

East Ayton



Primary
School

Traditional Values, Modern Vision

Attendance Policy

Reviewed: September 2024

Next review due: September 2025

This policy is written in line with the Local Authority guidance for school attendance and the procedure for absence.

Statement of Intent

East Ayton Primary School believes that good attendance is essential for all our pupils if they are to gain the maximum benefit from the education that we provide. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school we will support families to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Ultimately it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school every day. From the term following their fifth birthday all children are legally required to attend school for 190 days each academic year unless they are unable to attend through illness or other exceptional circumstances. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure breadth and balance: therefore, the full 190 days in school are essential for children to receive their full entitlement to education. The school has rigorous procedures for identifying poor attendance. Where attendance is found to be unacceptably low the school will take all possible steps to improve attendance, ensuring that all children have the best possible chance of making good progress and achieving the outcomes that they are capable of.

Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and the best schools will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places pupils at risk, and in some cases, it can lead to pupils being drawn into patterns of antisocial or criminal behaviour. (Department for Education)

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day, and ensure that their children are collected at the correct time, and inform school if there is a delay
- Ensure that they contact the school in the event of an absence by 9:30am at the latest, or if known in advance, as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school. (e.g. dental/medical appointment)
- Try to make health appointments outside of school hours, and provide proof of an appointment
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details

We expect that the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, and monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents as soon as possible if their child is not in school, and the absence has not been explained
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a health professional or other relevant body will be requested

- School may mark an absence as unauthorised retrospectively if contradictory information is found and will notify parents
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality
- When pupils' attendance falls below 95% school will inform parents and advice from other agencies may be sought
- Inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending school regularly or who are persistently late
- Will not accept reasons for absence from pupils or siblings. Reasons for absence must be provided by a parent or carer.

Example absence (authorised/unauthorised)

Authorised absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil
- Hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil
- Major religious observances
- Visits to prospective new schools
- External exams or educational assessments
- Approved sporting, cultural or competitive activity

Unauthorised absences:

- Holidays in term time
- Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park
- A birthday treat
- Oversleeping due to a late night

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

- Punctuality to school is crucial, lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. Reception class must arrive by 8:50am. For the rest of school, the school gates open at 8.50am and all pupils must arrive by 9:00am.
- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registration takes place at 9am and pupils who arrive after this time must enter via the School Office to ensure they are accurately recorded as on the premises.
- Children who arrive after registration will receive a late mark. Children arriving between 9-9.30am will receive a late mark.
- Children who have been for a medical appointment and have given school prior notice of their appointment will receive a 'medical' registration mark as such.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 12:50pm.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will lead to an initial meeting before the Local Authority procedures are followed.

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, within school hours, parents are to report to the School Office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.

Leave of Absence

Leave of absence (holidays) will NOT be authorised during term time. All leave of absences must be reported via the 'absence request form', obtained from the school office.

The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- In exceptional circumstances permission may be granted providing your child has a good attendance and the Headteacher is satisfied that the request complies with the exceptional circumstances requirements as outlined by the Local Authority.

- Exceptional circumstances are considered as one-off situations (once in a life time events). If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time, then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorised.
- The Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holidays and make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- If leave (holiday or leave of absence) is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised leave absence.
- School staff are not be expected to provide additional work for the child during the leave period.
- In accordance with North Yorkshire Local Authority guidance the school will refer for a fixed penalty notice to be issued for unauthorised holidays of 10 or more sessions (2 sessions = 1 day). More information on fixed penalty notices can be gained from North Yorkshire Local Authority.

Extended Leave of Absence

Where a pupil is absent from school for 10 or more consecutive days the school must inform the Local Authority. Extended leave of absence must be requested and risks the child's school place being revoked and filled by another pupil.

Attendance Concerns

Where a number of absences which remain unauthorised or persistent lateness, concerns are passed to the Headteacher. Parents will normally be informed of our concern by letter initially. If the situation continues, parents /carers will be invited in to school to discuss attendance concerns with the Headteacher.

In order to improve attendance we will:

- alert parents/carers of any concerns or queries via letter or in person.
- monitor patterns of attendance and lateness and raise any concerns with families.
- ensure written evidence of appointments is provided in order to authorise medical appointments.
- agree appropriate external agency support as deemed necessary.
- set targets for improvement with families, supporting individual needs if required.
- celebrate improvements.

If the above actions do not alleviate concerns and raise attendance, school will then submit collated evidence to the Local Authority who will decide whether to issue a fixed penalty notice or take the case to prosecution.

Persistent Absence (PA)

Any child who has an overall attendance of below 90% is considered to be Persistently Absent. The Attendance Lead will meet with children and families whose attendance cause concern to establish ways forward.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and the welfare of all children is the priority. Unexplained absences and lack of contact from parents/carers may cause school concern which may lead to involving other services (for example social services). Frequent absence, for example a day a week, or a pattern of absence can indicate a concern and will always be acted upon.

In the event of an unexplained absence, the school will contact families on the first day of absence to establish the reasons and the estimated date of return. If no contact can be made or there are safeguarding concerns, home visits by the DSL and Safeguarding Team will be made that day in order to check on the child's welfare. The safeguarding team at the Local Authority will also be informed.

Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The Governing Body has the responsibility of setting down the guidelines and principles with regard to school attendance policy and procedure and ensuring compliance with School Attendance Regulations. The Governing Body through the Headteacher will monitor and evaluate school attendance levels and review the effectiveness of this policy.