



EWELL GROVE PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

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POLICY STATEMENT

ATTENDANCE POLICY

APPENDIX 1 – ATTENDANCE CODES

REVIEW DATE:

ANNUALLY

PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNING BOARD

14TH MARCH 2019

This policy for Ewell Grove Primary and Nursery School has been developed with the guidance of the Surrey County Council 'Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices in cases of Non-Attendance at School'.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Ewell Grove Primary and Nursery School, along with other local schools and Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. The expectation of Ewell Grove is that all pupils attend 100% unless there is a genuine reason for the absence approved by the Headteacher. When absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the School at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a Penalty Notice.

All holiday requests will be considered to be unauthorised leave of absence unless proof of Exception Circumstances are provided but the Headteacher would deem it to be otherwise. Any appeal will be heard by the Governing Body, whose decision will be final. All other requests for leave will be considered on a case by case basis by the Governing Body that may, at its discretion, delegate some decisions to the Headteacher. Again, the decision of the Governing Body will be final.

In line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 consecutive days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority, although schools may wish to discuss such an absence sooner with their EWO if the absence is unauthorised, parents/carers cannot be contacted or there are other concerns. Schools are required to report all absence figures to the Local Authority, DfE and must ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by OfSTED as part of a school's inspection.

COMMITMENT TO ATTENDANCE

The staff of Ewell Grove Primary and Nursery School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which both serves the community and has a reputation of which we can all be proud.

Regular attendance is key to ensuring high achievement. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents/carers in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

ENCOURAGING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

The majority of children attend Ewell Grove regularly and punctually, the benefits of this can be seen in their academic progress and healthy relationships they enjoy with their peers and staff. With this in mind the School is proactive in encouraging good attendance using the following strategies:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child or parents/carers concerns about the school or other pupils
- by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration
- by providing parents with termly attendance data for their child and an annual summary with their annual report
- by celebrating regular attendance both half termly, termly and annually; stickers** are awarded for half term attendance and/or attainment of 'bespoke attendance targets', certificates are awarded for full term attendance and medals for full year attendance (see table below)
- ensuring all staff take a proactive approach to promoting good attendance and apply this policy consistently and equitably

** stickers may also be awarded to children at the discretion of the Headteacher

Autumn Term 1a	95% Attendance and Above or meeting an agreed bespoke attendance target Attendance Sticker given out in Class
Autumn Term 1b	95% Attendance and Above or meeting an agreed bespoke attendance target Attendance Sticker given out in Class
	100% Attendance for Autumn Term Attendance Certificate given out in Class
Spring Term 2a	95% Attendance and Above or meeting an agreed bespoke attendance target Attendance Sticker given out in Class
Spring Term 2b	95% Attendance and Above or meeting an agreed bespoke attendance target Attendance Sticker given out in Class
	100% Attendance for Spring Term Attendance Certificate given out in Class
Summer Term 3a	95% Attendance and Above or meeting an agreed bespoke attendance target Attendance Sticker given out in Class
Summer Term 3b	95% Attendance and Above or meeting an agreed bespoke attendance target Attendance Sticker given out in Class
	100% Attendance for Summer Term Attendance Certificate given out in Class
End of Academic Year	Any child who achieves 100% attendance throughout the school year will be awarded with a 'Medal' during an assembly at the end of the Summer Term.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY AND THE LAW

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude; and
- (b) to any special needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term 'parent/carer' is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

REGISTERS

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the School must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from School at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of School]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

CATEGORISATION OF ABSENCE

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the School must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off School unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Family holidays/days out/events during Term time
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Any absence which has not been explained by the parent by 10.00 am

2. Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the School.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

REGISTRATION & LATENESS

The School day begins with the whistle being blown at 8.55 am for children ready to start learning at 9.00 am. Classroom staff are responsible for keeping an accurate register of attendance at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon session. At the close of registration all registers must be returned to the School Office so that the children's attendance can be monitored and where necessary action taken in relation to any unexplained absence.

Morning registration will take place from 9.00 am (or 8.30 am in the case of morning Nursery). The registers will remain open between 9.00 am and 9.10 am for the main school and 9.00am for morning Nursery. Any child who arrives after the register has been taken but before 9.10 am will be marked late "L".

Any pupil who arrives after 9.10 am, when the registers have been closed, must be signed in by their parent using the attendance folder held in the School Office. Pupils arriving after 9.10 am will be marked as "U", which statistically counts as an unauthorised absence. If a reason is given for the late arrival, for example, attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered (**See Appendix 1**). For an authorised code to be used in this context, prior notice must have been received by the School. Any circumstances where prior notice has not been received by the School will automatically be treated as unauthorised.

The afternoon registration will be taken at either 1.00 pm or 1.20 pm (depending on your child's class) for main school or 12.30 pm for afternoon Nursery.

In cases of persistent late arrival to school, parents could be spoken to by the class teacher, written to, reminded of the schools attendance policy or ultimately be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher.

ESCALATION PROCESS

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the School by 10.00 am.

Where we have been unable to make contact the school will use all of the 'Emergency Contacts' that parents provide on their child's Admissions Form in an endeavour to ascertain confirmation that a) the child is safe and b) the reason for absence. Wherever possible office staff will leave messages asking the parent/contact to communicate with the school as a matter of urgency.

If a child is absent and no reason has been provided the following procedure will apply:

1. First Day Absence

The school will telephone the parent after 10.00 am to request a reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence but will categorise it as unauthorised. The school reserves the right to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances; the decision to use "exceptional circumstances" will rest solely with the Headteacher. If the School is unable to make contact then, wherever possible, a message will be left. The school will also contact all of the 'Emergency Contacts' that the parents provided on their child's admission form.

For any children whose family are known, by the school, to be currently working in partnership with Children's Services an additional phone call to the named Social Worker/Family Support Worker will also be made. Equally for any children where the school has significant concerns, that are not currently working in partnership with Children's Services, an additional phone call into 'MASH' (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) is likely to be made. The School may also seek further advice from the Educational Welfare team and/or any other professional service they feel is appropriate.

2. Second Day Absence

If the School has been unable to make contact with parents on day one, once again, they will telephone the parents and if necessary all of the Emergency contacts to ascertain a reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence but will categorise it as unauthorised. The school reserves the right to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances; the decision to use "exceptional circumstances" will rest solely with the Headteacher. If the School is unable to make contact then wherever possible a message will be left.

Where we have been unable to make contact with Parents and/or Emergency Contacts the School, in addition to the above, may also hand deliver a letter to the address that we have registered on the admissions form to; a) request parents make contact with the school as a matter of urgency and b) ascertain a reason for absence.

If a phone call to MASH was not made on day one, the school will review if this is now necessary and action as required.

3. Third and subsequent days

The school will continue to repeat some or all of the actions outlined in first day and second day absence as above.

4. Ten Days Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will automatically be notified to the Local Authority (if this has not already happened), by submitting a referral to Education Welfare; this is a legal requirement. As part of this referral the school will include details of the action that they have taken.

For any children whose family are known, by the school, to be currently working in partnership with Children's Services a repeat phone call to the named Social Worker/Family Support Worker will be made. Equally for any children where the school has significant concerns, that are not currently working in partnership with Children's Services, an additional phone call into 'MASH' (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) will be made. The School may also seek further advice from the Educational Welfare team and/or any other professional service they feel is appropriate.

5. Frequent Absence

The school understands that at some point most children will be off school due to illness. When looking at attendance patterns the school needs to ascertain if absenteeism is disguising other difficulties including a reluctance to attend school. It is in the best interest for the child, for home and school to work in partnership, in order to quickly and effectively resolve any issues leading to non-attendance. If a child is reluctant to attend School, it is unhelpful for families to cover up their absence or give into pressure to excuse them from attending; this gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes returning to School more difficult.

Education Welfare meets with school staff on a regular basis to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of non-attendance, parents could be spoken to by the class teacher, written to, reminded of the schools attendance policy or ultimately be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher and/or the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and the School requires parents' full support and co-operation in addressing this.

The School monitors all absence thoroughly and any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority. The EWO supports this process through planned visits to the school that include register checks. Following these visits parents are notified by letter if;

- The child's attendance pattern is irregular and/or concerning
- If the child's attendance percentage is falling, near to or exceeding 10% and/or persistent lateness is leading to unauthorised marks
- If a child's attendance pattern demonstrates prolonged and/or significant number of absences through repeating illness.

If any of the above are identified the school will communicate the concern to the parents and offer support to address the concerns. This can include offering to write a letter to a GP demonstrating a child's low attendance in order to secure further assistance from health professionals.

The school also sends letters in cases where a family has received communication in the past and progress is evident, at the next EWO visit, to acknowledge and encourage continued improvement.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Governors of Ewell Grove have decided that family holidays will always be unauthorised. This policy states that no authorisation will be given for any family holidays taken during term time, for any year groups. Authorisation will only be given, other than illness and hospital appointments, in exceptional circumstances; for example compassionate reasons.

All requests for absence must be submitted using the Ewell Grove 'Leave of Absence Form' (available from the school website or from the School Office).

Any request will only be considered where;

- A Leave of Absence form is submitted to the Headteacher in advance of any bookings/travel arrangements being made or committed to (this includes where somebody other than the parents makes this even as a surprise)
- All adults with parental responsibility are aware of the request being submitted
- Exceptional circumstances can be supported by evidence eg letter from employer, details of family emergency

Family holidays including those booked by other relatives, 'once in a lifetime' opportunities and where a significant price saving can be made will not be considered under Exceptional Circumstances.

The Headteacher will consider the application on behalf of the Governors. As part of the consideration the Headteacher will decide if the "exceptional circumstances" provided can be applied. Even in cases where "exceptional circumstances" do apply, authorisation will be considered within the context of the child's previous attendance and that the request does not exceed 10 school days in any one academic year. Exceptional Circumstances will not be applied where the absence would result in the child's missing 10% or more schooling across the year; as this would classify them as a Persistent Absentee. "Exceptional Circumstances" alone do not guarantee authorisation.

All absences, including holidays, taken without prior authorisation by the School will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, Education Welfare will be notified and in some circumstances parent/s may be liable to a Penalty Notice.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school, during term, to attend a family holiday. The Department for Education website states:

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. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

You can be [fined](#) for taking your child on holiday during term time without the school's permission.

Any savings that you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. Research relating to this demonstrates;

- The link between a child's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- Graduates earn an average of double per hour compared to young people who leave school with no qualifications.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice instead of prosecuting parents/carers for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered. Ewell Grove's policy includes the use of penalty notices. Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to three per pupil per academic year.

A penalty notice can be used as an alternative to prosecution of a parent/carer in cases where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. (unauthorised leave of absence). The issuing of a penalty notice for unauthorised leave of absence may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

1. Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days/10 sessions or more within a three month period – this need not be consecutive). **Each parent** could be liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child**. *In the case of separated parents, the penalty notice will be sent to the parent requesting leave of absence and/or taking the pupil out of school.* No written warning will be given where it can be shown that the parent/carer had previously been warned of their liability to receive a Penalty Notice.
2. Unauthorised absences or late arrival after the close of registration, on 7 occasions in any six week period (not including school closures). The liable parent/carer will receive a written warning from the Education Welfare Service of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement. During this period the pupil is not expected to incur any further unauthorised absence. Where a formal warning letter has been issued to parents, the Local Authority will monitor the attendance for a maximum of 15 school days and issue a Penalty Notice by first class post if the Local Authority determine that an acceptable level of attendance has not been achieved.
3. Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences
4. Penalty Notices 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 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive a notice before it is issued.

If two penalty notices have been issued and paid in relation to a particular child (or there has been previous prosecutions) and poor attendance is still an on-going problem, except in Exceptional Circumstances, information will then be gathered to support a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 rather than a further Penalty Notice being issued.

TRUANCY PATROL

When a family comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the child's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carers.

The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER (EWO)

Education Welfare monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The EWO will work with school and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to Education Welfare Team. The EWO will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed and unauthorised absence persists, the EWO can use sanctions such as Parenting Order, Education Supervision Order, School Attendance Order, Penalty Notice and Prosecution.

Legislation is put in place for parents to ensure all children attend school regularly. Failure to comply with this could ultimately result in prosecution. Parents could receive a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court also gives you a Parenting Order.

ATTENDANCE CODES

All students must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances