



Attendance Policy

Esh Winning Primary School

Academic Year

2022/23

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Attendance key contact List

Name	Role	Contact details
Mrs C Hodgson	Head Teacher	0191 3734701 eshwinning@durhamlearning.net
Mrs A Hattersley	Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance	0191 3734701 eshwinning@durhamlearning.net

Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Mrs L Doherty	Parent Support Advisor	0191 3734808 0191 3734701 Mob: 07930806095
	Class Teachers	0191 3734701 eshwinning@durhamlearning.net
	School Office	0191 3734701 eshwinning@durhamlearning.net
	School Nursing Service	03000 263538
	Attendance and Inclusion Officers	Number available on request

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Esh Winning Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

Here's what the data shows:

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Esh Winning Primary School recognises the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We can identify the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils.

This policy is supported by our:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

1. Expectations

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

We will ensure that:

All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.

Attendance is a priority across the school.

Aspire to high standards on attendance.

Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of students.

Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

Esh Winning Primary School sets high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all our pupils and we communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels. In doing so, we help parents to understand what is expected and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development.

2. Attendance data

Esh Winning Primary School analyses attendance data regularly which includes patterns and trends, this allows early identification of pupils who need intervention and support. Specific strategies are devised to address areas of poor attendance identified through data scrutiny.

Analysis of attendance data provides regular attendance reports to relevant staff (including our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator if applicable) to facilitate discussions with parents/carers and consider the most appropriate support allowing targeted actions to be developed. Conduct through analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data identifies cohorts, certain attendance codes and days of poor attendance. Benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level takes place against local, regional, and national level and identifies areas of focus for improvement. Monitoring the data allows findings to be used to evaluate approaches and inform future strategies. Attendance data and reports are used to support the work of our Governing Body.

3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

Esh Winning Primary School works hard to build strong relationships with families, we understand there are barriers for some pupils in relation to attendance. Our Parent Support Advisor is here to help those families who need additional support. All pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff model respectful relations to build a positive relationship between home and school to support the foundation of good attendance. Where a pattern of absence is identified the school will listen to and understand the concerns of the pupil and/or family may be experiencing.

4. Facilitate support

Pupils and parents are supported by the school to address any in-school/outside barriers to attendance. All partners work together to access any support they may need voluntarily. This includes meetings with pupils and parents who are at risk of persistent or severe absence and agreeing actions/interventions. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support e.g. Early Help referral.

5. Formalise support

Where absence intensifies, the school will work with the Local Authority and any other relevant partners. Where engagement in support is proving challenging, we will hold more formal conversations with parents. The meeting will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the parent and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available. Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged, consideration will be given to a parenting contract or education supervision order.

6. Enforce

To ensure the pupil's right to an education, where engagement with the family has been unsuccessful statutory intervention or prosecution may be necessary. Support will be sought from children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where the absence becomes severe. A fixed penalty notice may be issued when all other routes have failed.

In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and adjust where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and other partners involved.

General / frequently asked questions

When can children be absent from school?

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Your child's headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes

Attendance and absence management

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

Esh Winning Primary School promotes good attendance through all communications with pupils and families via Newsletters, website, Facebook, texts and e-mails.

Within school a weekly assembly takes place in which class attendance percentages are given. Further to this, any children who achieve 95 - 100% attendance over each term will receive a certificate and have an opportunity to win a prize. Attendance percentages are shared with parents on a weekly basis on the school website. In addition, at termly parents' meetings and also annual reports to parents will contain a record of individual pupils' attendance.

Parents are reminded of the school's start time through newsletters and our school website.

Communication

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance. For example, flexible start and finish times, picking up and dropping off children by school staff and accessing a part time timetable.

On the first day of absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

If the school has not received a reason why a child is absent from school, a call will be made to the parents. If unable to make contact via phone, 2 members of staff will visit the home. If there is still no communication with the family every effort will be made to locate the child. If necessary the police will be contacted.

All parents will receive a letter following **any** unauthorised absence. The letter will state the date, amount of days for that particular unauthorised absence as well as the amount of days so far for the academic year.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

Periods of extended absence

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will phone the parents to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

Punctuality:

Registration time is at 8.50am for Key Stage One and Key Stage Two at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Headteacher will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way improve this. Incentives to improve punctuality may also be offered to pupils e.g. improving their punctuality over 2 weeks to earn a school alarm clock.

If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with Head Teacher or deputy head for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

Then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; considering the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Pupils with specific needs

At Esh Winning Primary School we are committed to equality. We aim for every pupil to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or personal circumstances. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and recognise these duties are essential to reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN

Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Public Sector Equality Duties 2010.

We will ensure that all students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative. Individual needs of children will be considered, any barriers to attendance identified and appropriate support offered.

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.