

Epsom Primary and Nursery School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of issue: Autumn 2021 Owner: Head teacher

Date of review: Summer 2023 Governor Committee: SLT

Signed..... Date.....

For distribution to all school staff, governors, parents and pupils.

1. Introduction The Governors and staff of Epsom Primary and Nursery School are committed to developing a sound partnership with the Local Authority, parents, governors and others, to build a school which serves the community commendably and of which the community is proud.

The school staff, alongside the LA, strongly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 18) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a Penalty Notice.

In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. Schools are therefore required to report all absence figures to the Local Authority and the DfE and to ensure that they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

2. Expectations

2.1 We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school everyday
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss with their class teacher any problems preventing them from attending school.

2.2 We expect that all parents/carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, for registration at 8.55am, prepared for the school day and that they have completed their homework
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school
- contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.00am, explaining why your child is off. We do require you to call in on a daily basis to update us of your child's condition, unless otherwise agreed with the school office.
- You may be required to provide medical evidence for your child's absence, such as a doctors appointment card, prescription or empty medicine container
- contact the school whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child from school.

2.3 We would expect that the Head Teacher and/or Governors will :-

- adopt the whole policy
- initiate contact with parents in cases of unexplained absences and lateness before referring to Inclusion Service (unless there is justifiable cause for concern when contact is required speedily, in which case immediate referral to the Inclusion service may be necessary)
- ensure that the Attendance Lead has time for liaison and follow up work with the Inclusion Service
- consult and liaise closely with the Inclusion Service on a regular basis and take responsibility to ensure appropriate referrals are identified and investigated without delay
- to work in close collaboration with the Inclusion Service during their termly/half termly register analysis
- organise attendance assemblies, awards etc
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the Inclusion Service

2.4 We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily
- monitor all pupil's attendance and publish attendance statistics
- contact parents via the school calling system as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- encourage and reward good attendance
- make initial enquires to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly

2.5 We expect that all class teachers will:

- complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily

- follow up any unexplained non-attendance with Attendance Lead
- follow up any unexplained lateness with Attendance Lead
- inform the Attendance Lead of concerns
- be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Attendance Lead
- ensure children receive rewards as appropriate.

3. Lateness

If pupils arrive at school after 8.55am a late mark will be recorded (Marked “L” in the register). If a child arrives after 9.15am without a valid explanation it will be recorded as ‘late after close of register’ and counted as an unauthorised absence for that session (Marked as a “U” in the register). The pupil’s name will be signed in by an adult.

4. Grant for Leave of Absence

With regard to our views on regular school attendance, we strongly advise parent/carers to book their family holidays during the school holiday dates which are published a year in advance. If any leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Local Authority will be notified. If a family feels leave in term time is unavoidable, an application form for Application for Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances (which can be obtained from the school office) must be completed at least two weeks prior to the leave date.

The Head teacher will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence.

5. Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform the Head teacher in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving
- The name and address of the new school

The pupil’s school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service as missing in education.

6. Encouraging Attendance

Epsom Primary and Nursery School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
- Accurate and punctual completion of the registers during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive to registration after the close of register, without an explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name signed in by an adult in case of a fire drill.
- Rewards and incentives are offered to celebrate good and improved attendance.
- The Attendance Lead will monitor pupils' attendance and inform parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arrange meetings with them if necessary where the school's attendance agreement will be signed and attendance targets set.
- If irregular/poor attendance continues, the pupil may be referred to the Inclusion service.

7. Responding To Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence if no notification or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.00am the school will endeavour to contact them promptly using the school communication system.
- On the second day of absence, if no contact has been made on the first day, school will endeavour to contact all contacts held by the school for that child and may do a home visit.
- On the third day, if there has still been no contact the Senior Leadership Team will decide a course of action depending on the circumstances. It may involve contacting external agencies, children's services. Or the police.
- If a child's attendance is continuously below the schools acceptable levels it will be monitored and medical evidence, if appropriate, may be required.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Services may result in further action, i.e. court prosecution.

8. Penalty Notices

8.1 General

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

8.2 Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

8.2.1 Truancy Patrols

Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

8.2.2 Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more (which do not have to be consecutive) and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

8.2.3 Poor Attendance

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where there are 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

8.2.4 Examinations

Absences during End of Year Assessments, mock and other external examinations will not be authorised. Parents who persist in taking their child out of school during a period covered by these examinations for five days or more, without the authority of the head teacher, will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice.

8.3 Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice.

Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

8.4 Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.