

Reviewed September 2017

Eastbrook School Attendance Policy



Introduction

We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. To do this it is crucial that every child attends school every day and on time unless absence is unavoidable.

This policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important

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

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

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parent / carers, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this the school will:

- Give details on attendance in our regular Headteacher's Newsletter;
- Report to parents each half term regarding their child's attendance and punctuality
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent / carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Examples include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which are not properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays, etc
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Reviewed September 2017

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. In this situation it is essential that the parents do not give in to pressure and allow students to stay away from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. The school works to support parent / carers to ensure that the child returns to school.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% (previously 15%) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

PA students, and those at risk of becoming PA are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA students and their parents are subject to an action plan, and we will allocate appropriate support where possible. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Access and Attendance Officer. The attached appendix gives a summary of the stages and steps the school will take with persistent absentees.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent parents must:

- Contact **Registry** as soon as possible on the first day of absence; This can also be done via email - absence@eastbrook.bardaglea.org.uk. You can also contact registry via the groupcall number which is 07860 030306
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – parents must do this even if they have already telephoned us
- Call into school and report to reception.

If a child is absent the school will:

- Attempt to telephone or text parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the Access & Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have accurate contact details and numbers at all times. Please ensure the school is informed immediately of any changes. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Access and Attendance Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. However, if difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Access & Attendance Officer from the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if all efforts to improve the child's attendance fail and absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school and the Local Authority.

Reviewed September 2017

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the AAO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Students who are late disrupt their own progress and the learning of others.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.40am** in the secondary school and **9am** in the primary school and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Secondary School – Late Procedures

Registers are marked by **8.50am** and your child will receive a late mark and be placed in a 'late room' if they are not in by that time. This is to prevent them from disrupting the learning of others. If they are late they are required to complete a 15 minute detention on the same day. Failure to complete this detention will result in an escalation of sanctions. If they are late three times in the same week they will receive a 30minute detention organised by the Head of Year / Year Supervisor.

Primary School – Late Procedures

Registers are marked at 9.05am and your child will receive a late mark if not in school by that time. If your child continues to be late to school we will meet with you to discuss the reasons and confirm your legal responsibility to ensure that your child arrives to school on time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence, unless there is a valid reason for the lateness agreed by the school. If not, this may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a record of persistent lateness they and the parents will be asked to meet with a senior teacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but parents can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time. Persistently poor punctuality may also be referred to the Access & Attendance Officer.

Holidays in term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Holiday absences may be authorised in **exceptional circumstances**.

Any application for leave must be made in advance using the form available from Registry. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time and your child's overall attendance record.

Reviewed September 2017

Circumstances where such leave is unlikely to be authorised include:

- When a student is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods, GCSE or any other public examinations.
- When a student's attendance record already includes a significant level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a student's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised, which may lead to referral to Access & Attendance and attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

School targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and students have an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **95%** attendance, but we expect 96% or better as that will give students the best possible chance of achieving their potential. We will keep parents and students regularly updated about progress to this level.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Headteacher's Newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Coding Absence

When taking a register all staff should call each name and code as follows

P – Present

N – Not present

L – Late

They should duplicate any codes that have been prepopulated by registry and not override them.

Exceptional Codes

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

This code can only be entered with the agreement of the HT or DHT

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

This code can only be entered with the agreement of the HT or DHT

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave.

Reviewed September 2017

This code can only be entered with the agreement of the HT

Additional information can be found on attendance and attendance codes at the link below

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/361008/Advice_on_school_attendance_sept_2014.pdf

The people responsible for attendance matters in Eastbrook School are:

1. Deputy Headteacher:

Mr Paul Frith

2. Key Stage Co-ordinators:

Ms Ruth Botterill (EYFS) Ms Cathy McKee Y7 and 8 Mr Neil Tobias (Y9,10 and 11) Mrs Katie Davies (6th Form)

3. Heads of Year & Year Co-ordinators:

Ms Jo Arnill (Y7) Ms Debbie Mouser (Y8) Mr Mark Samuel (Y9) Mr Chris Sullivan (Y10) Mr Amir Nathan (Y11)

4. Attendance Officer:

Mrs Donna Martin

5. Access and Attendance Officer:

Mr Alexander Jones

Reviewed September 2017

APPENDIX One Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- Students will arrive at secondary school before 8.40am, and at primary school before 9am,
- Students will attend all timetabled lessons on time.
- Students will bring absence notes to the Registry in the secondary school.
- Parents will bring absence notes to the Reception of the Primary School.

Parent / Carers

- All non-urgent appointments to be arranged after school, at the weekend or in school holidays.
- The school should be informed in advance or first day back in school of reasons for absence.
- A reason for every absence to be given to the school either in writing, via email or by telephone.

Attendance Officer

- Updating the registers when notification is received regarding reason for absence
- Provide each HOY/ YS with a list of students to receive Warning letters re attendance
- Daily monitoring of am / pm registration – recording where registers not taken
- Informing LBBD of vacancy figures and admissions.

Access and Attendance Officer

- Plan and review each term's work with the Deputy Headteacher
- Liaise with Key Stage Co-ordinators regarding students where attendance and punctuality are a cause for concern. (Non-attenders and those with attendance below 90%)
- Support families in raising attendance through visits and mediating between home and school
- Lead the process towards court action where necessary
- Attend review meetings of students supported by Children and Families team and / or those with special educational needs where low attendance or punctuality is an issue

Key Stage Co-ordinators

- Meet at least once a fortnight with their Year supervisors/ Heads of Year to discuss issues of attendance and punctuality and agree actions
- Meet fortnightly with the AAO to refer students and review the progress of students
- Lead and ensure the system of rewards for attendance and punctuality is in place
- Monitor attendance and punctuality for their Key Stages and ensure appropriate and effective action is being taken
- Set challenging targets for Form and Year group attendance and monitor progress towards achieving the targets

Tutors

- Take the afternoon register
- Ensure all absence notes to go directly to Registry
- Ensure attendance and punctuality information is displayed and discussed with students on a weekly basis
- Review and negotiate regular attendance targets as part of the tutor time activities
- Reward and praise students who improve and sustain good attendance records.
- Contact parent /carers where punctuality is becoming an issue and issue a punctuality report to students who are late twice in the same week
- Where there is no improvement following the above, refer students who are persistently late to HoY / YS and support the Year Team detention procedures

Reviewed September 2017

HoY / YS

- Ensure all am registers are taken during tutor time
- Monitor and support the tutors regarding attendance matters
- Organise and co-ordinate Year Team detentions if a student is late three or more times in a week
- Organise and co-ordinate reward activities and 100% or improved attendance certificates
- Regularly promote good attendance through assemblies
- Ensure effective tutor time activities in place and resources, including attendance and punctuality target setting
- Analyse weekly attendance figures for tutor groups, pass to tutors, ensure registers are amended on return
- Identify students who are or at risk of poor attendance or persistent absence and liaise with the Key Stage Co-ordinator to ensure appropriate action is taken
- Contact parent / carers in writing where a student has an unauthorised absence for 10 consecutive days.
- Provide the Headteacher with the names of students who have made a marked improvement in attendance and/or punctuality, for a congratulatory letter.

SEN Support Teachers

- Ensure support strategies address issues of poor attendance or punctuality as necessary

Subject Teachers and Class Teachers

- Take the register in every lesson within 10 minutes of the lesson starting, recording students who are late for the lesson after the first 5 mins
- Check students with frequent absence and follow up where the student has been present in the previous lesson.
- Refer students whose attendance is affecting their attainment to the Access Panel
- Welcome returning students to the class and provide appropriate catch up work
- Use the merit system to reward consistently excellent or improved attendance and punctuality
- Welcome late comers to the class and address the issue **at the end of the lesson** – and resend the register
- Subject Leaders Co-ordinate effective procedures to ensure registers taken in all lessons, including cover lessons
- Support classroom teachers in applying sanctions for truancy from lessons

Senior Leadership Team

- Operate a late duty system at the school gate in the mornings.
- Ensure the effective use of data supports the school in raising attendance and punctuality
- Deputy Headteacher to track and monitor whole school attendance and the effective implementation of the school attendance policy
- Follow up where any member of staff fails to fulfill their attendance responsibility
- Prepare and submit reports for attendance, including Governing Body Meetings

Governors

- Monitor and scrutinise attendance data at each full meeting of the Governing Body.
- Ensure attendance is a key strand of the school's School Development Plan

Reviewed September 2017

Appendix Two

Attendance thresholds and Actions

95% or greater – no action required beyond staff recognition and eligibility for awards and rewards

90 - 94% - Tutor takes responsibility for promoting better attendance. Letter to be sent to parents and group call alerts the family to the concern. Any issues discussed with parents at Academic Achievement Day, Parent / Carer Evening or through phone call home.

Less than 90% - This is now categorized as persistent absence. Attendance at this level is a significant cause for concern and further intervention is essential. The Tutor and HOY should work together to promote better attendance. A further letter home and a personal phone call is essential and a meeting if necessary with HoY.

HoY works with Access and Attendance Officer to monitor progress. Parents should be invited in to discuss the matter and failing that students should be interviewed formally to work through any issues and set targets for improvement.

If progress is not achieved further meetings with the family will be held by the Senior Leadership Team and possibly members of the Governing Body.

If progress is still not achieved a referral is made to the AAO through the Key Stage Co-ordinator and failure to improve is likely to lead to prosecution

Attendance Procedures– 2017/18

The framework is designed to ensure that there is a clear pathway for the school to address attendance issues. It aims to include a wide range of staff and involves the tutor as a means of early intervention. Ultimately its purpose is to improve attendance at Eastbrook School.

Note: Unlike the punctuality procedures, there is not a fresh start at the start of each half term.

Note: It is essential that registers are taken accurately for this process to work effectively

Evidence to inform this process includes:

- Weekly attendance and punctuality posters – they must be displayed and discussed with students
- Weekly meeting between Key Stage Coordinators and HOYs
- Fortnightly meetings between KSCs and DHT
- Fortnightly meetings between KSCs and Access and Attendance Officer (AAO)

Level	Thresholds	Action	By Whom	Monitored by
0	Attendance over 95%	Positive praise and recognition	Tutor/ HOY	KSC
1	Attendance falls below 94%	Spoken to by tutor Group call expressing concern	Tutor HOY	HOY KSC
2	Attendance falls below 90%	Phone call to parents Letter to parents to express concerns and clarify possible escalation – to go on file	HOY KSC	KSC DHT
3	Attendance falls below 85%	Meeting with parents (possibly with AAO or school Governor) Referred to AAO Warning letter issued	HOY & KSC KSC AAO	KSC DHT KSC/DHT
4	If there is no long term improvement from level 3	Meeting with parents with AAO/School Governor – targets set. School discipline board Legal proceedings begin	HOY & KSC HOY & KSC AAO	DHT DHT KSC/DHT

Additional information

- First day contact must be in place for all absences
- HOYs should check registers on a daily basis to ensure they are accurate
- In addition to the above measures, HOYs and KSCs should meet the group of students whose attendance is a concern on a fortnightly basis
- All staff should take every opportunity to promote and praise good attendance, and try to address poor attendance – it is a key school priority

Punctuality procedures – 2017/18

The framework is aimed at having a structured and consistent approach to improving punctuality. It aims to ensure that all students are aware of their position with regard to punctuality, and that we respond consistently and systematically to students who are repeatedly late.

Each half term the process will restart and each student will start with a clean sheet.

The KSC and HOYs will introduce and reinforce the new punctuality procedure through assemblies and it will be reiterated in form time by tutors.

Note to all staff: it is essential that registers are taken accurately for this process to work effectively

Evidence to inform this process includes:

- Weekly attendance and punctuality posters – they must be displayed and discussed with students
- Weekly meeting between Key Stage Coordinators and HOYs
- Fortnightly meetings between KSCs and DHT
- Fortnightly meetings between KSCs and Access and Attendance Officer (AAO)

Level	Thresholds	Action	By Whom	Monitored by
0	A student has 0 late marks	Positive praise and recognition	Tutor	HOY
1	A student is late once	Group call home	Registry	HOY
2	A student is late twice	Spoken to by tutor Placed on White punctuality report Parents informed via groupcall warning about possible escalation	Tutor Tutor HOY	HOY HOY KSC
3	A student is late 3 times	Remain on White Punctuality report 45 minute detention Groupcall to parents to express concerns	Tutor HOY KSC	HOY KSC DHT
4	A student is late 6 times	Placed on Pink punctuality report to HOY 45 minute detention Phone Call to parents Letter to parents to express concerns and clarify possible escalation – to go on file	HOY HOY HOY KSC	KSC KSC KSC DHT
5	A student is late 9 times	Remain on Pink report to HOY Parents must attend meeting with HOY and KSC 45 minute detention Referred to AAO Warning letter from AAO	HOY KSC HOY KSC AAO	KSC DHT KSC DHT KSC
6	If no long term improvement	School discipline board Penalty notice	KSC AAO	DHT KSC & DHT

N.B.

- Students should be taken off **Tutor report** if they achieve a week without any late marks.
- Students should be taken off **HOY report** if they achieve 2 weeks without a late mark.