



EBORA ACADEMY TRUST

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Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

Ebor Academy Trust places high importance on punctuality and daily attendance. This is critical in the bedrock of a child's successful educational experience. This policy sets out the legal requirements and expectations for parents and carers in relation to pupil attendance, the policy also explains how its schools in the Academy Trust intend to support children and families who may encounter difficulties or barriers to positive daily attendance.

Following the implementation of the Department For Education improving school attendance August 2024 Ebor Academy are committed to promoting positive patterns of attendance, minimising lost learning opportunities for children and eradicating any barriers that may be emerging that could be preventing a child from accessing schooling daily.

Improving School attendance

2. Responsibilities

Working together in partnership with parents is critical to ensuring successful attendance and therefore increased chances of positive attainment and wellbeing. Each school in the Trust is committed to supporting its children and families to achieve their full potential by ensuring their frequent and punctual attendance.

The expectation in relation to a pupil's attendance is one that is set out in law and stipulated under section 444 of the education act.

This policy reflects government guidance and all schools within the Ebor Academy Trust will ensure fair and consistent application of the policy.

It is a legal requirement for each school to take the attendance register twice a day: at the start of each morning and once during the afternoon. The Academy Trust school is required to notify the local authority if a student/pupil has irregular attendance or is absent continuously without authorisation.

Each Ebor Academy school is fulfilling its legal obligation as stipulated by the government to track, monitor, promote and highlight any concerning patterns of none attendance as well as regularly update all parents on their child's attendance data.

3. Aims of the policy to promote good attendance

Each school is explicit in its overall aim that children should feel secure and happy in a well ordered environment and that they should be enthusiastic about coming to school. Children have a right to experience a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum; nonattendance deprives them of this opportunity.

It is the aim of this policy that unauthorised absence for every child should be 0% on a year by year basis and that authorised absences should be kept to a minimum. Whole school and individual monitoring will be in line with targets set by the Ebor Academy Trust on an annual basis. Each school aims to comply with the national targets set by the department for education.

In order to ensure attendance remains a high priority each school will;

- a. Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all children.
- b. Implement a common systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data every half term.
- c. Inform parents and carers each half term if their child's attendance is dropping below 100% or showing significant patterns of deterioration.

- d. Where repeated patterns of poor attendance occur a support plan will be actioned to address the persistent absence
- e. Implement a common system of rewards for attendance
- f. Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and carers where required.
- g. Work in partnership with supporting services and agencies and the Local Authority
- h. Recognise and meet the needs of the individual student/pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence
- i. Offer regular phone call support, home visits and check ins for children who are struggling to access school due to emotional avoidance tendencies.
- j. Comply with and fully implement the government and local authority expectation to issue fixed penalty notices for unauthorised leaves of absence.

4. Persistent Absence

Guidance from the Department for Education (2011) advises that if a child's attendance is below 90% he/she will be referred to as 'Persistent Absence'. Schools in the Ebor Academy Trust will work closely with parents and carers, the local authority and other external agencies to improve persistent absenteeism. This may include the use of Action plans, Parenting contracts and Attendance Panels.

The school will be monitoring attendance daily, and every half term will be looking to issue letters if children's attendance is dropping below national averages. If a child's attendance drops below the national average we will notify parents of this and provide support to improve a child's absence. We are committed to working in partnership with parents to overcome any difficulties that could be preventing a child attending school on a regular basis.

Where the school has identified regular negative patterns of absence they will make contact with parents and carers to invite them to attend a meeting to look at ways to improve attendance. The school will also be aware of sickness and ill health being a genuine cause for absence, and will work with families to engage with any appropriate medical and health support services to minimise any negative impact on a child's education due to ill health. Every school will be committed to working supportively and in partnership with every child and family in order to promote and support improvement and prevention of persistent absence.

5. Reporting absence

In line with the school's safeguarding policy it is a clear expectation that all parents and carers must notify the school on the first day of a child's absence. If a child continues to be unwell then it is a requirement to inform the school office daily of that absence, unless agreed otherwise by mutual consent. Any children that have not been reported as absent may result in the school having to carry out a welfare check at the child's home to assure pupil safety.

The school will also require at least three emergency contacts for every child. This is not just in the event of a medical emergency, but in circumstances whereby a pupil is absent and the parent/carer is unobtainable and or has not made contact with the school.

6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

There are a series of codes defined by the Department of Education which are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the correct codes are recorded and that patterns in children's attendance are analysed.

In line with the guidance that has come into force in August 2024 the school will not be authorising any leave of absence requests, and will be referring any leave of absence of five or more consecutive school's

days to the local authority. If a child has more than ten sessions of unauthorised leave in a ten week period this is also required to be referred to the local authority.

Where a family believes they have an exceptional circumstance for taking leave, or are dealing with an unplanned and unexpected family emergency we would encourage a discussion with the headteacher. Whilst this cannot guarantee that the leave will be authorised each school is keen to engage with families wherever possible.

Parents and carers are asked to ensure that they make any medical appointments for their child outside of the school day.

7. Enforcement

The school will always try to work supportively where a pupil's absence is becoming a cause for concern. In the first instance the school will communicate through a half term letter making parents and carers aware of the decline in attendance. In the first instance the school will always aim to work in partnership with a parent/carer to ensure the child's attendance is improving over time. Where a school has tried over time to engage a parent/carer to offer intervention to improve a child's attendance, yet the attendance is still declining or the parent/carer is not engaging then a referral to the enforcement department within the local authority will be made. The local authority may instruct legal action for repeated nonattendance. It is always the school's hope to work by mutual consent and agreement.

Fixed Penalty Notice

Where parents/carers choose to take a leave of absence in term time parents / carers can potentially be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice when they are taking a leave of absence in term time which is not authorised by the Head teacher. A Fixed Penalty Notice can require a parent to pay the sum of £80 and if the penalty notice is unpaid within a 28 day period this would increase to £160. Each parent can be issued with a notice for each child. The law also states that the local authority can issue an additional penalty notice for any subsequent absences of five days, or ten sessions in ten weeks, within a three years period which would total £160 per parent. A third absence within a three year period could be referred directly to a magistrates court. This is the decision of the local authority, and each school is required to comply with this legislation for regular non attendance as defined above.

8. Support and guidance available to those with poor attendance and punctuality

Where persistent absence occurs, or where persistent lateness or poor attendance is identified through the monitoring processes, the attendance lead in each academy will contact the family. They will offer support and assistance to families who are experiencing difficulties in getting their children to school. This will be via appointments in school, guidance and advice on attendance or contact with other agencies. Where a child's absence regularly drops below 90%, a persistent absence action plan will be instructed. Whereby the pupil's absence will be closely monitored for an agreed period of time.

Regular issues of punctuality will also trigger involvement from the school's attendance lead, expectations for families to engage in plans of support to improve a child's start to the day is something the school will proactively promote.

Together the school will work with the family to offer further support and guidance. If attendance continues to be poor due to the parent/carer not engaging with the school and the support the school is trying to put in, then at this point steps may be taken, as dictated by law, which may result in prosecution for non-attendance. The school will always endeavour to work in close partnership with its families and will always seek to collaborate and support to ensure a child's attendance improves. Where a child is experiencing genuine difficulty preventing them from regular attendance at the school, work will take place to engage appropriate support services and involve the parents fully in the monitoring process.

Where a child has prior known patterns of low attendance then the school will look to engage parents and carers proactively and promptly in the school year to try to mitigate any potential decline in attendance. The school will look to work collaboratively with families to ensure that they are addressing any concerns that could be overcome, potentially preventing a child from having positive attendance habits.

The Ebor Academy Trust has a duty to refer regular absence (unauthorised) to the relevant local authority. This may include any evidence to show how schools in the Trust have supported the student/pupil and parent to improve attendance. It is for each local authority to judge each referral on its own merits and make a decision on the next probable course of action.