

Eastwick Infant School & Eastwick Junior School

School Attendance Policy (2016-2017)

1. Introduction and purpose of policy

School education lays the vital foundation of a child's life. Irregular attendance can severely impede academic and social development. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer.

Our school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, children, parents and our Education Welfare Officer can work in partnership. We shall monitor attendance and work to solve quickly any identified problems so that absence and lateness are kept to a minimum.

All staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality. Where there are difficulties our Home School Link Worker will liaise with families and other agencies when this is appropriate. In addition our in-school attendance officers, retain close links with the Educational Welfare Officer and truancy teams. At Eastwick Infant & Junior Schools good attendance and punctuality are seen as achievements in their own right.

2. Aims

At Eastwick Infant & Eastwick Junior Schools we aim to:

- Support pupils and their parents / carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning.
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school.
- Make parent/carers aware of their legal requirements.

3. School Times

The teachers open the doors at 8.45am. The school day begins at 8.55am. Pupils must be in their classroom by 8.55am for registration.

Lunchtime registration is at 1pm for the infant department and 12.55pm for the junior department.

School finishes at 3.00pm for the infant department and 3.20pm for the junior department.

4. Taking the Register

By law, schools must take a morning and an afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. If a pupil has to leave school for any reason during the school day, the parent/carer must contact the school with an explanation. Pupils leaving the school site during the day must sign out at the school office. Pupils attendance and punctuality is recorded and will be passed on to future schools.

5. Lateness

5.1 Late arrivals

The registers close at 9.00am and at 1pm. When a child arrives late, it interrupts concentration and wastes valuable learning time. Children who arrive late must be accompanied to the school office by a parent/guardian and sign in. If a child arrives after 9am he/she will be marked late. If there is a valid reason for lateness, e.g. doctor's appointment, this may then be authorized.

Registers are carried out manually at the infant department and on the computer system at the junior school. Infant registers and junior register bags must be sent to the office promptly with letters of absence and the laminated card of absentees recorded.

5.2 Late collection

Children should always be collected punctually at 3pm at the infant department and 3.15pm at the junior department. If a child is not collected they are asked to return to our Office. Persistent failure to collect children on time will result in a letter from the head teacher. Emergency contact numbers will be used if we are unable to contact parents/carers. Social Services will be informed if any child is left uncollected after 5pm.

If parents/carers have an emergency that means they are going to be significantly late, school should be informed as soon as possible.

5.2.1 Late collection after clubs and booster classes

Parents/Carers will be informed in the initial letter about the importance of collecting their children on time. After one late collection parents/carers are given a warning letter. If parents/carers are subsequently late the child's place will be withdrawn.

5 Absences

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given for these absences.

5.1 Notifying the School of absence

Parents/Carers are asked to inform our school on the first day of their children's absence by written note, verbal message or phone call. We operate a 'First Day Absence Call' system if no message has been received by 10.00am. All reasons for absence must be recorded on the computer registration system. It's important for Parents/Carers to realise that not all reasons for absence may be regarded as valid and consequently may not be authorised.

5.2 Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Absence may be authorised for illness, hospital appointments, school visits/attending interviews, for religious reasons, or for unavoidable circumstances such as bereavement, moving house or serious emergency.

5.2.1 Examples of Authorised Absence include:

- Genuine illness of the pupil
- Hospital/dental appointment for the pupil **
- Compassionate grounds
- Religious observance (faith of the parents/carers)

**Routine dentist or doctor appointments should be made, as far as possible, outside of the school day.

If the teacher is concerned that the absence may not be due to the reason given they should then inform either the in-school attendance officer or Head Teacher who may need to discuss the matter with the parent/carer and/or the EWO.

5.22 Examples of Unauthorised Absence include:

- Shopping trip
- Birthday event,
- Oversleeping due to a late night,
- Looking after other children,
- Letting the gas man in.
- Visiting relatives.

5.3 SPECIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

We have thirteen weeks holiday each year. Family holidays should take place during the school holiday dates. If a holiday in term time cannot be avoided, a leave of absence form should be filled in, one month prior to the date of departure. The Headteacher will then decide whether or not to authorise it. Please do not book your holiday before authorisation.

Leave of absence in term time can only be granted in *exceptional circumstances* at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Where holidays are taken which do not fall into the "exceptional circumstances" category, these will be recorded on a child's attendance record as "unauthorised absence". All requests for more than 10 school days holiday leave within a 12 month period must be put in writing to the Director of Education.

Parents/carers of children who are consistently late or whose attendance is perceived to be poor will be referred to our Head Teacher to discuss strategies for improvement.

6. Partnership with parents

Prior to children joining our schools all parents/carers are sent an information pack, part of which emphasises the importance of good attendance and punctuality. This is also emphasised at the meeting to which all parents/carers are invited prior to their children joining the school.

Parents/carers of children who join our school in different year groups have an individual meeting with the head teacher where, again, the importance of good attendance and punctuality are emphasised.

School newsletters report our attendance and punctuality statistics to parents/carers on a termly basis and include attendance issues or successes in particular year groups. Individual yearly attendance and lateness figures for children are sent to parents/carers as part of the end of year reports. Our Home/School Agreement emphasises the need for regular attendance and punctuality.

Early intervention with parents/carers of children causing concern is important so that any problems can be sorted out at an early stage in order that good attendance or punctuality is not compromised. Children's levels of attendance are also monitored regularly and parents/carers of any child whose attendance dips to or falls below 90% with no authorised reason receives a letter. 90% attendance is the level set by the C.Y.P.S. (Children and Young People's Service).

If a letter and a meeting with the Head fail to secure an improvement, we refer children to our Education Welfare Officer.

By both adhering to our policy, and by our school, parents/carers and children working together in partnership, we hope to promote even better attendance and punctuality for our children, which in turn, should lead to increased achievement and the ability for our children to more easily reach their full potential.