



35. Attendance Policy

Date adopted: September 2021

Review: September 2023

See EOTAS policy control document (held by School Business Manager) for status, notes and actions pertaining to this policy

At EOTAS we want to give every student the very best chance of achieving their full potential. Outstanding school attendance will improve our young peoples' life chances by giving them every opportunity to gain vital academic and vocational qualifications that are critical for further study at college and university, for apprenticeships, and also for entering the world of work. We believe that every school day matters, and that our students have the right to enjoy and achieve during their time with us; we positively promote attendance and punctuality, and our policies and procedures are laid out below.

Guiding Principles

EOTAS Attendance Policy is in line with Swindon Children's Services Attendance and Inclusion Strategy and should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education and our Behaviour Policy.

Attendance at school is a legal requirement between the ages of 5 – 16 years and to remain in education or training between the ages of 16-18 years. Young people are entitled to formal education during this phase of their lives. It is important that they receive their entitlement for their present and future lives and for the economic and well-being of society.

The Local Authority is responsible by law for making sure that registered pupils of compulsory age regularly attend their school. The Government also has a priority of reducing unnecessary absence from school.

Many pupils attending EOTAS are more vulnerable and have greater needs than the majority of their mainstream counterparts. This means that they may have more genuine absences from school for medical reasons or experience greater social need than others. It is our responsibility to do all we can to encourage and support aspirations.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school. EOTAS is committed to ensuring that our families understand the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home- school links and communication systems to support good attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will, identify and strive, in partnership with parents / carers and pupils, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The legislation around school attendance and absence for parents / carers can be found on the government website listed here; <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

Swindon – schools online <http://schoolsonline.swindon.gov.uk/sc/Pages/EdWel.aspx>

Responsibilities

Families will:

- Notify the school of any absences on the day of that absence
- Keep close contact with the school if a pupil is on extended leave due to ill health
- Inform office staff if they receive any communication that a pupil will need to leave the school premises part way through the day by prior arrangement e.g. for a medical appointment.
- Provide a note from the GP after 5 days of absence.

Business support/Attendance officer will:

- Maintain an accurate record of pupil attendance on SIMS
- Send KKS messages and telephone pupils' homes as necessary re attendance
- Pass on information regarding attendance to the relevant staff

- Keep records and inform outside agencies as necessary to comply with local and national policy and procedures
- Store notes from home in the pupil file.
- Keep pupil tracker up dated termly
- Produce attendance data and reports for tutors, SLT and MC meetings when requested.
- Ensure accuracy in administration systems for monitoring attendance
- National updates in October and January

Teachers / pastoral support will:

- Weekly review and parent contact to focus on attendance/lateness – personal development and learning.
- Monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality to lessons, placing the pupil on end of day extension classes in order to make lost learning time. 'Inform senior members of staff if a pupil leaves a lesson without permission and does not return within a short time
- Mark registers at the start each lesson and during tutor time.
- To discuss the impact of low attendance on learning with families at meetings where appropriate.
- Contact parents / carers (by telephone or home visit) to monitor attendance

The Head/ Assistant Heads of College:

- Monitor the staff for Attendance, monitor and ensure robust tracking and accountability.
- Monitor and/or discuss with EWO or other relevant services
- Meet with the Attendance Improvement Officer and carry out a full analysis of attendance termly.
- Lead case management meetings
- To notify the safeguarding team of absences of vulnerable pupils. The Safeguarding Team are displayed on information posters around the school,
- To coordinate sending of letters when appropriate triggers have been met and coordinate formal attendance processes.
- Compile reports for the Headteacher and management committee as and when required

Procedures

Early Interventions

Before the start of the school day, between 8.00am and 8.30am, pastoral support workers will make phone calls and / or send text messages to targeted students who have a track-record of low or declining attendance to support families and young people.

Marking the Register

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupil's attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised. A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance, or in seeking an Education Supervision Order.

Registration

Pupils are registered in Lesson 1 onto SIMS. The morning register closes at 9.45am. All pupil arrivals between 9.15am and 9.45am are treated as late for that session, unless there has been a delay to school transport.

Procedures for following up absence / lateness

- Pupils who arrive between 9.15am and 9.45 am are marked as 'L'.
- Pupils who arrive between 9.45am and 12.20pm are marked with a 'U'.
- Pupils who attend at the agreed times where part-time timetables or alternative curriculum is in place will receive a mark for the morning, afternoon/twilight attended.
- Where a pupil is to attend twilight curriculum at 3pm in line with the procedures outlined within the behaviour policy, the pupil will be marked with an authorised attendance for that session. Students arriving after 3.30 will be given a U mark and time of arrival recorded on SIMS

Pupils following alternative curriculum pathways are expected to attend the bespoke timetable given to them. Pupils who arrive 20 minutes late will be marked as "L"; pupils who arrive 40 minutes late will be marked as "U".

It is the responsibility of the parent / carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. This can be done by leaving a message on the answer phone, sending a text or calling when the school office opens at 8.00am. In all cases a parent / carer should contact prior to 9.30am; a 'carer' also includes foster carer, social worker or residential carer – the expectation around attendance is the same for all of our students.

If this contact is not made by parents, business support staff will contact the parent / carer by telephone, or a 'Keep Kids Safe' (KKS) text message, and responses are checked and entered onto SIMS. For students considered at risk or where attendance is a cause for concern, the pastoral support workers will follow up with a call or a home visit. If this fails to provide an explanation, pastoral support team and tutors will discuss with parents during weekly check in calls and inform them of each young person's attendance and next steps if there is an attendance issue.

Fernbrook school day times

Monday - Thursday

Check in/Breakfast club	08.50 – 09.10	
Registration	09.10 – 09.25	
P1	09.25 – 10.25	
P2	10.25 – 11.25	
P3 (reading)	11.25 – 11.50	
Lunch		
P4	12.20 – 13.20	
P5	13.20 – 14.20	
Registration	14.20 – 14.45	pupils leaving from 1430 if points allow
<i>Twilight sessions:</i>		
1	15.00 – 15.45	
2	15.45 – 16.30	

Friday

Check in/Breakfast club	08.50 – 09.10	
Registration	09.10 – 09.25	
P1	09.25 – 10.25	
P2	10.25 – 11.25	
P3 (reading)	11.25 – 11.50	
Registration	11.50 – 12.00	collect lunches/points
<i>Twilight sessions:</i>		
1	12.00 – 12.45	
2	12.45 – 13.30	

Riverside school day times

Monday - Thursday

Check in/Breakfast club	08.50 – 09.10	
Registration	09.10 – 09.25	
P1	09.25 – 10.25	
P2	10.25 – 11.25	
P3	11.25 – 11.50	
Lunch	11.50 – 12.20	
P4	12.20 – 13.20	
P5	13.20 – 14.20	
Registration	14.20 – 14.30	pupils leaving from 1430 if no detention

Friday

Check in/Breakfast club	08.50 – 09.10
Registration	09.10 – 09.25
P1	09.25 – 10.25
P2	10.25 – 11.25
P3	11.25 – 11.50
Registration	11.50 – 12.00

Learners on the Oakfield pathway will be given bespoke timetables.

Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

In order to celebrate success regular attendance and punctuality, including those pupils whose attendance is rising from a very low starting point, will be promoted and recognised through awards and certificates in tutor groups and assemblies.

Our target for student attendance is currently 95%, and it is recognised that many of our pupils come to the school with already entrenched patterns of poor attendance. In these cases, smaller, more manageable targets will be set on the way to reaching the full 95% target.

Parents and carers, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence. Opportunities to maintain awareness through weekly tutor contact, newsletters, Parent / Carer Consultation Days, reminder letters (see Appendix 2) and student reports will be used. Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding punctuality and attendance.

Monitoring Attendance and graduated response

Whole school attendance is monitored by all staff with regular reports being submitted to the Management Committee. Individual student attendance is monitored by SLT at weekly Case Management meetings. The school works very closely with a number of external agencies so positive attendance can be promoted, and students and families can be supported.

Where a student's attendance is a concern, reminders and discussion will be had with the young person and parent. All students will have a return to school meeting with a member of staff on return from an absence. A parent/carer will be sent a letter and invited to a meeting when a student has missed 6 sessions. The purpose of the meeting will be to establish the reasons and what intervention and support can be offered. The meeting will set out the expectations and remind parents/carers that if a student misses 10 session (5 days) a £60 fixed penalty notice will be issued. The date and actions will be logged on SIM.

If a student's attendance does not show improvement and is deemed to have persistent non-attendance, and parents do not engage in support meetings and interventions then an initial case discussion involving the EWO service will be arranged. A formal letter (Appendix 3) outlining the parent / carer's legal duty to ensure school attendance, and seek to facilitate a formal meeting with parents. Attendance will be monitored over the period of a term during which time a significant improvement must be demonstrated. A review meeting will be held at 4 weeks and 8 weeks.

No improvement during the monitoring period (Appendix 4), the evidence of the three monitoring periods will be collated and could be referred for legal proceedings if this is felt to be the appropriate course of action.

Initial Case Discussion

A Graduated Response will be used at the Initial Case Discussion. The Chair will decide what appropriate and proportionate initial action to take from the range outlined above.

The aim of the initial Case Discussion is to identify reasons, causes and barriers to improved school attendance. At the Initial Case Discussion Meeting the following will be agreed:

- A target will be set for the expected improvement to attendance
- A review date e.g. 4 and 8 weeks will be set for the Review Case Discussion

Targeted Interventions to Support Persistent Non-Attenders

Use Pastoral/family support worker

Apply for transport support.

Bus passes for young people provided.

Given positive rewards – home and school (postcards home/vouchers)

Tutor daily focus – (reset – recover- rebuild)

Parenting support – 1:1 or group offered

Referral to external agency support offered

Youth engagement worker or other student focused intervention used to support engagement in learning.

Parenting contract

Authorised and Unauthorised Leave of Absence

Requests for Leave of Absence during term time must be made to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance and where s/he is satisfied that there are exceptional or special circumstances to justify the request. The DfE (2013) now state that leave of absence requests for holidays should not be granted. A fixed penalty notice may be issued for unauthorised holidays.

Fixed penalty notice – FPN If a student misses 10 sessions (5 days) in any 2 terms then EOTAS will issue a FPN of £60.

Illness – From time to time students may become ill. However, if there are 10 missed sessions through illness, then it will be necessary for the school to ask the parent/ carer to provide the school with written evidence of the reason for absence e.g. appointment cards, medical certificate, or a letter from the GP. If no evidence is provided, further illnesses will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

If there is an extended period of absence due to medical reasons the school may ask for permission of the parent / carer to contact the child's GP or consultant/CAMHS to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

CME – If a child miss's education for more than 10 consecutive days then the school will notify the Education Welfare Service – EWS.

Further Outcomes for Persistent Lateness and Non-Attendance

In addition to Fixed Penalty Warnings, The Local Authority or Management Committee may impose an Education Supervision Order (details below), Parenting Contract or Parenting Order when parents / carers are not responsive to the support offered by the school in order to improve poor or declining attendance.

Education Supervision Order

An Education Supervision Order is an order granted in the Family Proceedings Court requiring you and your child to follow directions made in the Order and work alongside the Education Welfare Officer, as the Supervising Officer, to improve your child's school attendance.

All children are required by law to attend the school at which they are registered and it is viewed very seriously if they do not do so. If a child refuses to attend a school regularly, the Local Education Authority could summon the child and parent before the Family Court and apply for an Education Supervision Order. The application is heard in the Family Court which consists of local Magistrates who have the power to grant

an Education Supervision Order. If an order is granted, it will last for a period of 12 months and, on further application to the Family Court, could be extended up to 3 years.

If an Education Supervision Order is made on a child, he/she will be required to:

- *Attend a school regularly.*
- *Allow the Supervisor to visit him/her at the place where he/she is living.*
- *Meet with the Supervisor on a regular basis.*
- *Discuss with the Supervisor any problems which arise which could prevent him/her attending school.*
- *Keep to any reasonable instruction which the Supervisor may give.*
- *Notify the Supervising Officer of any change of address.*

Throughout the period of the Order, parents retain parental responsibility for their child, and must continue to ensure that their child attend school regularly. They must also meet with the Supervisor on a regular basis, and allow the Supervisor reasonable contact with the child. They must co-operate with any strategies proposed by the Supervisor.

An Education Supervision Order is imposed when it is proved to the Court that a child is not being educated according to his age, ability and aptitude, taking into account any educational needs he/she may have. During the period of the Order, a review will be held at which the child, parent, supervisor, and member of the Education Welfare Service discusses whether the Order is working and what future plans need to be made.

If a parent does not co-operate with the Supervisor in working within the requirements of the Order, the parent could be referred back to the Court. A fine of up to £2,500 could be imposed on the parent.

If a child does not co-operate with the Supervisor he/she can be referred back to the Court who could direct the Social Care and Health Department to become involved and consider applying for a higher order.

Appendix 1: Day 1 'Informal' No Contact Letter

Date

Dear

Your son / daughter **pupil name** has been absent from school today. I have been unable to contact you to discuss this.

Please contact the school on the number above as soon as possible with reasons for absence.

Without an explanation this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Yours sincerely

Name of staff member

Appendix 2

Stage 1 Attendance Letter

Name

Address

Date

Name of child

DOB

Dear Name,

I am very concerned that your child's attendance has fallen to %. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed. This is a cause for serious concern and is well below the government's national target of 95%. Your child has now had 6 sessions absence or more, one session is AM or P, one school day is two sessions; it is important to highlight that 10 sessions absence could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice which will incur a fine of £60. It is a safeguarding concern for us that your child is missing out on their education and we would expect that their attendance should improve with no further sessions missed wherever possible.

As I am sure you are aware, regular attendance and punctuality at school is vital to help children achieve and improve life chances. As a school, we are keen to make sure that all of our children benefit fully from their education as regular attendance is a legal requirement.

We understand that there are occasions when being absent is unavoidable, for example through illness, but missing school is disruptive to children's learning and social development.

Your child's tutor will be in touch to discuss strategies to improve attendance going forward and these will be logged in your child's Individual Attendance Plan which you began writing on the recent Curriculum Review Day.

Yours sincerely

Name of staff member

All parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or through other appropriate arrangements. Where parents and carers are not fulfilling this responsibility, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to uphold the rights of children and young people to education. Where necessary, this includes taking legal action against parents.

Appendix 3

Stage 2 Attendance Letter

Parent Name

Address

Date

Dear **Parent name**,

I am writing to invite you to a School Attendance meeting to discuss **child name** attendance at school. At EOTAS we take attendance very seriously and know that good attendance is directly linked to good outcomes for young people. Young people whose attendance is poor often underachieve at school, often find school more challenging and struggle to make and maintain friendships with peers.

Child name attendance is currently % which is a serious cause for concern and significantly below the government's target figure of 95% and as such we have called a School Attendance Meeting to explore the reasons for poor attendance set targets to improve attendance and offer support to improve this. The Education Welfare Officer from Swindon Borough Council will be at the meeting as well as a representative from our Pastoral Outreach Team. Minutes from the meeting may, in future, be used in future legal proceedings should attendance not improve. Noncompliance may mean we need to seek advice through referral to the Social Care Team.

We want to work closely with you in order to support attendance and look forward to seeing you on **Meeting date** at **time**. Please inform the school office as soon as possible if you are unable to attend this meeting. We may however need to hold the meeting in your absence in order to support your child in their learning and would subsequently share the outcome of the meeting with you in a letter.

Yours sincerely

Name of staff member

Appendix 4

Stage 3 Attendance Letter

Parent Name

Address

Date

RE: Childs name

Dear **parent name**,

I am writing to inform you that, since I last wrote to you, your child's instances of being very late or ill regularly has reached 10 sessions or more, a session is AM or PM, one school day is two sessions. This has triggered the Stage 3 Attendance procedures to support access to education for your child; this is a safeguarding procedure around entitlement to education.

As I am sure you are aware, regular attendance and punctuality at school is vital to help children achieve and improve life chances. As a school, we are keen to make sure that all of our children benefit fully from their education as regular timely attendance is a legal requirement.

According to our policy, we are now issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice fine as a response to this level of missing education, which sits outside of the legal responsibility of the family to work with the school to make sure young people access their entitlement to education.

I would urge you to contact the school office on 828941 to arrange an appointment for School Attendance Meeting. This meeting should be held within the next 7 days, to discuss how we can support you and your child in improving their attendance.

Yours sincerely

Name of staff member

Appendix 5 - Pupil Absence Monitoring Procedure

1. ALL registers will be completed on SIMS during AM and during PM sessions
2. All absent pupils will be contacted on their first day of absence by either KKS message, phone call or letter. Initial contact home will be by 9.30am.
3. Records of late arrivals will be made on SIMS.
4. Students entering or leaving site outside of registration times will be recorded by business support teams.
5. If by the end of the afternoon session (at the latest) on the first day there is no reason for absence, then a letter will be sent home requesting the family to contact the school as soon as possible to explain why the pupil is not at school. External agencies will be informed.
6. On making contact with the pupil's family, they will be informed that for every day the pupil is absent the family must contact the school to inform them of the pupil's progress. If they do not, then the school will contact them each and every day of absence.
7. The pupil's family will also be informed that they must write a letter explaining the absence and this will be kept on file. Students will have a return to school meeting to support safeguarding and see if support is needed.
8. If a pupil is absent for more than 3 days without contact by the family a home visit will be arranged and external agencies if applicable contacted
9. CME – EOTAS will inform the EWS if a young person is missing for 10 consecutive days.
10. Individual absence records for each pupil are monitored and recorded. Fortnightly data is collated by the Attendance officer and discussed with the SLT member responsible for Attendance in the weekly Case Management meetings. Statistics will be produced to show the performance of response times to a student's absence. It will be used to inform individual student's families of any patterns forming. The information will also be used to inform the Senior Leadership Team and School Management Committee and, if necessary, the Attendance Improvement Officer for the school.

Appendix 6 - Registration Codes

Code Description

/ Present (AM) \ Present (PM)

B Educated off site (NOT Dual reg)

C Other Authorised Circumstances

D Dual registration (attending other establishment)

E Excluded (no alternative provision made)

F Extended family holiday (agreed)

G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess)

H Family holiday (agreed)

I Illness (NOT med/dental appointments)

J Interview

L Late (before registers closed)

M Medical/Dental appointments

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised absence (not covered by other code)

P Approved sporting activity

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

U Late (after registers closed)

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

X Non-compulsory school age absence / Covid 19 related

Y Enforced closure

Z Pupil not on roll

School closed to pupils - All should attend / No mark recorded