

Engayne

Primary Attendance and Absence Policy

Date policy last reviewed: September
2023

Signed by:



Headteacher

18/09/2023

Date: 18/09/2023



Chair of governors

Date: _____

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Statement of intent

Engayne believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

Our ethos for attendance working together as partners as outlined in Government Guidance :

Expect and aspire to high attendance for all

Monitor

Listen and Understand

Facilitate and support

Formalise support

Enforce

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance lead is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

4. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

5. Pupil expectations

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, 97 percent throughout the year.

6. Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a weekly data check to monitor and review next steps
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance list for work with HSSW.

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with pupils/parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Liaise with HSSW to Lead regularly to check-in to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

7. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone or in person as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence and each subsequent day of absence. A note in on the first day that their child returns to school with a signed explanation of why they were absent is desirable and will be sought if the calls have not been clear as to the nature of the illness. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments that are unavoidably in school time provided a written explanation is received.

If a child is absent without parental notification these are our actions:

1. A telephone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
2. If we can not make contact with the parent/guardian other contacts (4 preferably) on our system will be called.
3. If 1 and 2 are unsuccessful 2 members of staff will call at the home address.
4. If 1,2, and 3 are unsuccessful the police/MASH team will be called.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a half termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the borough attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

8. Parental involvement /Information

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

If a child does not want to attend school for any reason it is important that the parents/carers do not collude with the child by supplying a note stating sickness as a reason for absence. Parents/carers must discuss the problem with the school at the first opportunity and, if it cannot be resolved a referral may be made to the Attendance and Behavioural Support Service.

A summary of a child's attendance record is attached to the Annual Report. At the end of the year all parents receive a report about their child's progress. This report includes a record of their child's attendance throughout the whole year and also shows any unauthorised absences.

Where attendance has been disappointing the head teacher and/or class teacher will make comment on this fact and possibly highlight how it has affected the child's overall progress throughout the year.

If a child's attendance is shown to be giving us a cause for concern a letter will be written to the parents informing them of this. Often parents can be unaware that a few single days of absence can soon add up.

Similarly if a child is persistently late a letter will be written to parents informing them of this. Attendance records are passed onto Secondary school.

If a situation does not improve the Attendance and Behaviour Support team will be informed and will discuss contact with parents by phone/letter/parent meeting or a visit the child's home.

9. Attendance register

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

Coding will continue to be guided by government and borough guidance during any further disruption such as the covid 19 pandemic.

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. EYFS part time staggered start.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years

Attendance Lead

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to SLT/HSSW and borough attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the borough attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The school attendance lead will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence, and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

10. Lateness

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated. Even if a child is just 10-15 minutes late every day they miss the very important introduction for that day's lessons. All pupils arriving late to school must report to the school office where they attendance will be recorded for the register.

The school day starts at 8:50 (KS1 and KS2) Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by 8.55 Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 9:00. Any child arriving between 9.00 and 9.05 will be recorded as L.
- After lunch, registers are marked by 12:50 and 1:20pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 12.55 and 1:25pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- Pupils attending after 9.05 will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Pupils arriving later than 9.50 will be marked as absent and a note will be requested to be supplied with a reason for the absence.

11. Term-time leave

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases. The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis.

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

Current fines are:

£60 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 21 days.

£120 per child imposed to each parents if paid within 28 days.

Please note we will seek medical/documents for evidence if children are ill prior to or after a holiday and if a child is not back in school due to a flight delay. Their absences will be marked as unauthorised until evidence is produced. Evidence should be produced for the school within 7 school days. Parents/Carers should not ask the children to give a different reason for their absence in order not to report a holiday as this puts all parties in an unfair position.

We continue to use the borough guidance from Autumn 2022 after covid in terms of postponed/rescheduled holidays/events.

12. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher.

Our lunch time hours are 11:45pm – 12:45 and 12:15pm to 1:15pm. Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no earlier than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the Inventory system register at the school office. A member of office staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises without a parent present.

TRUANCY

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

13. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

14. Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

15. Appointments

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card or screen shot of the text should be sent to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

16. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 95 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

17. Young carers

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring

and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

19 Notified Travelling

When the parents of traveller children notify the school in advance that their child/ children will be absent from school for the reason of travelling, a pack of work will be set by the class teacher. The work set will be appropriate to the age and ability of the pupil and may consist of:

- Reading an appropriate text/book
- Commenting upon the reading through activities such as book reviews, story board retelling, and drawing of favourite character and explaining choice.
- Consolidation worksheets
- Learning tables and number facts. This may be through games or short practices.
- Work relevant to the topics being covered by the class particularly in humanities while the child is absent. (This will ensure a smoother return for the child)
- On-line work including My Maths and Bug Club.

The pack of work should, where possible, be given and explained to the parent with the child present particularly in the case of KS1 children or if necessary just to the child.

When the child/children returns to school, following the period of travelling, the work will be discussed with the teacher as a means to helping them settle back into school. Depending on the nature of the work set, (e.g. speech and language work), it may not be a requirement for the work to be returned to school.

The notification given by the parents, preferably via an e mail, will be kept on file and in the appropriate section (Notified Travelling) of the 'Absences' folder.

Where notification has been given and work has been set the child is not considered to be absent from school but educated off site (code B).

The school will be following borough guidance of 200 sessions as a minimum requirement for families travelling to attend school. Travelling families will be aware of the advice and requirements for notified travelling and the school will monitor accordingly.

20 Rewarding good attendance

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance in the following ways:

Golden time and class rewards as voted for by school council and class councils

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways

- Certificates and reward activities

21 Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 97 percent

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is SEPT 2024.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Engayne has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
2. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls to 95 percent, the attendance lead can also make a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary and has a discussion with the pupil.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance lead contacts the HSSW and borough attendance team to monitor and discuss next steps.
7. The pupil's attendance is monitored weekly and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the HSSW and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
8. If targets are not met, the attendance lead makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.
9. Engayne are working with due regard and note within the borough attendance strategy plans with these aims to enhance and support our families with regular school attendance:

Development of an *Attendance pathway*;

- Need to move away from an attendance being an 'Education' issue, to a Children's Services issue.
- Look at use of Early Help Assessment prior to any enforcement.
- Needs to be restorative –high support; high challenge.
- Must aim to address underlying concerns in family that impact on the child.
- Support schools with guidance and tools, including training.
- Monitor compliance and quality through performance scorecard.
- Consistency of approach, with standards letters etc.
- Regular item at relevant fora, and regular meetings with schools, with focus on welfare issues contributing to poor attendance.
- Strong and consistent legal advice.

Guidance - First Day Calling (LBH GUIDANCE UPDATED JAN 2022)

1. Get registers in promptly
2. Listen to absence calls, read absence emails (or however messages come in)
3. Bring together registers, 'lates' register, absence calls, any other information you might have about the absence of a child – produce the list of children absent with no explanation
4. Consider a double check in school before you start calling, ensure information on registers is accurate
5. Start first day calling for children absent without explanation, call everyone on the contact list until you get an answer.
Leave messages if there is a voicemail option. If you have text message systems use them – but follow up with phone calls.
You might get an overseas ring tone – is the family abroad but they haven't told you?

Once you make contact, stop this 'first day calling' process - Continue to manage the unauthorised absence, using your attendance processes.

6. Call the contact list at least twice.
7. By this stage, if you have a good contact list (4 numbers recommended) you probably have a reply.
8. If no reply at all from anyone on the contact list for the child
 - Does the child have additional agency support, such as a social worker?
 - Do you have any in-school intelligence?
 - Does anyone in school know the family?

No explanation from a supportive family is very worrying – so don't just concentrate on children who you already know to be vulnerable.

9. Make a prompt home visit.
10. Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, it is essential to take action without delay. If there is an immediate concern that a child is at risk of significant harm, a referral to the Local Authority Children's Social Care MASH should be made . If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police should also be involved.

If there is no immediate concern for the child, a referral to your attendance team will be required. If there is no response after a further 24 hours of trying to make contact to allow for family emergencies, contact the Local Authority Children's Social Care MASH Team.

MASH (and police, as appropriate) will triage your request and may carry out a welfare call as a result.

Ensure your parents are aware of this process, it may have a positive effect on your attendance figures.