



# Attendance and Punctuality

## The Role of Parents/Carers



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***Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.***

Taken from Academy Attendance - guidance for maintained academies, academies, independent academies, and local authorities.  
Department for Education, Nov 2016

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## Why are good attendance and punctuality important?

Education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to both academic and social development, which in turn will improve the life chances of children and young people.

## What is good attendance?

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
95-96%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4

## So, what does 90% attendance mean?

90% attendance over a school year = ½ day absent every week!

## It's your responsibility

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually to optimise their learning, achieve the best they can and get the most out of their school experience. Failure to do so is an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

If a child is registered at a school, they must by law attend that school regularly and punctually. Children should only miss school if they are ill or unable to attend for some other unavoidable reason.

Eastbrook Primary Academy believe attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole academy community and the local community. We will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance early and try to resolve any difficulties.



## Term time leave

Amendments to the 2006 Government regulations (appendix 1) make it clear that the current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child for a family holiday or extended leave of absence during term time.

Any application for leave must be in 'exceptional circumstances' and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

If you feel your request could be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' a completed request form must be sent to the academy for the attention of the headteacher before the holiday is booked.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include a short absence (usually a day) to attend a close family wedding, funeral, or a special family celebration (for example an 80th birthday of a grandparent), a special family reunion, or a special religious/cultural festival.

## How can parents/carers help their child have good attendance and punctuality?

As part of our whole academy approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Notify the academy by telephone on the first day that their pupil is unavailable to attend.
- Avoid making medical/dental appointments during the school day.
- Do not take children out of school during term time and in the case of exceptional circumstances, permission must be granted by the Headteacher.
- Promote the value of excellent attendance at home and follow the procedures set by the academy.
- Advise the academy of any difficulties they may be having so that support can be provided as appropriate.
- Are aware that Section 444 of the Education Act states, *'If a pupil of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.'*

## What is an unauthorised absence?

These are absences that the academy does not consider reasonable and for which a leave of absence has not been given. Some examples of this type of absence include:

- Shopping, day trip, or a visit to a theme park.
- For a birthday treat.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Looking after other children or family members.
- Medical appointments for other family members.
- Truancy.
- Parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.

## What is an authorised absence?

There may be some circumstances where the academy will authorise absence such as:

- Illness.
- Hospital, dental, or doctor appointments for the pupil which can't be made outside academy hours.
- Major religious observations.
- Visits to prospective new academies.
- External exams or educational assessments.

### Religious observance

Eastbrook Primary Academy recognises that there may be times when children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of academy holidays and weekends and will consider authorising absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should request the absence in the normal way by giving the academy a written request in advance.



## Reporting an absence

Our arrangements for the notification of absence and seeking approval for absence.

### Reporting absence (except for term time leave of absence)

- On the first day of their child's absence parents are asked to send in an email or telephone the academy, on 01273 874050, by 9:00 am.
- If it is unclear how long the child will be absent from the academy parents are asked to contact the academy daily to record the absence.

### Illness, Medical or Dental appointments

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside academy hours.
- Parents are asked to inform the academy in advance if their child has a medical appointment.
- Children should attend the academy around the appointment wherever possible.
- Children will not be allowed to leave the premises unless they are collected by an adult, or it has been agreed in writing.
- An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is required.
- If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, then they should not return to the academy for the next 48 hours after the last symptom. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the academy.
- In the case of repeated absences, the academy will require a written explanation of why a child has been absent. The office will request this when it is needed.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from the academy.

***Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that either calling the academy or providing a note for an absence does not automatically mean it will be authorised.***

## Arriving late

Children are expected to arrive between 8:35-8:40 am. We expect your child to be lined up ready to enter by their allocated time. The academy gates open at 8:35 am, the gate or the children in Reception will open at 8:35am.

Registers are completed by 8:50 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

The registers will be closed in accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on-site, but this will not count as a present mark, and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence. This could lead to a penalty notice if the problem persists.

### **Being frequently late adds up to lost learning:**

- Arriving just 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.



# Some strategies to improve punctuality

## Bedtime routines

- Encourage children to pack their bags before going to bed, ready for the next day.
- Getting to bed earlier.
- Setting a time for the television, Tablets, computers, games consoles mobile phones, and other devices to be turned off.

## Morning routines

- Setting the alarm for a time that allows all morning routines to be carried out without making them late.
- Having breakfast before leaving home, so there is no need to call in at the shop on the way to school.
- Encourage them to leave home at least five minutes earlier than they think they need to.
- Meeting a reliable friend to walk to school with.
- Coming to school for breakfast club if available.

## Drop Off

- Leave home in plenty of time to reach school before 8:35 am.
- We encourage families to walk, scooter or cycle to school.
- If you do need to drive leave enough time to park safely well away from the school entrance.
- No child should be dropped off on double yellow lines or the yellow zigzag 'Keep Clear' signs.
- Children can be dropped off at the school gate or delivered directly to class teachers.

## Picking Up

- Please arrive to collect your child by 3:10 pm.
- We encourage families to walk, scooter or cycle home.
- If you must drive, please park a safe distance from school.
- It is illegal to leave a car unattended on double yellow, and zigzag lines.
- Children in Reception and Years 1, 2, 3 & 4 should be collected in person.
- Please advise the school office if someone different is collecting your child.
- KS2 children can leave the school without parental accompaniment from Y5 & Y6 **with permission** (forms will be sent out and available at the school office).

