

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



George Eliot
Primary School

Revised: May 2017

Ratified by Governing Body: May 2017

Signed:

Review:

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Westminster City Council Attendance Policy. (<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/school-attendance-and-child-employment>)

Introduction

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- *Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;*
- *Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,*
- *Act early to address patterns of absence.*
- *Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.*
- *All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.*

[DfE \(Department for Education\), Nov 2016](#)

AIMS

- To provide a clear framework for the monitoring of pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To raise the percentage of pupils attending school regularly.
- To encourage and aspire for all pupils to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality.
- To provide all members of the school community with clear guidelines as to their responsibilities concerning pupil attendance.
- To maintain clear channels of communication between teachers, parent/carers, the office, relevant school staff (Exec Head/Head of School) and external agencies so that everyone is clear about what action is being taken.
- To set out agreed procedures for addressing issues surrounding absence and lateness.

A. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/ Carers should ensure that:

- Their child attends school regularly and on time.
- They contact the school to provide a valid reason for any absence verbally, by phone or in writing.
- They let school staff know if they have a problem that prevents the regular attendance of their child.
- Their child brings any necessary equipment to school e.g. book bag, water bottle.
- They support efforts by the school to raise the achievement of their child through regular and prompt attendance.

The School should ensure that:

- Class registers are accurately kept
- Children displaying attendance or punctuality difficulties are monitored
- Positive links are made with the ACE (Attendance, Children and Employment) team

- Contact is made with parents who do not provide a reason for absence (*first day calling*)
- Support is offered to parents/carers experiencing genuine difficulty
- Strategies for promoting and raising attendance are in place (keyrings/certificates)

B. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

- Registers are taken twice a day at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session
- Attendance is recorded in classrooms on SIMS and a child that is present is marked with a diagonal line
- Any absence of a child of compulsory school age is shown as:
 - **Authorised**– where the school approves the absence in advance or accepts any explanation offered subsequently
 - **Unauthorised**- all other absences

C. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING ABSENCE OR LATENESS ABSENCE

Only the school (Exec Head/Head of School) can authorise an absence.

When parent/carer gives the teacher a reason in the week of absence, the teacher records the reason in the register. If a letter comes late, the reason can be recorded on the unauthorised absence sheet. The teacher sends it to the office or makes a note on the register saying it has been received, and the reason for absence. The office will amend the unauthorised absence sheet.

All written reasons for an absence are stored in school record files in the school office.

If no reason for the absence is received the procedure is as follows:

The school office will contact parents to determine the reason:

- The reason for absence should usually be given by an adult. The office and the Executive Head/Head of School will decide on the validity of the reason. i.e. 'going shopping' is not valid.
- Older children can give a reason but the school will use their discretion.
- If there is any doubt the member of staff will write "The child said ... "
- The office amends the unauthorised absence sheet at the end of each week and updates the child's record.
- Any letters received by teachers regarding future absences are sent to the office and passed to the Executive Headteacher/Head of School who will give them their attention and keep them on file.

Follow-up Procedures for Authorising Absence

- If no reason is forthcoming from the parent/carer regarding an absence, the office sends a letter home asking for the parent to make contact with them as to why their child was absent from school.
- If no reason is received after one week, another school letter is sent reminding the parent/carer that the school must be informed about reasons for absence and offering to provide support if there is a difficulty.
- If another absence occurs with no reason given, a letter is sent advising the parent/carer that a referral may be made to the ACE team if attendance does not improve.

Persistent Absence or Patterns of Absence

1. If a child's attendance rate drops below 90% the school along with the ACE team, will initiate procedures in consultation with the school. Also, if the 90% attendance rate is due entirely to illness, the school will refer the child and the parent/carer to the School Nurse for a routine check.
2. If a teacher is concerned about persistent absence (with or without reasons), which is not already being followed up by the ACE team, the teacher will raise this with a senior leader either at pupil progress reviews or as appropriate.
3. Following a discussion between the office and members of the senior leadership team, the parent/carer is telephoned and an appointment is made to discuss the situation. A referral to the ACE team may be made and support given.

ABSENCES OTHER THAN SICKNESS

The school may authorise up to ten days of absence for reasons other than sickness. This is discretionary and may or may not be granted by the Executive Headteacher or Head of School depending on circumstances.

Requests for Term-time Absence

We are concerned to preserve the continuity of learning where possible, and any absence can adversely affect a child's ability to settle and make progress.

Non-essential absences are discouraged. Any requests should be made to the Executive Headteacher or Head of School, well in advance.

Absences will not be authorised after the event.

Requests will be considered using the following criteria, and we give some examples:

- Time of the year e.g. Absence during the first two weeks of any term will not be authorised, unless in exceptional circumstances
- Nature of the absence e.g. families with roots in distant countries may need to travel during the winter months
- Child's overall attendance pattern e.g. if a child's general attendance is below 90% in the current or previous year, the absence will not be authorised
- Medical appointments should be made outside school hours. If this is not possible we need to take a copy of an appointment card and be informed of their absence in advance.

This is expected procedure across Westminster.

Holidays

1. General family holidays taken during term time will be actively discouraged and may result in all, or part of the absence being unauthorised, or the child being taken off roll.
2. If the holiday supports the child's cultural roots, permission for extended leave may be considered.

Private Tutoring

It is not our policy to authorise absence for private tutoring. An exception may be made for specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia

Other reasons

All other requests for authorised absence will be at the discretion of the Head teacher.

Absence during Term Time – Referrals to the ACE team

Term time absences that are referred to the ACE team may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. This is in accordance with Westminster LA and DFE guidelines.

PUNCTUALITY/LATENESS

If a child is not present in the classroom by 9.00am the child is marked late in the register. Any child arriving in the classroom after this time must be recorded as late before the register has closed. If a child arrives at school after 9:15am it will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session of that day, unless evidence is provided to giving a valid and justified reason, as agreed by the Executive Head or Head of School.

Persistent Lateness and Procedures

If a teacher is concerned about a child who is persistently late, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer reminding them that children need to be in school on time and that any lateness that is not supported by a valid reason is considered to be unauthorised.

Promoting good attendance and Punctuality

- Rewards Class attendance will be calculated at the end of each week and the school is informed on the following Monday. Each week an award for attendance is given to one class ('George and Georgie' the attendance bears).
- 100% attendance certificates to be awarded to children at a special assembly at the end of each term.
- Early Bird key rings to be awarded to children that have 100% punctuality for a whole term.
- Individual certificates to be rewarded for children where there has been a significant improvement in attendance.
- Information Attendance information is included in the George Eliot newsletters and Head's Report.