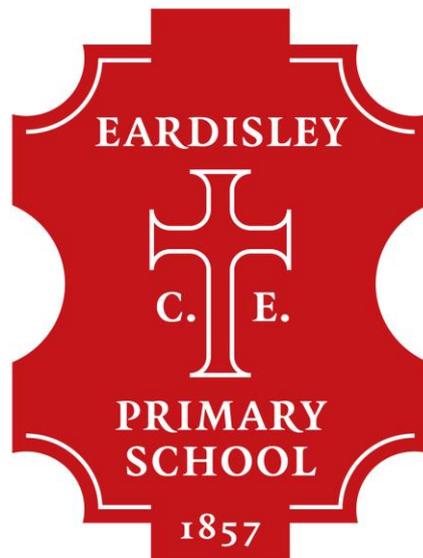


Eardisley CE Primary School



Attendance Policy

Date Agreed: September 2018

Review Date: September 2019

Introduction

Eardisley CE Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. If allowed to remain unchecked persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupil's progress and achievement. Our partnerships with parents are play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved.

We expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all children where the children want to come. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. Though our home-school agreement, parents agree to ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance. As part of our annual written reports to parents, the children's attendance records are shared.

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Eardisley CE Primary School by;

- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority. In line with the 1996 Education Act.

Why Attendance Matters

Pupils attend for 190 days each year – a total of 38 weeks

Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

Recording Attendance

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by the office staff. All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes, the office staff check the messages. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, then the school will telephone parents to check on why a pupil is not in school. Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System.

The Headteacher monitors the attendance of pupils each week. Where the head feels it appropriate, parents/carers will be notified by letter when their child's attendance drops below the School's target of 97%. If attendance drops below 90% a 2nd letter may be written informing parents/carers and the head may invite the parents to an Attendance Panel meeting to discuss ways of improving attendance. The School will refer a pupil to the Educational Welfare Officer if a child's attendance drops below 85% and there is no satisfactory reason for this drop in attendance. Returns of school data are made annually to the DfE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Governors at the first Governors' meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years and national attendance data.

3.Punctuality and Lateness

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the beginning of the school day. The Headteacher monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. Children may arrive at school from 8.40 am, at which time there is supervision on the playground or, if very wet, children can go straight to class. Registration is called at 8.55 am and again at 1.00 pm. Registers will close at 20 minutes after registration times. A pupil that arrives after this time will be marked as 'Unauthorised Late' unless the school have previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Headteacher will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a

meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to the School Attendance Officer.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence and it is a statutory requirement for the headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. If a child is absent from school for whatever reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible. The normal routine is to telephone the school on the first morning of absence. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed. Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

For sickness

If your child is very unwell and unable to be at school, please call the school on the first morning of absence by 9.15 am. If your child has been sick or has had diarrhoea it is important they stay at home for 48 hours. Please note that the school is able, with written permission, to administer Calpol for low-level illness, so that your child may come to school as normal. We would encourage children to be at school unless they are very unwell.

The school is not obliged to authorise any illness that they do not believe to be genuine. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence of continued sickness or encouraged to consider GP consent. Where there are concerns about the level of attendance due to illness, the school may request a note from the GP.

For other absences

Permission for special occasions such as weddings must be requested in advance, in writing to the Headteacher. Shopping trips, birthday trips, days out and holidays at home will not be authorised. Emergency medical or dental appointments can be authorized. Days of religious observance and family bereavement may also be authorized.

Medical Appointments in School Time

Wherever reasonably possible, we request and expect parents to make

routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time. If this is not possible please give as much written notice as possible with a copy of the appointment slip.

Leave of Absence for Term-Time Holidays.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Parents must put any holiday request in writing to the headteacher at least six weeks prior to the dates of absence.

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 say that Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Leave of absence requests of 10 sessions (5 days) or over (at one time or over the course of a year) are required to be reported to the Local Authority and parents may face a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or other legal action. The Fixed Penalty Notice is £60 per parent per child which rises to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days. There is no appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. Failure to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice may lead to legal proceedings under the Education Act 1996 section 444(1).

Please be aware that the Local Authority would not usually issue more than one penalty notice to any one family. Therefore applications for a second leave of absence may incur legal actions such as court proceedings.

Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.

Monitoring and Review

All teaching staff are vigilant about attendance and report unexplained absence without delay. The headteacher carries out weekly checks and half-termly reviews. Attendance is reported to governors in the Headteacher's

termly Report. We as a school have a duty to inform parents of their child's attendance and how this can impact upon their performance. Attendance is shared with parents at parent meetings and through the annual report. Parents will be informed of their child's low attendance level and may be invited to discuss their child's attendance when:

- A child continues to be absent for more than 3 consecutive days without explanation (school will have made strenuous efforts to contact parents/carers in this time and will contact the police as a matter of safeguarding if no explanation is found).
- A child's attendance drops below our agreed attendance target of 97%.

Parents may be invited to an Attendance Panel review meeting when:

- A child's attendance falls into the Persistently Absent category of 93% and/or
- Where a pattern of unauthorised absence persists or attendance does not improve, despite the school's involvement, this may result in legal proceedings.

If a child is absent without explanation for ten consecutive school days the school will inform the Children Missing From Education (CME) Legal Officer at Herefordshire Local Authority and police as a Safeguarding priority.

Procedures:

- Long term medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence (either a letter from a consultant doctor or photocopy of medical prescriptions) where appropriate. GP consent may be requested if a pupil has high levels of authorised absence through sickness and a parent will be invited to an informal meeting and may be requested to complete a GP consent form that will enable an appointed person from school to enquire if the pupil has attended the surgery but not to share any confidential information.
- Lateness – where lateness becomes an issue the matter will be discussed with the parents and this will be monitored and a record kept. We monitor punctuality and will often conduct a punctuality sweep.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Herefordshire Local Authority Education Legal Officer who will also try to resolve the situation by agreement. However, if there is still no improvement in attendance a referral may be made for a Penalty Notice or take legal proceedings.

Support for Parents and Carers

The Early Help Assessment (EHA) is a way of working out what extra support a child may need. It is a consensual process and involves holding meetings with the school and, if necessary, with other agencies to make sure that help

is provided as quickly and effectively as possible. With parental agreement, the appropriate agencies are invited to meet with the parent to have a conversation to identify the child's needs and strengths and a plan of action is put in place which can help to improve attendance where there is a medical or logistical difficulty as well as any other areas such as learning behaviour or family support issues. In addition, the headteacher/SENCO will work with pupils and their families to support school attendance.

The Role of the Attendance Governor

The attendance governor will act alongside the Headteacher to monitor the attendance of all children and vulnerable groups (Pupil Premium, FSM, SEN etc) and ensure that this policy is being followed.

Data Analysis

The school collects and stores attendance data using the management information systems (SIMs). The school provides attendance data to the DFE, using SIMs to send data about the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics. The school uses the attendance data to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils. Where attendance is a concern, the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender. The school uses attendance data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and to take action to address and improve those areas. The school will use data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Attendance Incentives

- Children with 100% attendance for a whole term will receive 5 gold stars towards their Bronze, Silver or Gold Badge awards.
- Children with 100% attendance for a whole year will receive 20 gold stars towards their Bronze, Silver or Gold Badge awards.

These achievements are celebrated in our end of term Celebration Assemblies.