

School Attendance Policy

Scholar Green Primary School



Confirmation that the Attendance and Discipline Policy in respect of Scholar Green Primary School has been discussed and approved by the Governing Body.

Date: Autumn 2023

Date for review: Autumn 2026

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Attendance Co-ordinator: Head teacher
Education Family Support Worker: Anna Rutter

Attendance Policy Group members:

Name	Role	Responsibility
Lyndsey Colman	Head teacher	To monitor the attendance throughout the school. To raise the level of attendance of those children or young people identified as being at risk
Caroline Yarwood	Deputy Head	To monitor the attendance situation of individual children or young people
Pat Morgan	Governor	To keep a check on general attendance
	EFWS	To support the school in achieving its objectives by following the Local Authority Guidelines.

RATIONALE

- Regular attendance at school or alternative provision is a legal requirement and “The Education Act” 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent/carer to fail to secure their child’s regular attendance at school.
- Parent/carers have a legal duty as well as a moral obligation to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on time, on a regular and full-time basis.
- Good attendance and punctuality is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of School and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life.
- Safeguarding each child is everyone’s responsibility and a child may be at risk if they do not attend school regularly.
- Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.
- The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.
- Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school.
- The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Aims

- To improve the quality of school life
- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'
- To demonstrate to pupils, parent(s), carer(s) and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

Objectives

- To involve the children or young people more in their school attendance
- To improve communication with parent(s), carer(s) about regular school attendance
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children or young people's attendance and for the school to recognise the importance of this role
- Effective working relationship with the Education Welfare Service

Targets

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring information
- To discuss the settings of targets for the school with the EWO and the Governing Body
- To ensure that such data is used effectively by all staff in conjunction with the Head Teacher
- To agree specific targets for individuals whose attendance falls below 95%
- To keep parent(s), carer(s) and governors informed of policy and practice e.g. school website, school newsletter
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children or young people

Consultation Process in Place:

1. School Staff:

A staff meeting to discuss this policy and make any changes, which are deemed supportive of the aims of the policy.

2. The Governing Body:

A Governor Sub Committee meeting will be held to discuss this policy and make any changes which are deemed supportive of the aims of the policy. The final policy, after consultation will be presented for approval to the whole Governing Body.

3. The Parent(s)/carer(s):

Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- When their children first start at our school
- Home school contracts
- Through newsletters
- At parent(s)/carer(s) evenings
- School website

4. The Children or young people:

Children or young people will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- School Council

Procedure:

- Children or young people are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
 - - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
 - - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
- It is expected that parent(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation if the child or young person is absent on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by letter, telephone, text, personally at the office or by appointment
- If contact, explaining the child or young person's absence, fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s), then the school will contact the home by telephone on the initial day and on each day thereafter until the unexplained absence is clarified. **This contact will be recorded in the register / attendance file / electronic records.**
- The head teacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Children or young people with 97% attendance or better will be rewarded by the school with a certificate of attendance

What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?

- If your child is absent from school please contact the school before 8:45am (prior to the close of morning registration) on the day of absence so that we know your child is safe. If your child is likely to be absent for any length of time, (e.g. due to illness) please keep us informed and **a medical note is required.**
- Try to make appointments outside school time
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary

Identification of Pupils Giving Cause for Concern & Referral

- Identification is made by the form / class teacher (cause for concern)
- Concerns are passed to the person responsible for contacting parent(s)/carer(s)
- Person responsible will contact parent(s)/carer(s)
- There will be two weeks' monitoring of the child or young person's attendance
- If there is no improvement, at this point, attendance letter 1 (Appendix 1) will be sent and parent(s)/carer(s) will be invited in for a meeting
- We will, after a further two weeks' monitoring, inform parent(s)/carer(s) that they will be referred to the Education Welfare Service, if there has been no improvement in attendance (Attendance Letter 2 in Appendix 2). The referral to the Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form (see Referral Form in Appendix 5), copies of all correspondence to parent(s)/carer(s) and a print out of the child or young person's attendance certificate.
- If attendance has improved over the last four weeks, school will continue to monitor attendance to ensure improvement is maintained

Completing the Register

- The Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998
- Electronic registers are printed out and kept in the same way as manual registers. **These are legal documents**
- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils formally receives children or young people from home
- Emphasis is placed on the accurate twice daily completion of registers
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- Registers will be marked in ink. Any alterations should be visible and explained and initialled by the teacher. Tippex or similar products will not be used
- The register will be marked using the symbols advised by DfE and CEC.

Lateness

School begins at 8.45am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Classroom doors will be closed at 8:50am unless there is an exceptional circumstance (such as a conversation taking place with the class teacher and parent). Pupils arriving after 8:50am when the classroom doors are closed will need to enter school via the main reception area.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

Late Registration

Pupils requiring admittance to school following registration periods must go to the main entrance and request entry via the school office

The school office is responsible for maintaining the signing in/out book. This must contain details of name, class, time admitted/time released, reason for lateness/early departure and name of supervising adult. For health and safety reasons, after 8:50am/12:50 pm an entry **MUST** be placed in the signing in book before a late pupil is admitted or released.

In accordance with current guidance, the attendance registers are closed at 9.00am. This means that any pupil who arrives after the registration period (8.45 to 8:55am) but before the registers are closed (9.00am) will be given a late mark (L) in the register. This code is classed as a present mark, but displays that the pupil arrived late for school. Any pupil who arrives after the registers have closed (9.00am) but before the end of the morning session will be given a "late after registers closed" mark (U) in the register. This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session.

The fact that the U code is classed as an unauthorised absence means that when it is used pupils are likely to be missing significant amounts of schooling; putting their educational progress at risk. For this reason the use of this code will be considered as serious as any other unauthorised absence and will attract the interest of external agencies, including referral to the local authority attendance team and consideration of the use of legal measures, in just the same way. A parent or carer may be issued with a fixed penalty notice if their child has more than 10 'u' unauthorised late sessions within two consecutive half terms.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken. See Identification of Pupils Giving Cause for Concern and Referrals – the same process will apply (See Appendix 4)

Leave of Absence during term time

Parent(s)/carer(s) do not have the right to take their child or young person out of school for a holiday. A request for a leave of absence **must** be made by the parent who the pupil normally resides with. A child or young person who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll and the parents/carers/guardian(s) may be liable to prosecution. A child cannot have more than five days (10 Sessions) of unauthorised absence over the course of two consecutive half terms. Fines may be issued by the Local Authority in these cases.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave for a leave of absence, the School will consider each case individually, taking into account a child or young person's overall attendance and the reason for the absence. The school **will not** authorise any leave of absence unless there are "exceptional circumstances" e.g. funeral, leave of absence recommended by a health professional for medical or emotional reasons and religious observance.

A "LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM" is available from the School Office and on the School Website. It must be completed in advance of the absence and returned to the school where it will need to be discussed with the head teacher. This discussion will contribute towards the final decision.

- It must clearly state on the form why it is necessary that this absence must be taken in term time.
- The following reasons are not considered "exceptional" – Cheaper holidays, unable to take holidays at another time, work reasons, birthday celebrations, holiday is being paid for by somebody else.
- On receipt of the "Leave of Absence Request Form", you will be sent a response indicating whether the school is able to authorise your request or not.

*Reasons for not authorising it **might** include:-*

- Unsatisfactory attendance
- Time of year, e.g. if pupils are sitting Public Examinations
- If leave of absence has already been authorised during the current academic year
- It is a holiday request in school term time
- There does not appear to be an exceptional circumstance surrounding the request

Examples of exceptional circumstances are seen to be:

- being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time,
- service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark on a tour of duty abroad
- when a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- the wedding/funeral of an immediate family member or the birth of a sibling

While decisions are to be made on a case by case basis, requests will normally be refused.

If parents, contrary to what the school has said, still decide to take their child out of school, then the absence will be coded as "**unauthorised**". This may lead to the school referring the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two Children
Paid within 28 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 42 days	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance

Fixed Penalty Notices have been introduced as part of the Government's drive to improve attendance.

These measures are severe but we believe that regular and high attendance is in every pupil's best interests and helps to maximise their achievements and enjoyment of school.

This Policy reflects accurately the current legislation and as a school, we have a duty to point this out to parents/carers.

Further details and background information can be found at the Cheshire East Council website – http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/education_and_learning/schools/parents.aspx.

LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS

A child will only be permitted to leave school during school hours if permission has been sought and a parent or carer or designated person collects the child in person. You will be asked to sign your child in/out of school accordingly for safeguarding and health and safety reasons.

- **The school aims to have ALL children or young people attending regularly and punctually and parent(s)/carer(s) need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.**
- **Parent(s)/carer(s) need to be aware that Cheshire East Schools work in co-operation with the Education Welfare Service.**
- **Parent(s)/carer(s) need to be aware that Cheshire East Council in conjunction with Schools are operating Fixed Penalty Notices for non attendance.**

In developing this Attendance Policy we have taken into account the fact that Cheshire East is an ethnically diverse community. The school has incorporated practice, which guards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving pupils is a key priority. This aims to improve the attainment of minority pupils across Cheshire East. Schools are aware and take into account the need for all public authorities to re-examine and make changes to their practice in promoting genuine multi-racial partnership.

The school understands the need for on-going communication with parent(s)/carer(s) and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the school.

MONITORING OF ATTENDANCE

Local Authority Monitoring of Attendance

There are a range of processes to support Local Authority monitoring of attendance:

- All schools have a statutory obligation to provide information about attendance to the LA and the DfE via the school census returns. This enables national comparisons.
- The development of Electronic Registration means that the Local Authority should be able to access attendance data centrally, and could therefore monitor trends.
- The Education Welfare Service monitors attendance on behalf of the Local Authority through regular meetings with school staff and regular register checks. This focuses particularly on children or young people with long-term absences, regular patterns of absence, the school's monitoring of student attendance at alternative provision such as college placements, return of children or young people after fixed term exclusions, admissions of children or young people for whom a place at the school has been agreed, children or young people cared for by the Local Authority.
- Monitoring of agreed School/Education Welfare Service School Action Plans to ensure priority concerns are effectively addressed. The Education Welfare Officer and school must regularly review the Action Plans jointly.
- Monitoring the use and success of legal action to enforce attendance.
- The Admissions Team has a protocol for referral to the Education Welfare Service of children or young people who, for whatever reason, are without a school place.

School monitoring of Attendance

Every school must have a designated person responsible for attendance, and establish a routine that ensures that regular monitoring and review take place.

General

Frequency	Action
Daily	Class teacher has initial responsibility for dealing with concerns. The way in which concerns are dealt with will vary from school to school and details should be outlined in the school policy. Attendance of all pupils on alternative packages should also be checked daily with the providers.
Weekly	Action to be taken by the school with regard to children or young people whose absence is causing concern. Discussions with Education Welfare Officer, who may be asked to intervene in cases where the school has not been able to ascertain reasons for absence, or where other concerns exist.

Specific

Individual schools should allocate overall responsibility for specific tasks to a designated senior member of staff. Details should be included in the school policy.

Group	Issues
Year Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare figures with those for other local schools• Compare figures with those for other cohorts within the school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare figures for the same cohort over time i.e. as it progresses through the school • Compare figures with those for the same year group over time i.e. year 9 over the years • Consider attendance pattern over the year.
Form/Class Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare group with others in the same year group • Analyse long-term absentees contribution to the figure • Consider if registration guidelines are being correctly applied • Consider the tutor/class teacher effect • Consider school effects e.g. over use of supply teachers etc.
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for broken weeks – five separate one-day absences are more significant than a week’s absence • Look for same day absence each week • Check reasons for absence • Check absence notes • Look for absences with friends • Closely monitor vulnerable/”at risk” children or young people • Reward good/improved attendance • Report to Education Welfare Officer long-term absentees/those for whom no reason for absence has been received.

School Monitoring of Lateness

The major principles of any late monitoring system are:

- it should ensure everyone in school is recorded in case of fire
- it should not allow children or young people to come into school undetected especially if some form of same day contact is being made with absentees.

The School’s signing in system:

- enables the school office to keep a record and monitor punctuality
- makes it difficult for a student to enter a classroom late without staff acknowledgement
- ensures all teachers are consistently and correctly coding registers.

Keeping Track of children or young people – see Section on ‘Children Missing Education’ Every Minute Counts

Lateness = Lost Learning (Figures below are calculated over a school year)	
5 minutes late each day	3 days lost!
10 minutes late each day	6.5 days lost!
15 minutes late each day	10 days lost!
20 minutes late each day	13 days lost!

30 minutes late each day

19 days lost!