

Attendance Policy

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Signed By:	Barry Nolan, <i>Chair of the Board of Trustees</i>
Author:	Andrew Sanders, <i>Regional Director and Trust Safeguarding Lead</i> Lisa Hatcher, <i>Safeguarding Officer</i>
Owner:	Andrew Sanders, <i>Regional Director and Trust Safeguarding Lead</i>
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Version Control

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2	March 2017	Drafted by Hilary McDermott; Ratified by the Board
3	October 2019	Revised by Andrew Sanders (Senior Headteacher) to reflect updated 'Children Missing Education' guidance; Approved by Chair's action in October 2019 and ratified by the Board in November 2019
4	July 2023	Cyclical update, reflecting the latest model policy. There is an accompanying changes
5	September 2024	Updated to reflect Statutory Guidance that comes into force in August 2024
5.1	November 2024	Update to para. 8.7 to reflect national and local guidance on penalty notices. Approved under Chair's Action

This policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of the next review to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or best practice (where appropriate).

Key changes from v4

This policy has been updated to reflect new statutory guidance published in August 2024 ([working together to improve school attendance August 2024](#)) (v5 onwards unless stated)

- **1. Philosophy and aims** – Updated to reflect new statutory guidance
- **2. Legislation and guidance** – updated to reflect new statutory guidance on attendance and pupil registration
- **5.3** – designated lead has been renamed to “Attendance Champion” to reflect DFE guidance. This section has also been revised to reflect new legislation
- **8.2 Registration** – updated to reflect that it is now statutory to upload daily attendance data to the DFE
- **8.7 Penalty notices** – updated to reflect national and local guidance on penalty notices (v5.1)
- **9 Supporting SEND pupils’ attendance and those with mental or physical illness** – new section added
- **10.1 School responsibilities** – revised to reflect new legislation
- **10.2 Recording information in the schools’ admission register** – new section reflecting new legislation
- **Appendix** – updated attendance codes

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1. Philosophy and aims

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Children who frequently miss school often fall behind and they may find it challenging to make the expected progress in their learning. Regular absences may also lead to children finding it difficult in maintaining friendships and they can feel isolated from their school community. All staff across The Eden Academy Trust (the Trust), will work in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers to ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the opportunities and experiences offered by the school. We will encourage and support parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves the maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance through our whole-school 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 full-time 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 school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the statutory requirements of [working together to improve school attendance August 2024](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). In addition the following documents set out the legal powers and duties that govern school 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 2024
- 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. The law relating to attendance

The Education Act 2006 states that:

The parent 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” is used to include those who have parental responsibility and / or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

4. The law relating to safeguarding

¹Poor attendance can be an early alert for safeguarding issues. Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Refer to section 21 of the Eden Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees (the Board) is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for each school within the Trust
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on supporting pupil attendance
- Holding the head to account for the implementation of this policy

Monitoring of pupil attendance will feature in the regular discussions between the standards Trustee portfolio holder and Deputy CEO.

¹ DfE “Children missing education” 2019

5.2. The Head²

The Head is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the individual school within the Trust
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

5.3. The Senior Attendance Champion

The senior attendance champion (or designated senior leader for attendance) is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising and maintain specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

Each school or setting within the Trust will have a designated senior leader responsible for attendance who can be contacted via the school.

5.4. The Attendance Officer

Each school's attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with Local Authority education attendance teams to tackle persistent absence.

Each school or setting within the Trust will have a designated attendance officer who can be contacted via the school.

² For the purposes of this policy, Head refers to the Executive Head, Headteacher or Head of School/Setting/Satellite as appropriate

5.5. Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office each day School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

5.6. Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before the start of school on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

6. Types of absence

Each half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Logging reasons provided for absence enables schools to understand and track pupil groups and fulfil their duties to safeguard children. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons like:

- Illness
- Medical appointments which fall unavoidably in school time
- Emergencies

It is important to note that Ofsted makes no distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence, since the impact of any non-attendance on pupil progress is the same.

7. Equal opportunities

No pupil should be denied permission to be absent from school on grounds of age, race or gender. Consideration should be given to permission for absence on grounds of religious beliefs and / or cultural events. The reasons for the importance of attendance should be made on Education and / or Safeguarding grounds. No one person or group should be made to feel their values have not been respected.

8. Attendance procedures

These procedures aim to:

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- To keep parents informed about lateness and unauthorised absences.
- To support families if they are experiencing difficulties in achieving regular and punctual attendance.

8.1. School attendance targets

Each school within the Trust will set attendance targets each year. Each school will have a system for analysing performance towards the targets. Staff, parents / carers and the pupils themselves all have an important part to play in meeting these targets. Each school will keep parents / carers updated about how their child's attendance compares with the whole school target.

8.2. Registration

All Trust schools will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. The school must record attendance electronically and the School Management Information System will be linked to the governments daily reporting system.

Class registers are to be completed by the agreed time (for each school) at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. It is the legal responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the register is completed.

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
- 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

See the appendix 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

8.3. Absence

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as authorised or unauthorised, using the agreed codes. In the first instance, it is for a parent / carer to provide the school with a reason for absence as quickly as possible. Individual schools will publish the procedure for notifying absences.

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

8.3.1. Following up on Absences

The school will follow up absences immediately if they have not been notified of the reason for absence. Messages from 3rd parties, such as transport escorts should not be deemed as an official notification of absence and parents / carers should be contacted to verify absences. If parents / carers are unable to be contacted, then the school will attempt to speak to alternative contacts held on file. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed if there are concerns about a child's safety.

8.4. Lateness

Each school will make parents aware of the time when the registers close. A child arriving after that time but before the next registration will be marked as late, unless there is an acceptable explanation, e.g. school transport was delayed, medical appointment.

8.5. Exceptional Leave

Pupils are not entitled to be away from school during term time as a result of a family holiday. Such absences will be recorded as unauthorised. Leave of absence will be granted in very exceptional circumstances on application to the Head. These requests should be made by writing in advance to the Head and permission is subject to his or her discretion.

8.6. Cause for Concern

Where there are causes for concern about a pupil's attendance, staff will work in partnership with the parents / carers to improve the situation. Parents / carers of pupils whose absences / lateness give ongoing cause for concern will receive a letter in the first instance. This letter will stress the importance of attending school and the legal requirement to do so. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, further steps will be taken, in line with individual systems for intervention in place in each school, with the intention of quickly reversing the trend of non-attendance.

8.7. Penalty Notices

As a Trust we do not believe that the issuing of penalty notices is a supportive measure to improve pupil attendance but recognise that in exceptional circumstances this may be required as part of a longer-term intervention. For example, if there is no improvement in a child's attendance after the school has carried out further steps, the Local Authority may choose to apply a fixed penalty notice for non-attendance. All local authorities are responsible for publishing a Local Code of Conduct. Penalty notices should always be issued in line with the Local Code of Conduct and with the National Framework. Penalty notices should only be issued when a school or a local authority have considered the following;

- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?

The National and Local Frameworks will be made available to parents

9. Supporting SEND pupils' attendance and those with mental or physical illness

The school will consider, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and the DfE's Working together to improve attendance (2024) the support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities where it is deemed appropriate. A reasonable adjustment is not the same as lowering expectations; it means that some pupils need additional support to ensure that they meet the high expectations required of all pupils.

Most pupils at the school will have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). For these pupils the academy/school will report a decline in attendance to the local authority or where barriers to attendance are identified. The local authority may then decide to review the EHCP and make amendments if appropriate. Please see further details on SEN support.

Pupils who are struggling with their mental or physical health are still expected to attend the academy/school who will make every effort to mitigate the barriers to the attendance. The Attendance Champion will work with the pupil (if appropriate), parents/carers and possibly external partners in creating an effective plan of support.

10. Children missing education

"Children Missing Education" 2016 contains guidance for schools on its statutory duties and contains non statutory advice for schools.

10.1. Schools' Responsibilities

When the school agrees to admit a pupil then they should be entered on the admissions register on the agreed date of entry whether they attend or not. If the

pupil does not attend, they should make reasonable enquiries to establish their whereabouts and notify the child's local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Make all required returns regarding pupils' admissions, attendance and absence to the local authority. Provide the Local Authority with full details of pupils where a school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively due to sickness in line with statutory guidance for [Children with health needs who cannot attend School](#)

If a pupil is in the care of the local authority, the academy/school will inform the pupil's social worker and the Virtual Schools Head of their absence. If a child is being supported by the Youth Offending Team, the academy will contact the relevant key worker regarding the absence.

When a pupil has been excluded for 6 or more days the school has a duty to arrange full time education.

10.2. Recording Information in the schools' admission register

Each academy/school will maintain an admissions register in line with government guidance. The admissions register contains personal details of every pupil along with the date of admission or re-admission to the establishment, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.

Where possible, the academy/school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.

The school will notify the local authority if a child is to be removed from the admissions register at a non-standard transition point (e.g. when a child leaves the school before completing their current phase). Pupils with EHCP plans are covered by the SEND code of practice and these pupils should not be removed from roll without the agreement of the LA's SEND team. Almost all pupils in the Eden Academy have an EHCP plan.

10.3. When the whereabouts of a child is unknown

If a child is absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown the school should make reasonable enquiries to locate them. Paragraph 37 of "Children Missing Education" outlines the steps that can be taken to locate a child. The school must record the actions it has taken to locate the child. Where the safety of a child is in doubt then a referral should be made to social care or the Police.

11. Accountability

The Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. The Head will submit this data to Trustees at the end of each term as part of the School Management Information return.

12. Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels

13. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Eden Academy Trust has produced an attendance Toolkit to support schools with addressing attendance issues.

14. Attendance monitoring

Attendance at Trust schools is monitored as part of termly safeguarding monitoring by the Trust safeguarding officer and through the termly sharing of School management information with Trustees. Further monitoring is carried at a school level.

14.1. Monitoring attendance

Each school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are 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 school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Board. Monitoring of pupil attendance will feature in the regular discussions between the standards Trustee portfolio holder and Deputy CEO.

14.2. Analysing attendance

The school 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
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

14.3. Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

14.4. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (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
- Use the Trust attendance toolkit to support improved attendance
- Use the EAT attendance toolkit to support the reduction of pupil absence

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees or delegated committee, Trustee or Executive Director as specified in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation at that time.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- The Trust's child protection and safeguarding policy
- Individual schools' behaviour policies

Appendix: Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition
/ \	Present. / Morning \ Afternoon
L	Late arrival before the register is closed.
Attending a place other than the school	
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority.
V	Attending an educational visit or trip.
P	Participating in a sporting activity.
W	Attending work experience.
B	Attending any other approved educational activity.
D	Dual registered at another school.
Leave of Absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination.
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance.
Absent - other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes.
R	Religious observance.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made.

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.
Absent - unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school.
N	Reason for absence not yet established.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed.
Administrative codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register.
#	Planned whole school closure.