procedures. It aims to provide teachers, parents/carers and governors with a clear outline of our systems. The policy has also been produced in light of the Knowsley School Attendance Strategy https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/knowsleycouncil/media/Documents/KNOWSLEY-ATTENDANCE-STRATEGY-2021-2024.pdf

Appendix 1

The Eastcroft Park 5 Partners Attendance Charter

School

The Attendance team will:

Check that children are coming to school every day and on time.
Celebrate attendance with children daily, weekly, half termly, termly and annually
Contact parents of absent children daily and offer advice on whether the absence is necessary or unauthorised.
Give support to those families who struggle to get their children into school
Provide medicine in accordance with the completed medicines form if a child needs it during the school day
At the request of parents keep an eye on a child if they are a little under the weather and inform the parents of any change
Always contact parents if a child becomes unwell during the school day
Not authorise holidays taken during term time.
Arrange for the Headteacher / governors to meet with parents of children whose attendance is causing concern.
Work with the attendance service to identify children whose attendance is causing concern and arrange meetings and home visits
Issue penalty warning notices to help to prevent fines
Issue Penalty Notices when a child has missed at least seven school days within a period of ten weeks due to unauthorised absences.
Prosecute parents if this is necessary and in accordance with Knowsley guidelines.

Teaching staff will:

Begin every day as a fresh start for every child
Celebrate attendance with children daily, weekly, half termly, termly and annually
Make learning exciting and enjoyable so children want to be in school
Keep families informed of the exciting educational activities taking place each week
Ensure any issues that might impact on a child's wish to come to school are dealt with before the end of the school day wherever possible.

Parents and carers will:

Ensure my child comes to school every day and on time.
Attend attendance celebration assemblies
Ensure my child understands the importance of coming to school every day and on time, and take an interest in what my child is doing in school on a daily basis
Contact the school office on the first morning of absence giving detailed reasons for absence
Refer to the help sheet when their child is unwell to gauge whether they are fit for school
Administer appropriate medication before sending their child to school if the child has a minor illness
Provide any prescribed medication if their child needs medicine during the school day and complete a medicines form
Inform the school to request that they keep an eye on their child if they are a little under the weather
Notify the school of any issues that could impact on their child's attendance so the school can resolve them quickly
Not take holidays during term time

Children will:

Come to school every day and on time
Switch off all screens eg.tv, smartphone, tablet and gaming station two hours before bed
Review their attendance on a regular basis using the school attendance review sheet and set their own attendance and punctuality targets
Tell an adult in school if anything is worrying them so that it can be sorted out quickly

Governors will:

Check the information about children coming to school every day and on time.
Celebrate attendance with children termly and annually
Not authorise holidays taken during term time
Meet with parents of children whose attendance is causing concern
Prosecute parents if this is necessary and in accordance with Knowsley guidelines
Monitor the curriculum to ensure learning is exciting and enjoyable so that children want to be in school.

Attendance service will:

Work with the school to monitor the attendance of all children to ensure they are coming to school every day and on time.
Work with the school to identify children whose attendance is causing concern and arrange meetings and home visits.
Prosecute parents if this is necessary and in accordance with Knowsley guidelines

Appendix 2

The Eastcroft Park Five Day Attendance Challenge

Let's celebrate every day, every week, every half-term, every term and every year!

How do we celebrate?	
Every Day	Jenny and Amanda will visit each of the classes with 100% attendance for the day and sound the horn to celebrate. Each class with 100% attendance for the day will fly the special attendance flag outside the classroom door.
Every Week	**High five for the five-day challenge!** Children with 100% attendance for the week are celebrated in class with a high five and achieve a 5-day sticker for the attendance chart. Classes with 100% attendance for the week are celebrated in the newsletter and given a special Fairtrade treat. The classes with the best attendance for the week in each Key Stage will be presented with the attendance cup during Praise Assembly and also celebrated in the newsletter. The Attendance derby will be updated each week and children will be able to see how well their class is doing.
Every Half Term	**Five days a week challenge for the half term** Children with 100% attendance for the half term receive a postcard to take home, a special prize and a certificate. All children who have completed the challenge will be celebrated during assembly and in the newsletter. *Children who do not complete the half term challenge but are maintaining good attendance of 96%+ will receive a postcard to take home and a prize*
Every Term	**Five days a week challenge for the term** Children with 100% attendance for the term receive a bronze certificate and a special prize in assembly. Parents and governors are invited to the assembly to congratulate all the 100% attenders. Children are also celebrated in the newsletter and on the termly roll of honour board. For two terms of 100% attendance children receive a silver certificate and a prize. *Children who do not complete the term challenge but are maintaining good attendance of 96%+ will receive a postcard to take home and a prize*
Every Year	**Five days a week challenge for the year** Children with 100% attendance for the year receive a gold certificate, a badge and a special prize in assembly. Parents and governors are also invited to attend. *All Children who have achieved attendance of 96% or above will receive a good attendance certificate and a prize.*

