



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## Attendance Policy

### Attendance Policy

Eastfield Primary Academy (EPA) recognises the fact that regular attendance and academic success go 'hand in hand'. Therefore, it is incumbent upon EPA to ensure that:

- I. Registration procedures are rigorous and comply with the DfE regulations.
- II. Accurate attendance statistics are compiled to inform future targets for student attendance.
- III. Unauthorised absences are promptly detected and followed up.
- IV. Long term absentees are successfully reintegrated on their return to EPA.

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring regular and punctual attendance of their children.

### Aims

Our aims are:

- To strive to maintain the excellent level of attendance at EPA.
- To ensure that regular attendance assists our pupils to be successful learners.

### Background

EPA endorses the following DfE statements:

- A student who is authorised to take ten days' holiday during one whole academic year will attain only 94.7% attendance.
- There is a strong link between the amount of absence and the results/qualifications that a pupil achieves.
- Every lesson matters - children who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well at school.

### **1** Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when EPA is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures and support. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make EPA a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Once a child is enrolled at EPA, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends every day, unless prevented from doing so by illness or other exceptional circumstances for which any absence is authorised by **us**.
- 1.3 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the Academy Improvement Committee (AIC) are responsible for making sure that EPA keeps an

attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session. This register will also indicate whether an absence was 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

#### 1.4 Definition of 'authorised absence':

- an absence is classified as authorised when EPA has ascertained that a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and we have received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones us to explain the absence. Exceptional cases of religious observances or particular family circumstances may also result in an authorised absence being granted by us.
- only EPA can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers **do not** have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of EPA to go shopping during school hours, or allows a child to stay away from school to celebrate a family birthday or go on a family outing, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

#### 1.5 Definition of 'unauthorised absence':

- an absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from EPA without the permission of both us and a parent.
- therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from EPA without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## 2 Aims and objectives

### 2.1 Our aims and objectives in relation to pupils' attendance are to:

- maximise attendance so that all pupils can gain full access to our curriculum and be enabled to reach their full academic potential and achieve a high level of personal and social well-being;
- ensure that pupils are safe and that their whereabouts are known;
- eliminate unauthorised absence;
- discourage families from arranging holidays during school terms;
- ensure that parents and carers understand clearly when it is appropriate to keep their children off school and when this constitutes unauthorised absence;
- ensure that school staff and parents and carers are familiar with and adhere to our procedures for registering pupils' attendance, and reporting, recording and following up a pupil's absence or lateness;
- ensure that pupils and their parents and carers understand the importance of regular and consistent attendance;
- make clear to parents and carers the consequences of failing to ensure that their children attend EPA;
- ensure that pupils enjoy coming to school and are highly motivated to attend regularly and consistently.

### **3 Procedure if a child is absent**

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the Attendance Officer or office staff, who will endeavour to contact a parent or carer.

EPA encourages parents to telephone the school by 9.30am to inform them of their child's absence through illness, each morning of absence. This prevents the Attendance Officer or office staff having to make numerous phone calls and provides reassurance of a child's safety in the event that parents cannot be contacted by telephone, for any reason. Parents should not use e-mail or text messaging to inform us of a child's absence.

- 3.2 Evidence may be presented to the Attendance Officer or office staff prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has an unavoidable medical appointment.
- 3.3 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the Attendance Officer or office staff. EPA will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

### **4 Requests for leave of absence for a child**

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible and do not miss out on crucial learning which may put them at an educational disadvantage. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances in which a parent may legitimately request 'leave of absence' for a child to attend, for example, children with parents in the forces, or a family in crisis (such exceptional circumstances would not include normal events such as birthdays or regular religious ceremonies). We expect parents and carers to contact us to obtain authorisation at least a week in advance. Normally such exceptional requests will be allowed but will be designated as unauthorised. All absences are unauthorised and only those that meet the criteria will not receive the penalty points.

- 4.2 Parents and carers have no statutory right to withdraw their children from EPA for a family holiday. Children are required to attend school for 190 days in a school year, leaving 175 days of weekends and school holidays. Parents and carers should always endeavour to arrange family holidays when their children are not required to be in school.

- 4.3 EPA considers pupils' continuous attendance at school to be so essential for their academic achievement that it is not our policy to routinely authorise an allocation of term time holiday days to families. Only where exceptional circumstances have resulted in a family being unable to take an annual holiday during the school holidays, will such requests be considered. Such exceptional requests for longer periods of absence should be made at least two weeks in advance. Each case will be considered individually by the Principal, in consultation with the Chair of the AIC.

- 4.4 For further information please refer to the 'Request For Leave' Policy.

## **5 Long-term absence**

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from EPA for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that, where possible, the child can keep in touch with the learning going on in their class.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, EPA will contact the Local Authority (LA) support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school, where possible.

## **6 Repeated unauthorised absences**

- 6.1 EPA will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit us to discuss the reasons. If the situation does not improve, EPA will arrange a School Attendance Panel (SAP) meeting and targets will be set. If attendance does not improve and targets not reached, EPA will arrange an Academy Improvement Committee Panel (AICP) meeting. Targets will be set again, and if these targets are not met, legal action will be considered.
- 6.2 The Academy Improvement Committee, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action, possibly resulting in a fixed penalty fine, against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to EPA on a regular basis.

## **7 Persistent Absence**

- 7.1 Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).
- 7.2 Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

## **8 Rewards for good attendance**

- 8.1 While we would always seek to avoid disadvantaging children who, through illness or other circumstances, have been unavoidably absent from EPA, we do, from time to time, give attendance incentive rewards or certificates for children with 100 per cent attendance over a term or a whole school year, in order to maintain a focus on the importance of regular attendance.

## **9 Attendance targets**

- 9.1 EPA sets attendance targets each year which are always in line with National Targets.

## **10 Monitoring and review**

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the AIC to monitor overall attendance; attendance data is reported to the AIC on a half termly basis by the Principal. The AIC also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The AIC will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they can be.
- 10.2 EPA will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 10.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in our prospectus and on our website.
- 10.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the Attendance Officer or office staff immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Principal, who will contact the parents or carers.
- 10.5 This policy will be reviewed yearly by the AIC or sooner if necessary.