



Esland North Limited

ED0011D - Attendance (Student)



Introduction

When students join our school, they have often experienced a significant period out of school, or significant difficulties within school, that have led to greatly reduced attendance. This is due to their complex needs, which may impact on their ability to manage the emotional, social and environmental aspects of school life. Several students have co-morbid conditions which may also lead to reduced attendance.

In cases such as this, agreement may be made with the local authority and the parents for part time attendance for fixed periods, with the aim to increase their time in education as soon as possible. Our expectation is that all students achieve their full potential, and we aim for all of them to achieve 95% attendance given time and a carefully planned transition.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools

Principles and Aims

To maintain and improve current attendance levels through a consistent approach to registration and the monitoring of attendance.

To ensure the completion and maintenance of attendance registers. We work in partnership with parents, carers and support agencies to encourage and support all children to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality. Where attendance levels fall, we will work with the local authority and social workers to make full use of statutory duties available,

to encourage and ensure excellent levels of attendance. On the rare occasions when these efforts fail to improve attendance, the school will actively seek, in liaison with the Education Welfare Service (EWS), the use of legal remedies.

Actions

- Celebrate success.
- Monitor attendance rates and offer support to families where issues are arising.
- Keep and maintain accurate records.
- Liaise with stakeholders to improve attendance and outcomes, including the Education Welfare Officer.

Benefits of good attendance

There are numerous benefits to a young person's attainment, social and personal development and their mental health and wellbeing from regularly attending school. These benefits can be taken for granted and easily overlooked. At Esland Bedford School we feel it is important to communicate the positives of regular attendance. The following is a non-exhaustive list of the benefits for students who regularly attend into the following areas:

- Learning and attainment
- Access support to meet learning and other needs from trained teachers and tutors Increase self-esteem through positive recognition of effort and achievement
- Enhance literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
- Increase opportunities for college, university, employment or chosen future
- Achieved recognised qualifications Develop forms of intelligences (e.g. emotional, interpersonal, logical-mathematical, verbal-linguistic)
- Develop confidence through learning with a supportive network of teachers, tutors and wellbeing professionals Increase organisational ability
- Access greater number of qualifications through regular attendance
- Experience the transformative potential of education
- Social and personal development
- Experience a sense of belonging and community outside of the family
- Build and experience friendships Develop resilience Develop teamwork and understanding of others' needs and beliefs
- Develop social communication and interaction skills.
- Experience positive routine and structure
- Experience a sense of achievement
- Engage with kind and nurturing adults who can be positive role models Develop positive routines
- Develop practical skills, such as cooking, gardening and employability skills
- Experience new cultures, beliefs and people to broaden horizons and break down prejudice and stereotypes Develop identity, purpose and independence

Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities

The headteacher

- Implementing this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students.
- Monitoring the impact of any attendance strategies put in place.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Working with the parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly missed and where students with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a student with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance related to the student's needs.

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents, through all available channels.

The designated senior leader ("senior attendance champion")

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with students, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families.

School staff

The teacher in charge of a class must accurately take a register of attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions within 30 minutes of the session start time. Attendance is recorded on Bromcom.

The school admin manager will take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system. They will transfer calls to the teacher or attendance champion where appropriate, to provide more detailed support on attendance.

If there is no school admin manager or headteacher available, another member of school staff will do this and refer to this policy for process.

Parents/carers

A parent or carer's legal responsibility is to ensure that their child attends school. This includes being punctual. When a child is absent, it is the parents' responsibility to inform the school at the earliest possible opportunity, and to:

- Make sure their child attends every timetabled session in a punctual manner.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 09:15 on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Keep to any attendance contracts made with the school and/or local authority.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the assistant headteacher (SEND/inclusion).

The governing body

The governing body, together with the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Education Director and headteacher, share responsibility for overseeing and monitoring the school's attendance. The governing body acts as a 'critical friend' and sets targets and reviews the impact of attendance policies and approaches. The governing body should:

- Set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students and parents.
- Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including recording attendance accurately and sharing required information with the DfE and local authority, and working effectively with local partners to remove barriers to attendance.
- Recognise and promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Make sure attendance management processes are delivered effectively, with consistent support for students who need it most.
- Make sure the school has high aspirations for all students, but adapts support to individual needs.
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data, helping school leaders focus improvement efforts where they are needed most.
- Work with school leaders to set goals for attendance and provide support and challenge.

- Monitor whole-school attendance figures and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement efforts.
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, work with leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan.
- Make sure all staff receive adequate attendance training as part of continued professional development, covering the importance of good attendance, the legal requirements for keeping registers, and the school's strategies for tracking and improving attendance.
- Make sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function, including interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Standards and Monitoring

The school administrator will initially monitor attendance. Children's attendance is classified as follows:

- 97% to 100%: excellent attendance
- 95% to 97%: good attendance
- 92% to 94%: requires improvement (potential impact on learning)
- Below 90%: attendance below this level may trigger action by the school

The headteacher and attendance champion will check the attendance of all children on a half-termly basis. A summary of every child's attendance is sent home at the end of each half term.

Parents/carers will be informed by letter if their child's attendance falls below 90%. This communication will be supportive and will consider individual circumstances. Persistent attendance below 90% is a concern and will be investigated.

If a child's attendance indicates they are persistently absent, a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting will be held, and their attendance will be discussed with the local authority Education Welfare Officer.

Early identification of emotionally-based school avoidance

Due to the needs of many of our students, they will have already been identified as emotionally-based school avoiders (EBSA) or are vulnerable to this.

If a student has been previously identified as an emotionally-based school avoider, additional support will be provided to the student and their family, ensuring that student voice is at the centre of these discussions, in order to identify the individual barriers to attending for that young person.

These students, having been identified, will be reviewed during the safeguarding team's weekly attendance review.

For those students who have not been previously identified as emotionally-based school avoiders the same support will still be available.

These students will be identified as emotionally based school avoiders and receive the same support as those identified from admission.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.
- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families.
- Provide regular attendance reports to tutors, to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the governing board and school leaders. Attendance will always be discussed at Student Progress Meetings.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate.

Record Keeping

Registers and all related correspondence will be kept for six years. Correspondence regarding concerns about a child's attendance will be kept in the child's individual file and transferred to the next school at the point of transfer.

Absence Reporting

The school operates a 30-minute registration window. Morning registration starts at 9am, although due to individual transition plans some start times will differ. Afternoon session registration begins at 12.30pm and, as with the morning session, has a 30-minute window. Student timetables will differ due to the personalised nature of our learning programmes.

The attendance register

We keep an electronic attendance register and place all students on it. We take the register at the start of the first session of each school day, and once during the second session, marking whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (see Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes). Any amendment to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date the amendment was made, and the name and position of the person who made it.

We will also record whether the absence is authorised, the nature of the activity where a student is attending an approved educational activity, and the nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. We keep every register entry for six years after the date it was made.

The school day runs from 09:00 to 15:30. Students must be engaged in their first lesson within 30 minutes of its start time. The register for both morning and afternoon sessions is taken immediately at the start of the scheduled lesson and kept open for 30 minutes.

Unplanned absence

The student's parent must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day, by 09:15 or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school admin manager on 01260 294909.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Where an absence is longer than three days, or there are doubts about authenticity, the school will ask for medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate evidence, and will not ask for this unnecessarily. 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 in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment counts as authorised, provided the parent notifies the school in advance and provides evidence such as an appointment card to the school admin manager. We encourage parents to make appointments outside school hours where possible, and where this is not possible, for the student to be out of school for the minimum time necessary.

The student's parent must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible. See the section on approval for term-time absence below for which absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late is marked as late (using the appropriate code) if this is before the register closes, or as absent if it is after the register closes. Where there are ongoing concerns about punctuality, a TAC meeting will be instigated by the assistant headteacher to look at what support can be put in place for the child and family to encourage them to attend on time.

Following up unexplained absence

Where a student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any emergency contact, it may contact relevant agencies such as the police or children's social

care.

- Identify whether the absence is approved.
- Identify the correct attendance code and input it as soon as the reason is ascertained, no later than five working days after the session(s) missed.
- Call the parent on each day the absence continues without explanation, to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the student's youth offending team officer.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the student needs support from wider partners as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via email, telephone and the student's termly report.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. A leave of absence will only be granted during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad.
- Attending an interview.
- Study leave.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances.

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time authorised. A leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours, and, as leave is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely to be granted for a family holiday.

The school considers each application individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background. Requests should be submitted as soon as anticipated, in accordance with the leave of absence request form, available from the school admin manager. The headteacher may require evidence to support a request.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include, but are not limited to:

- Illness (including mental health illness) and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance, where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong. The school will seek advice from the parent's religious body where necessary, to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent(s) 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 travelling family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision elsewhere.
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made.

Other reasons a student may be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include but are not limited to:

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity, visit or trip arranged by the school.
- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration).
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority.
- Attending work experience.

- Any other unavoidable cause, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or the school premises being closed.

Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions, including but not limited to those below, to tackle poor attendance. Decisions are made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), the local authority or the police can fine parents for a child's unauthorised absence from school, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority beforehand and send it a copy of any notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-school-week period).
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student.
- Whether further support, a notice to improve, or another legal intervention would be more appropriate.
- Whether any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a suspension or exclusion where the school has notified parents the student must not be present in a public place on that day.

Each parent liable for the offence can be issued a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent(s) who allowed the absence. Payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

- First penalty notice: £80 within 21 days, rising to £160 within 28 days.
- Second penalty notice for the same parent and student: £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the first. Where the national threshold is met a third time within those three years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met, support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may issue a notice to improve, giving parents a final chance to engage. Notices to improve are issued in line with the local code of conduct for the relevant local authority area, and will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance does not improve within the improvement period, with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, decided case-by-case.
- A clear improvement period timeframe of three to six weeks.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

Term-time leave requests, including holidays

Parents/carers have no entitlement to take their child out of school during term time. Any request for term-time leave, up to a maximum of 10 school days in an academic year, must satisfy the following conditions before it will be considered by the headteacher:

- Exceptional circumstances apply, for example forces personnel, significant year-round seasonal employment restrictions (a letter from the employer must be provided), or unforeseen family circumstances. Financial reasons

are not an exceptional circumstance.

- The request is made in advance of the proposed dates, at the earliest possible opportunity and at least four weeks' notice.
- A definite return date is provided. Any child not returned to school on the expected date will be considered a 'child missing from education' and referred to the Education Attendance Service/Welfare Service as a safeguarding concern. This may trigger a home visit and police involvement.

Child Missing Education

Schools have a key role in ensuring children do not become a 'child missing education' (CME). Schools are responsible for maintaining attendance registers and monitoring student attendance in accordance with the Education (Student Registration) Regulations (England) 2006 and the Education (Student Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016.

To comply with these regulations, the school must notify when it is about to remove a student from the school roll, and should only delete a student from the roll when:

- The headteacher has received confirmation from the child's parent/carer that the child has been registered at another school, and there is no School Attendance Order in place.
- The child has ceased to attend the school, is no longer ordinarily resident within a reasonable distance of the school, and the school has received confirmation from another school that the child is now on its roll.
- The headteacher has received written confirmation from the child's parent that the child is to be electively home educated. In such circumstances, the school should notify the Access and Inclusion Service using the local authority's prescribed notification and referral procedure.
- The child has been continuously absent from school for not less than four weeks, and both the headteacher and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate them.
- The child has not returned to school within 10 days of the expiry of an agreed extended leave of absence (more than 10 days), the headteacher has established that this is not the result of sickness or another unavoidable cause, and both the headteacher and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate them.
- The child, having been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, has not been offered a place in the reception class.
- A school medical officer has certified that the child is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- The child has died.
- The child will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets, and they intend to leave.
- The child has been permanently excluded from the school and the deadline for lodging an appeal has elapsed, or the parents have notified the school in writing that they do not intend to appeal.
- The local authority has named another school in a School Attendance Order, or a School Attendance Order has been revoked because alternative arrangements for the child's education have been made.
- The child is detained under a final court order or order of recall and will be continuously absent from the school for not less than four months, and the headteacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe the child will return to that school at the end of the period of detention or recall.

When Esland Daven School removes a student from its roll (other than as part of a normal transfer or following permanent exclusion), the school will inform the placing authority by completing a Notification of Removal from School Roll e-form. If this form does not include a named destination for the child, the case may be treated as a CME.

Cross Border Arrangements

Esland Daven School has signed service level agreements with various local authorities. These agreed protocols cover children who attend school in one local authority area but reside in another. Under the terms of these protocols, if a child attending a school in one local authority area becomes CME, the CME officer will notify and liaise with the CME officer of the local authority in which the child resides.

Supporting Students who are Absent or Returning to School

We acknowledge that at times our students absent due to complex barriers to attendance, including their emotional health and wellbeing. We will draw on our clinical expertise to work with children and their families to ensure that a programme of support is in place to ensure that they are able to continue learning. This will be agreed through a TAC (Team Around the Child) meeting. When students have been absent from school for a significant period of time during complex factors we will support a return to school using a bespoke and personalised education pathway, utilising our Turning the Curve approach.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 - Term time leave advice to parents and carers.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the [Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) and came into force on 1st September 2013.

The amendments made it clear that Headteachers may only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. Any request for leave must be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance.

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education (DfE). However, from discussion with the DfE and professional associations, it is suggested that exceptional leave would be:

- Rare
- Significant
- Unavoidable
- Short

(National Association of Headteachers, 2014)

Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts learning and teachers must spend time helping children catch up when they return. Parents/Carers should arrange holidays during the school holiday periods. The school is open 190 days per year which leaves 175 days of the year for holidays.

Government website link

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

Appendix 2- Example

Appendix 2 - Request for Term-Time Leave

Class

I wish to apply for term time leave for:

Name

from

to

inclusive

The Exceptional Reasons for this request are:

Signature

(Parent/Carer)

Date

Please make your request prior to making any bookings and at least four weeks before the anticipated leave date.

Appendix 3 - Example

Appendix 3 - Approval Letter

Dear

Name of Child:

Re: Request for Term Time Leave

Thank you for your request for term time leave.

I am in agreement this is for exceptional reasons and have authorised this leave.

The leave is from to

Should the leave be extended for any reason, the extension may be regarded as unauthorised absence which may be used in any legal action for poor school attendance.

Signature

(Headteacher)

Date

Appendix 4 - Example

Appendix 4 - Letter of refusal.

Dear

Name of Child:

Re: Request for Term Time Leave

You have requested School days leave.

Your request for term time leave has been carefully considered but unfortunately it has not been possible to authorise it for the following reasons:

The reasons are not considered exceptional The leave has not been requested in advance

Other

Please be aware that if you decide to proceed with the unauthorised term time leave the school will inform the Local Authority who make take further action.

Signature

(Headteacher) Date