



Edgar Stammers Primary

Attendance Guidance

1. Aims

Our academy aims to ensure that:

- All pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential.
- It provides a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
- Good attendance and punctuality are well embedded as part of our high expectations of all pupils and as part of the ethos of the academy.
- All staff work closely with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.
- There is an effective system of incentives in place which acknowledges the efforts of pupils and their families to improve their attendance and time keeping.
- Poor attendance and punctuality is robustly tracked and challenged, taking an 'every absence, every time' approach.
- Communication with parents and appropriate external agencies is effective and efficient and impacts positively on attendance and punctuality.

2. The Law Relating to Attendance

- [The Education Act 1996 – section 7:](#) 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-(a) To age, ability and aptitude and(b) To any special educational needs he/ she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

3. Why Regular Attendance is so Important

Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

The Law:

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parents/carers legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding:

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Failing to attend this school regularly will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Health and safety
- Access to the curriculum
- Anti-bullying

4. School Procedures

4.1 Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and immediately after lunch. The register is completed electronically, using Bromcom MIS. It marks whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent and the appropriate code used.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day (doors open from 8.45am).

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.45pm (EYFS, KS1), 1.15pm (Y3 and Y4) and 1.30pm (Y5 and Y6), it will be kept open for 10 minutes.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible.

Parents should call the school office to notify them of the absence along with the reason. They should continue to contact the school on each further day of absence. In the event of school not being called, the office will call the contacts on the child's file to establish a reason for the absence. If there is still no contact, the school may carry out a home visit or contact the Education Welfare Service Officer, who may conduct a home visit. Where welfare concerns are ongoing or severe, Children's Services may also be contacted.

Reporting an absence does not guarantee authorisation. Authorisation will be considered in relation to the reason and any provided evidence. Medical appointment cards and hospital letters WILL be required for all appointments, in order that an authorisation can be made.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

4.3 Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence and advance notice is usually required for authorising these absences. Parents should show evidence of the appointment to the office to ensure that the absence is authorised.

However, we strongly encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and where possible be in school before or after their appointment.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (9.15am) will be marked as late (L), using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (9.15am) will be marked as absent (U), using the appropriate code.

At Edgar Stammers Primary Academy, we actively encourage punctuality as we believe that children have a far more positive start to their day if they are in class with their peers, ready for registration.

4.5 Following Up Absence / Lateness

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason daily, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. All parents who bring children to school late are challenged and a reason for the lateness is recorded.

4.6 Reporting to Parents

Parents receive a copy of their child's attendance at the end of the academic year in their school report, as well as at Parent's Evenings. However if there are concerns regarding a child's absence and / or punctuality, conversations, texts and letters will happen as regularly as required.

Parents are strongly encouraged to track their child's attendance using the MCAS app, so that they can spot any decline or persistent absence quickly and address it. Support is readily available in the school office with this for those parents who require it.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion and only for exceptional circumstances.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 4.2 and 4.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

If parents consider that a request for leave of absence during term time is for 'exceptional circumstances' then a written request should be made to the Head Teacher. Please note, a family holiday is not an 'exceptional circumstance'. This should be done by:

1. Requesting a 'Leave of Absence' form from the office;
2. Completing the form fully, clearly explaining why the request is considered exceptional;
3. The completed form should be handed to the office no later than 2 weeks before the date that the leave of absence is requested;

4. The request will be processed in school within 5 working days and parents will be notified in writing of the decision.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

Parents can receive a fixed penalty notice for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. This will be per parent.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

- Incentives for high attendance / improving attendance trends.
- Attendance certificates and prizes presented annually to all pupils with 100% attendance over the academic year.
- Weekly certificate for the class with the highest level of attendance, with a reward of 10 minutes extra play for the winning class.
- Half termly class attendance winners are rewarded with a treat afternoon.
- Assembly stories which emphasise the importance of good attendance and what constitutes an authorised absence so that pupils understand what is expected.
- Following up on all absences that have not been explained in writing by parents and carers, including undertaking first day contact telephone calls where there are concerns about attendance.
- Undertaking school based meetings with parents and carers where attendance is identified as a concern.
- Information in newsletters about our attendance policy.
- Our Attendance Officer attends Nursery and Reception class induction meetings to share information about attendance with parents and carers before they start school, so that expectations for attendance and what constitutes an authorised absence are clear.

7. Strategies for Tackling Absence and Lateness

- First day calling by office staff.
- Afternoon phone calls by class teachers to inform parents about the learning missed that day and the learning taking place the next day.
- In exceptional circumstances, the use of the school minibus to collect children.
- Early Help
- Referrals to School Nurse
- Communication with external agencies such as social workers, family support workers, etc.
- Phonecalls by attendance officer
- Parent meetings to discuss barriers, support, etc.

8. Attendance and Punctuality Monitoring

The school monitors absence, persistent absence and lateness on a daily, weekly and half termly basis.

Absence and punctuality are discussed as part of weekly DSL meetings within school and with the Walsall EWO. Further actions are decided in these meetings.

Reports are produced regularly and shared with GLP ELT and GLAC. The EHT uses the school attendance report to feed into a report for GLP Trustees.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 Parents

All children of Statutory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary statutory responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

To discharge their agreed responsibilities parents should always:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- Make sure their child understands that they, as parents, do not approve of absence from school;
- Encourage good attendance, making sure that their child goes to school regularly and arrives on time;
- Take an interest in their child's school work;
- Notify the academy on the first day of absence if their child cannot attend for any reason –this is for the child's safety as well as for administrative reasons. This should be done by informing the school on the first day of absence that the child is going to be away, clearly stating the reason why and if possible, an expected return to school date;
- Co-operate with the academy staff and the Education Legal Intervention Team to make sure their child overcomes his or her attendance problems and receives the education to which he/she is entitled.
- Work with school staff respectfully, resolving any problems together.

7.2 Pupils

Pupils are actively encouraged to attend school regularly and to arrive punctually at school and at the start of lessons after break. The school gates are open from 8:35am, school starts at 8:45am (9am for Nursery) and the register is closed at 9:15am.

Pupils are encouraged to talk to a staff member if there is a problem that may lead to their absence or lateness.

7.3 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Class teachers should promote high attendance and punctuality at all times by appropriately challenging absence and lateness and ensuring that pupils who have been absent / late are welcomed into their classrooms.

Class teachers should take into account when children have missed learning due to absence / lateness and should endeavour to ensure that gaps are effectively and quickly closed.

7.4 Attendance Lead (Mrs L McGee), supported by Family Support Worker (Sarah Williams)

- Initial point of contact for all parents with queries or concerns about attendance.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality data at the school and individual pupil level.

- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher.
- Work with Education Welfare Service Officers and Legal Intervention Team to tackle persistent absence and punctuality.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues (attendance below 92%).
- Advise the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Attend DSL meetings to highlight attendance and safeguarding links and trends.
- Meet regularly with SENDCO to ensure a coordinated plan / response around the absence of SEND pupils.
- Organise attendance incentives and rewards.
- Conduct home visits as appropriate.

7.5 The Headteacher (Miss C Nock)

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school and that it is well understood and available to all staff and parents. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the GLAC, ELT and Trust Board.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils and will work the Education Welfare Service where necessary.

7.6 GLAC

The GLAC is responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. An attendance report is shared at all GLAC meetings, breaking down data into key groups for detailed scrutiny.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Office staff should maintain registers on Bromcom, amending absence codes as required, e.g. when medical evidence is provided at a later date. Office staff should signpost parents to the Attendance Lead / Family Support Worker as appropriate to discuss issues around absence / punctuality.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This guidance will be reviewed annually by the Attendance Lead.

9. Links with other Policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day