

Attendance Policy

EPWORTH PRIMARY ACADEMY



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1. Aims

At Epworth Primary Academy we encourage learners to attend the academy, so that they are ready for learning and later in life, whether that is transition to another school, attendance at college, punctuality at work or as an apprentice.

We promote attendance to ensure learners are safe and as part of ongoing safeguarding. By attending the academy, learners have the opportunity to meet their educational outcomes, have supportive adults in their lives and are able to share any concerns they have with staff who have a genuine interest in their development.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to academy attendance through our whole-academy culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- promoting good attendance
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ensuring every pupil has access to the education to which they are entitled
- acting early to address patterns of absence
- building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend academy

We promote and support punctuality in attending the academy and all lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve academy attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [academy attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern academy attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governors

The Governors are responsible for:

- promoting the importance of academy attendance across the academy's policies and ethos
- making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy
- making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- holding the principal to account for the implementation of this policy

The link governors responsible for attendance are Dianne Barratt and Emma Orcott.

3.2 The Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy at the academy
- monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leaders are responsible for:

- leading attendance across the academy
- offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Principal
- working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- advising the Principal (authorised by the principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance, Sean Woolley, can be contacted via admin@epworthprimary-iet.co.uk 01724 872345

3.4 Class teachers / Assistant teachers

Class teachers / Assistant teachers are responsible for reporting attendance. They will do this by recording the pupil's attendance using the appropriate code on Arbor. Attendance is recorded twice daily. This will be done within 30 minutes of the start of the first session, for either morning or afternoon.

3.5 Academy office staff

Academy office staff will:

- take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on Arbor

- transfer calls from parents and carers to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- call the parents or carers of a pupil if they do not present themselves within 30 mins of the start of the first session, either morning or afternoon. If the academy has not already received warning of the absence, the academy will attempt to make contact with home and ascertain a reason for the absence. It will then be recorded on Arbor.
- record absence codes for children

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every day on time
- call the academy to report their child's absence before 09.15 on the day of the first absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- provide the academy with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend the academy every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Epworth Primary will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

Epworth Primary will complete the attendance register at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- present
- attending an approved off-site educational activity
- absent
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include the:

- original entry
- amended entry
- reason for the amendment
- date on which the amendment was made
- name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- whether the absence is authorised or not
- the nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- the nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for at least 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in the academy by 08.45 on each academy day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 09:00. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:15

Pupils arriving at other times of the day may be marked present if this is part of an agreed plan, for example as part of a pupil's EHCP or at the request of a medical practitioner.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45 or as soon as practically possible by calling the academy office staff (see also section 7) on 01427 872345

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the academy may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

Parents and carers should request leave of absence by calling the academy office on 01427 872345.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence (see section 5 for details of what the academy can authorise.)

The academy will consider the use of remote education for a specific period of time under the requirements of an EHCP or at the request of an Educational Psychologist or medical professional.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- and is identified as being persistently late will have a meeting called with parents to discuss reasons for lateness and how this can be rectified

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend the academy does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the academy will:

- call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, they may attempt a home visit to safeguard the pupil
- identify whether the absence is approved or not
- identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session
- call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the academy will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The academy monitors attendance regularly and will inform parents if their child's attendance falls below 96% and thereafter if attendance remains a concern. Attendance is discussed at parents' evenings where there is a concern and also reported to parents in their child's annual report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. As a guide, exceptional circumstances are considered to be those which are unlikely to happen again during the time that a child is at the academy.

A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request, the principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised** absence include:

- illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Romani people, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- part time timetables and transitions
- EHCP requirements.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The academy or Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal, Local Authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during academy hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Staff at the academy are committed to promoting and achieving good levels of attendance in accordance with the Local Authority policy. Underpinning this commitment is a belief that only if pupils attend the academy regularly can they take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

In addition to this, the academy promotes an environment where pupils feel safe and valued. All pupils are greeted in a respectful manner. The day begins with a soft start where pupils enter as soon as doors are opened, with tasks ready for them to engage with.

A range of rewards and celebrations will underpin good attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

The academy will:

- monitor attendance and absence data termly and yearly across the academy and at an individual pupil level
- identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's academy absence national statistics releases. The underlying academy-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Academy Oversight Committee (governors).

7.1 Analysing attendance

The academy will:

- analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- analyse historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.2 Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- provide regular attendance reports to all teaching staff, and other academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with learners and families
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school. **Severe absence** is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The academy will:

- use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- provide regular attendance reports to all teaching staff, and other academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with learners and families

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Academy Oversight Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Achievement and Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on academy attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the academy
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the academy
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	Academy has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Romani, Roma, and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the academy
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the academy
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	The academy is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at academy after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in academy	Pupil of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Academy site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the academy
#	Planned academy closure	Whole or partial academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

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