

## **Attendance Policy**



**Approved by SIDC on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

**Next review due February 2025**

## 1. Aims

Eaton Bank Academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly\* and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

*\*Our attendance target is 96%*

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 'School Attendance Guidance' [September 2018], from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on 'School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures' [January 2015]. These documents are drawn from the following legislation, setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 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. School procedures

### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student 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;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date on which the amendment was made;
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.15pm for Key Stage 4/5 and 12.50pm for Key Stage 3. Consideration will be made for students who are late to school because of adverse reasons.

### 3.2 Unplanned absence

When there is a genuine and unavoidable reason for absence, parents/carers must contact the Attendance Officer on 01260 273000, before 9.30am, on each day of absence.

On return, a letter should be given to the tutor, explaining the reason for the absence.

If an explanation for an absence is not received, it will be recorded as unauthorised and a phone call will be made and a text message will be sent, from the Academy. A home visit may occur as a follow up action.

If the authenticity of an illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents 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 school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### 3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Any medical appointments should be made outside school hours. If this is not possible, a note or a medical card must be produced. It is important that students attend school directly after/before the appointment, where this is possible. Whole days off for medical appointments will not be authorised without prior consultation with the Attendance Officer.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### 3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed (9.30am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

### 3.5 Following up absence

Eaton Bank Academy will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The regulations relating to holidays have been refined. In April 2012, the Government set out a clear directive that term time holiday leave should only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances'. Amendments came into force from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 and removed references to 'family holiday' and 'extended leave' as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days from any supporting literature. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Eaton Bank Academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

### 4.2 Legal sanctions

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child's regular attendance at the school at which they are registered, where that absence is not authorised by the school. This could include:

- a number of unauthorised absences, perhaps within a rolling academic year;
- one off instances of irregular attendance such as holidays taken during term time without the school's permission.

To address poor attendance and unauthorised absence such as holidays, the local authority may decide to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) fine and prosecute parents/carers under the Education Act 1996, if they choose to ignore the advice from the academy.

The chart below details the Fixed Penalty Notice process including fines and timelines:

<b>Penalties for Unauthorised Absence</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>One child</b>	<b>Two children</b>
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent/carer	£60 per child = £120 per parent/carer
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent/carer	£120 per child = £240 per parent/carer
After 28 days	The parent/carers will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds the parent/carers have failed to secure their child's regular attendance	The parent/carers will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds the parent/carers have failed to secure their children's regular attendance

## **5. Attendance monitoring**

The Attendance Officer monitors student absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The following procedures are in place for identification and referral:

- The Attendance Officer identifies students with cause for concern.
- The Attendance Officer contacts parent(s)/carer(s), notifying them of the student's attendance and discusses ways to support improvement.
- If there is no improvement, the parent(s)/carer(s) are invited in for a meeting to discuss ways to support improvement as part of a monitoring process.
- If attendance improves over the monitoring period, the academy will continue to monitor attendance.
- If there is little or no progress, the academy will refer to The Education Welfare Service.
- The referral to The Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parent(s)/carer(s), minutes of meetings and a print-out of the student's attendance record.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1 The governing body**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a half-termly basis. It also holds the relevant senior leader to account for the implementation of this policy.

## 6.2 Senior Leadership

The pastoral senior leader is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the academy and for monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

## 6.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level;
- reports concerns about attendance to the Director of Pastoral Care;
- works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence;
- arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices;
- receives calls from parents about absence and records this on the school system.

## 6.4. Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes.

### **Policy review**

The Attendance Policy will be reviewed and/ or updated every 3 years or whenever new legislation or regulation deems an update necessary.