



THE EDWARD RICHARDSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of last review	Autumn 2026
Term next due for update	Autumn 2027
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 with regard to the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the Department for Education’s statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), and relevant guidance and procedures from Lincolnshire County Council.

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.

The headteacher will consider each request individually and decide whether exceptional circumstances justify the absence and, if so, how much leave to grant. The pupil's attendance history, the timing of the request and its effect on their education may inform that decision, but will not automatically determine it. A holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation is not normally an exceptional circumstance.

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

Parents should arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible. Where an appointment during school hours is unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance where possible and provide appointment evidence if requested. The pupil should be absent only for the appointment and reasonable travel time. Where there is a genuine concern about the reason given for illness-related absence, we will discuss this with parents, consider appropriate support and may ask for suitable evidence. We will not routinely require medical evidence for every illness-related absence.

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. The headteacher is the Senior Attendance Champion and leads the school's strategic approach to attendance. Parents should contact the school office about a pupil's absence or punctuality on a day-to-day basis. Parents who need more detailed support with attendance should contact the headteacher through the school office via email or phone.

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 Late Pupil sign-in 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 hospital or other medical appointments during school hours, where possible, and providing appointment evidence if requested.
- 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. Every entry must be preserved for six years from the date on which it was made.

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

Pupils arriving after the school's expected arrival time of 8.55am must report to the school office. A pupil arriving after the morning register has closed at 9:15am will be recorded as late (code L). A pupil arriving after the register has closed will be recorded as Code U (late after registration closes), unless another attendance code applies to the circumstances.

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 Code U (late after registration closes).

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

We aim for attendance of at least 96%, while recognising that individual circumstances, including medical needs and disability, may require a tailored response. We monitor attendance and patterns of absence so that we can offer support as soon as concerns emerge; we will not wait until attendance falls below 90%. A pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of sessions, and severely absent when they miss 50% or more. These measures include both authorised and unauthorised absence. We will discuss barriers with the pupil and parents, agree and review appropriate support, and involve other services or Lincolnshire County Council where needed.

Unauthorised absence and legal action

A penalty notice must be considered when a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions need not be consecutive, and the period can span terms or school years. Meeting the threshold does not mean a notice will automatically be issued: we will consider the individual circumstances, whether support is appropriate or has been offered, and Lincolnshire County Council's Code of Conduct. The local authority decides whether to issue a penalty notice. A first notice for a parent in a three-year period is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days; a second is £160 with no reduction. No more than two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years. Where further unauthorised absence occurs, or a penalty notice is unsuitable, the local authority may consider another legal intervention, including prosecution.

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.

Part-time timetables

Every pupil is entitled to a suitable full-time education. A temporary part-time timetable will be considered only in exceptional circumstances as part of an individual support plan, where full-time attendance is not currently in the pupil's best interests. It will have an agreed end date, regular reviews and a plan for returning to full-time education or suitable alternative provision. We will agree the arrangement in writing with parents and relevant professionals and notify Lincolnshire County Council's Attendance Team when the plan is agreed. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour or as a long-term arrangement.

Children missing education and removal from roll

Where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established, we will make reasonable enquiries promptly and work with Lincolnshire County Council under its children missing education procedures. We will remove a pupil from the admission register only where a ground in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies, and will make the required notification to the local authority. We will seek information about the pupil's next school and address wherever possible.

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>