



Attendance Policy

To be reviewed annually

Chair of Governors, Sue Nelson

Signed 

East Preston Infant School Attendance Policy

East Preston Infant School is a Rights Respecting School. All pupils, staff and visitors have the right to be healthy, safe, educated, listened to and treated fairly. These principles are at the heart of our school ethos, and our policies and practices support these rights. We are committed to equal rights, mutual respect and shared responsibility.

In this Policy we specifically recognise the following articles from the UN convention on the Rights of the Child:

Article 2 – The Convention applies to everyone; whatever their race, religion or abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3 – The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 28 – Every child has the right to an education. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity.

A child who is not at school is missing out on part of his or her education. Likewise a child who is late for school is missing out on a very important part of the school day including setting out the context for the work for the day.

Our aim is for the highest level of attendance possible and for all absences to be explained with acceptable reasons. Alongside this we want to have all our children in class ready to start the school day promptly.

The Government says:

- **There is a legal responsibility for you to send your child to school every day.**
- **Your child should be in school for at least 95% of all sessions.**
- **School is in session for 190 days a year leaving parents a further 175 days a year in which to have days out together and take a holiday.**

Key Principles

It is vital that parents and schools work together. We follow the West Sussex guidance which sets out the following principles:

- All registered pupils should attend school regularly and punctually.
- All children, irrespective of individual circumstances, should have an equal opportunity to attend school regularly.
- The school and the Local Authority, together with any external agencies will work together with the parents or carers for the best interest of pupils.
- The school's expectations of regular attendance will be made clear from the outset.
- Where necessary, intervention and enforcement measures will be taken, especially with regard to unauthorised absences and lateness.

Parents should ensure that their children are properly dressed, and have all the things they need and are in a condition fit to learn.

Aims

- To help parents/carers understand the need for their children to attend school regularly and punctually.
- To encourage good habits in attendance from the first day at school.
- Ensure that parents/carers and staff are fully aware of the need to keep accurate records of attendance and the necessary procedures.
- To minimise the number of absences and late arrivals.

School Procedures

1. Promotion of Good Attendance And Punctuality

On admission to East Preston Infant School all parents are given guidelines on good attendance, what to do in case of illness, punctuality and requesting absence in term time.

Additionally parents are asked to sign a Home-School Agreement at school. Our school's prospectus and web-site also promote good attendance.

2. Records of Attendance

Children's attendance details are recorded in electronic registers at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions of each school day. Registers are taken at 9am. Children arriving between 9am and 10.30am are recorded as late (before registers closed). Arrival after 10.30am is recorded as unauthorised - late (after registers closed).

The school office collates information about absences, taking phone calls and e-mails from parents. These are recorded on the electronic registers and session absence reports are produced.

The school is registered with the Data Protection Register as a data user under the 1984 Data Protection Act.

3. Monitoring Attendance

The attendance information is entered into the school's database and is used to monitor attendance.

If there is a concern about a child's attendance, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will notify parents.

Patterns of absence, or lateness or other concerns are shared with the Pupil Entitlement and Investigation Team (PEI), who check attendance records and discuss any problems. The PEI team is available to support parents who may be having difficulties in ensuring that their children attend school regularly. Where necessary, legal action may be taken by the Local Authority.

4. Reporting Absences

- It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school by 9.15am or as early as possible on the first day of the child's absence. Parents may either phone, e-mail, speak to a member of staff or send a written message.
- If no contact has been received from parents/carers, the school office will phone them on the first day of absence.
- If the child is ill then the school should be notified of the nature of the illness, and if possible, the expected date of return.
- If parents find it difficult to send their children to school because of personal problems or the children are reluctant to attend because of home or school problems then parents should contact the school or the PEI team.
- If parents fail to notify the school then it is the school's responsibility to find out the reason for the absence either by contacting the parents or by involving the Education Welfare Officer.

5. Lateness

- Lateness is discouraged and persistent lateness is unacceptable and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice. Where pupils miss registration and fail to provide an adequate explanation they will be marked with an unauthorised absence for that reason.
- If a child arrives late and misses registration they must be signed in at the school office.
- Registers are taken at 9am. Children arriving between 9am and 10.30am are recorded as late (before registers closed). Arrival after 10.30am is recorded as unauthorised - late (after registers closed).

6. Absence

All absences are registered as authorised or unauthorised. Examples of authorised absences include:

- **Genuine illness:** If the school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence is treated as authorised. Children who experience long term absences are supported both during and after their absence through direct contact with the parents/carers. The school reserves the right to ask for medical clarification if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child.
- **Medical or dental appointments:** Pupils' absence for medical or dental appointments may also be authorised, although where possible, parents should try to make appointments out of school time. If a pupil has an appointment during school time then the school should be informed beforehand and the parent must report to the office to sign their child in or out of school.
- **Religious observance:** Parents should give advance warning of absence if it is necessary for their child to take part in a day of religious observance.
- **Education off-site** eg an educational visit arranged by the school.

- Extreme family emergencies eg bereavement.
- Self isolation due to COVID 19 symptoms.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The school does not have to accept the parents' offered explanation as a valid reason for absence. If there are doubts about the reason offered, the reason given for an absence is not acceptable, or if no reason is given, then the absence is treated as unauthorised. Disputes with the School or claims of bullying are legally not a permitted reason for absence.

7. Other Absences

- Special occasions: Parents should notify the school if they wish their child to be absent because of a special occasion such as a family wedding. The school will consider each request on an individual basis. Absence for a birthday or a family day out would be considered as unauthorised. However, parents are asked to be honest with the school about such an absence.
- Family Holidays: Term time holidays are not permitted unless there are genuine mitigating circumstances and the school is convinced of the validity of these. Parents should book holidays out of term time.
- No absences are authorised at the start of the academic year (September).
- No absences are authorised throughout the National Curriculum assessment period for Year 2 during May and for Year 1 during June.

8. Requesting Absence from School

- Parents are asked to complete a 'Request for Absence in School Time' form, available from the school office well in advance of the proposed absence.
- A child's absence record will be taken into account when considering requests for withdrawal from learning and authorisation will not be given to children with less than 90% attendance.
- Each case will be considered on its merit. The 'Request for Absence in School Time' form will be returned either agreeing that the absence will be authorised or classifying it as an unauthorised absence.

9. Fixed Penalty Notices

A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued if there are 10 or more unauthorised absences within a 10 week period, (1 morning and 1 afternoon count as 2 sessions). The FPN currently stands at £60 per parent, per child.

If a FPN and/or Court Action has been instigated, the Local Authority are satisfied that the evidential requirements have been met.