



THE EDWARD RICHARDSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of last review	Autumn 2025
Term next due for update	Autumn 2026
Member of staff responsible for this update	Headteacher
Governor responsible for this update	Chair of Governors
Requirement	Statutory

Throughout this policy, the term ‘parents’ refers universally to all our parents and carers.

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. The Edward Richardson Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education, including ‘Working together to improve school attendance’ (DfE 2022), in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child’s good attendance, the headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning, and develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

The Law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent of every child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that the child receives efficient full-time education suitable to the child’s age, ability and any special educational needs he or she may have. Where a parent fails to ensure regular school attendance of their child at a school at which they are a registered pupil, then the parent may be guilty of an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Where a child has not attended regularly at school, the Local Authority has the options of issuing a fixed penalty notice in respect of the parents of the child, bringing proceedings before the family courts for an Education Supervision Order or prosecuting the parents under Section 444 before the Magistrates court.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. Through this Policy we aim to:

- improve pupils’ achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality;
- achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with identified chronic health issues that result in the child being unable to attend school on a regular basis (because of the identified condition);
- create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school;
- raise awareness within the community (parents, carers and pupils) of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education;
- work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their

potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence;

- promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility;
- establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties;
- recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance;
- raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils;
- ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually;
- equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development;
- maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters;
- developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness;
- developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer, for example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- Authorised absences due to illness are common in schools. Teachers will not be expected to revisit lessons missed by a child due to short term illness (up to two weeks). Teachers will ensure that the child receives additional support when the concepts missed are covered in subsequent lessons. For longer term absences, teachers may provide work to be completed out of school, in collaboration with parents and health professionals.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- Teachers will not provide work for children who miss school when the absence is unauthorised.

Holidays in term time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday, so **all holiday requests will be unauthorised** unless there are exceptional circumstances. Applications for leave under exceptional circumstances must be made in advance, and may be authorised at the discretion of the school. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Parents must **request** leave at least four weeks in advance, in writing, using the **Pupil Leave of Absence Request Form** (Appendix 1 – to be digitalised in 2024-25 year), and must only remove their child if and when they have been notified, in writing, that the leave has been authorised.

We will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- During a pupil's first term in school – a child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible
- In the four weeks leading up to, and during assessment periods (e.g. SATs)
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's absence would result in their attendance rate falling below 90% (persistent absence)

Exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances are one-off events which are unavoidable. Examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral or a family emergency which prevents parents being able to get their child to school. Taking a trip abroad to attend a family wedding is classed as a holiday and will not be authorised, although the day of the wedding itself may be authorised. Each request for leave under exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

Medical appointments

Medical appointments during school hours will not be authorised unless an appointment card, hospital letter or text from the GP/Hospital/Dentist is forwarded to school. Providing these retrospectively is acceptable. Absence will only be authorised for the duration of the appointment plus any reasonable travel time. Routine medical/dental appointments should be made for outside of school hours.

Procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- maintain appropriate registration processes;
- maintain appropriate attendance data;
- communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness;
- follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents have not communicated with the school;
- inform parents what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence;
- strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time;
- work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- inform Lincolnshire County Council of child whose attendance causes concern and where parents have not responded to school initiatives to improve;
- report attendance statistics to Lincolnshire Local Authority and the DfE when requested.

All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the headteacher.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- informing the headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them;
- providing background information to support referrals;
- emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness;
- following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register;
- discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- overall monitoring of school attendance;
- identifying trends in authorised and unauthorised absence;
- contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues;
- monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised;
- liaising with Lincolnshire County Council;
- liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- monitoring attendance and liaising with the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) in the first instance to ensure necessary support is in place for families, before escalating concerns as detailed above;
- following steps detailed in the Working Together to Improve Attendance flowchart (appendix 3).

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents;
- collating and recording registration and attendance information;
- taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence;
- ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed;
- contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made;
- recording details of children who arrive late or go home;
- sending out annual attendance reports to all parents.

Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually, unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a non-routine medical appointment (usually following a referral by the GP);
- **contacting the school office by 9.15 on the first morning of absence, giving accurate reasons for the absence;**
- informing the school in advance of any hospital appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the hospital (letter/text);
- minimising requests for leave of absence during term time. Requests for absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances;
- talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

The school gate is open from 8.45am until 8.55am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into the premises. Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.05am and by 1.05pm. All attendance records are documented using Arbor, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff contact the parent to establish the reason for the absence. Where we are unable to contact the parent, we will continue to persist until contact is made in the interest of safeguarding all our pupils. Where there are concerns about the wellbeing of the child, members of school staff may conduct a home visit.

Punctuality

Once the gate is closed at 8.55am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Records are kept of those pupils who are late (after 9.10am); this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (attendance code U). Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (attendance code M).

Extraordinary changes to the school day

Under exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to temporarily make changes to the school day, with earlier or later start and finish times for some children. Any such changes, and the reasons behind, them will be communicated clearly to parents. In this situation, attendance registers will be completed by teachers 10 minutes after the time that the children are expected in school. Any child arriving more than 10 minutes past the expected time without good reason will be marked as 'late' (L). Any child arriving more than 30 minutes late will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U).

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96%. When attendance becomes a concern, the school will always seek to work together with parents/carers to improve this, through the agreement of strategies and/or target setting.

The table below shows procedures and actions depending on the level of absence:

Percentage (Year to Date)	Rating	Possible Action
96%+	Good attendance – it's as expected	Continued monitoring
91-95%	At risk of persistent absence	Letter of concern
80-90%	Persistent absence (attendance likely to affect attainment and progress at school)	- Letter of concern - Invited to meet with Headteacher/FSW - Fixed Penalty Notice
51-79%	At risk of severe absence	- Letter of concern - Invited to meet with Headteacher/FSW - Involvement of Education Welfare Officer - Fixed Penalty Notice
<50%	Severe absence	- Letter of concern - Invited to meet with Headteacher - Involvement of Education Welfare Officer - Fixed Penalty Notice - Magistrates Court

If a pupil has 10 unauthorised sessions, which is equal to 5 school days, within a 10 week period, a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore, where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of these. Initially, concerns about attendance are raised with parents informally by the class teacher who will offer support, with the aim to improve attendance. Should attendance not improve, the headteacher will request a meeting with the parents to further discuss the reasons for the poor attendance.

As a school, we acknowledge that poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

Other Agencies that may be used where appropriate include:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services
- Educational Psychologists
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Social Services
- Local police
- Early Help Workers
- School Nursing Team
- Lincolnshire County Council Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team
- Lincolnshire County Council Inclusion and Attendance Team

Each situation is considered on a case-by-case basis. Following meetings with the headteacher and engagement of outside agencies as appropriate, where parents have not made every effort to improve their child's attendance over a period of time, then the school has a responsibility to inform Lincolnshire County Council, who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), start court proceedings or prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Parents will receive a formal letter of notification from the school prior to this.

Pupil Leave of Absence Request Form

DIGITAL ONLY: <https://form.jotform.com/243242742657055>