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ATTENDANCE POLICY



Document Control

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1.0 Introduction

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and securing it must therefore be a high priority for the school, parents and the pupil themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils diminish the value of the education provided for them; they may also damage the learning of others because fluctuations in the size of the pupil group may restrict the scope for effective teaching. Many Eden students already have gaps in their learning due to sporadic attendance or behaviour at other settings so encouraging regular attendance is essential to bridging attainment gaps.

2.0 Philosophy

Eden School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance are crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the philosophy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 percent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. If there are problems, which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and work with parents, pupils and partner agencies where necessary to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

3.0 Principles

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be referred to Eden Attendance coordinator if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

4.0 Authorised and unauthorised absences

It is for the school, not the parent, to decide whether or not to authorise any absences. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for good reason (i.e. illness or other unavoidable cause). The school will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no parental explanation is given.
- For extended visits overseas where no approval has been given.
- For holidays in term time (unless there are exceptional circumstances.)
- For shopping trips.
- For leisure days out.
- Where it is believed a parent is condoning an unnecessary absence.
- In other cases where it is deemed there is no reasonable explanation

5.0 Leave of absence

Requests for Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher. In the case of absence for family holidays these will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is best to be transparent about the reasons for this so that we can work together to find a solution. Parents are therefore expected to contact school at the earliest possible point of their child's absence.

The School will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration procedures, regulations and education law.
- Complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning by 9.30am and also by the afternoon register at 12:00pm every afternoon.
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence.
- Reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.
- Raise the profile of attendance as a whole school issue.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance coordinator in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior leadership team.
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, he/she will be missed.
- Have in place procedures which will allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of others.
- Have procedures in place to encourage 'best-possible' preparation for attendance at official examination times.

6.0 School Transport

For pupils who are collected by the school transport, the bus will leave school at 8.30am every morning. If there is no answer on collection a calling card will be left behind the door and the bus will wait a total of 2 minutes for the pupils to come out ready for school. On return to school the transport staff will inform the Attendance coordinator or a member of office staff in their absence and the following procedures will be adhered to.

7.0 Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- illness and other legitimate reasons - if the pupil is unfit for school, parents are asked to contact school on the first day of absence by 9:00am.

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil by 9:30am on the first morning of absence the Attendance Coordinator (or a member of the office staff in their absence) will contact the family in the following ways:

Day 1

Phone call will be made and recorded. No contact, home visit attempted during PM transport.

Day 2

Phone call will be made and recorded, if no contact is made via telephone a home visit will be conducted to try to encourage attendance. If there is no contact at the home, a letter will be posted to request contact by the end of the day (Appendix 1). If school have received no contact by 3pm, the attendance coordinator will request a police welfare check.

Day 3 & 4

Phone call will be made and recorded, if no contact is made via telephone a home visit will be conducted to try and encourage attendance. If a welfare check was requested on day 2, this will be followed up by the attendance coordinator.

Day 5

If there has been no improvement in attendance seen after 5 days a further home visit will be made by Attendance Coordinator and a 1st monitoring letter (appendix 2) posted through the door or handed to parents. If staff have any safeguarding concerns an additional welfare visit will be requested.

Day 10

After 10 days of continuous absence a letter will be sent (appendix 3) with date and time of a formal meeting with the Attendance Coordinator to discuss attendance support. This meeting will be arranged at the earliest opportunity. An attendance contract will be drawn up and reviewed weekly. The attendance officer will also contact the inclusion team for advice.

Day 15

If there is still no improvement in attendance seen after 15 days, a further home visit will be made by the Attendance Coordinator and a 2nd warning letter (appendix 4) will be posted through the door or handed to parents.

Day 20

Following the 2nd warning letter and 20 days of absence, the inclusion team will be contacted to provide further guidance. A fixed penalty notice could be issued by Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority. Failure to improve attendance or pay the fixed penalty notice could result in Court Action being taken.

8.0 Improving Attendance

Every pupil will be set a realistic target. The school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

We will reward pupils who improve their attendance, even if they do not achieve their target.

9.0 Practice

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regular analysis attendance data
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in case of non-school attendance
- Liaising closely with the base schools and Education Welfare Officer for dual registered pupils
- Recording carefully, all telephone messages
- Informing parents of their child's attendance at the end of each half term if they are not meeting the attendance requirements

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

APPENDIX 1 – Welfare Letter

Date

Address

Dear _____

According to our records **student name** has been absent from school. You will be aware that it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school, on the first day of a pupil's absence, to explain the reasons why they are unable to attend school and an expected date when they should return. Unfortunately, we have not received any contact from you.

Please contact us by **3pm today** to explain your child's absence. As we have a safeguarding responsibility for your child, we will contact the police to complete a welfare call if we have not had a response from you by this time.

Yours sincerely

Hayley Cope

Attendance and Family Liaison



APPENDIX 2 – First Monitoring Letter

Date

Address

Dear _____

Attendance Concerns

The government has now classified Persistent Non-School Attendance at 90% and below.

I write to remind you that as a parent or guardian you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly under Section 444 of the Education Act.

At present **student name** attendance is __% this is of concern.

This letter is to notify yourself that **student name** attendance will now be monitored for the next week to decide if further action needs to be taken.

Please contact me as soon as you can to discuss ways we can work together to improve attendance.

Yours sincerely

Hayley Cope

Attendance and Family Liaison

APPENDIX 3 – Attendance Meeting

Date

Address

Dear _____

As you are aware **student name** has been on a two week attendance monitoring period, as the government has now classified persistent non school attendance at 90%.

Unfortunately over the last two weeks **student name** has failed to comply with the regulations therefore we would like you and your child to attend a meeting to discuss this so that we can prevent further action being taken by Eden School that could lead to prosecution under the Education Act 1996 that requires parents to secure the regular attendance of their children at school. Section 444(1) of the Act states:

“If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent(s) is guilty of an offence.”

The date of your meeting is **insert date** with myself at Eden School.

Yours sincerely

Hayley Cope

Attendance and Family Liaison

APPENDIX 4 – Attendance Meeting (Final warning letter)

Date

Address

Dear _____

Formal Warning**Section 444, Education Act 1996****The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007**

As you are aware **student name** unauthorised absences from school continue to give serious cause for concern even though a contract has been signed.

I am writing to inform you that your child's level of unauthorised absence is such that you are liable to be issued with a Penalty Notice, and to formally warn you that this will happen unless there is an immediate and lasting improvement in his/ her attendance in the next week.

Should **student name** continue to have unauthorised absences from school, a Penalty Notice will be served on you by the Local Authority. The Penalty would require payment at £60.00 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120.00 if paid between 21 and 28 days of issue. Should no payment be received with the 28 day period, prosecution proceedings at Magistrates' court would normally then be instituted against you.

If you wish to discuss matters further do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely

Hayley Cope

Attendance and Family Liaison