

Attendance Policy

Summary

This policy document has been developed to ensure a consistent response to all students and families in our care in providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.



If you are unsure about the validity of the content of this policy please refer to the Policy Owner.

Please Note: This policy is applicable to All Employees / Teachers / Support Staff / Volunteers including Trustees and Governors within the Group.

Policy owner	Board
Policy holder	Director of Education
Author	Chris Jessup

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Approved by

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1. Rationale

Eastern Multi-Academy Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. This Policy has been developed in order to give a consistent response to all students and families in our care.

The Trust wants to do its best for all its young people and believes that regular attendance at the Academy is vital for children as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and in their friendships. Students should be at the Academy on time every day the Academy is open unless the reason is unavoidable. Permitting absence from the Academy without a good reason is an offence by a parent. The Trust will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach his/her full educational achievement, a high level of education attendance is essential. The Trust will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Attendance is subject to various education laws and this Policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the Trust academies will examine their attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets which will reflect both national and Trust attendance targets. The Trust and its academies will discuss their attendance figures and the success of this Policy on an annual basis and will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This document is the overarching principles with each academy having their own attendance policy that outlines the responsibilities of academy staff, children and parents in securing good attendance for all children. The local policy also outlines the procedures that each academy follows to support attendance as well as the key times for parents/carers to be aware of.

2. Procedures

Any student who is absent from the Academy at the morning or afternoon registration period **must** have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on his/her behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department for Education.

3. Lateness

The Trust academies set their own registration times dependent upon when they are open. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation such as delayed 'academy' transport. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Medical evidence may be requested to support the absence.

Students arriving after the start of 'academy' but before the end of the registration period will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present but will be coded as late before registers close.

4. First Day Absence

On the first day of an absence, parents/carers should contact their child's academy before the registration period closes. If no contact has been made, the Academy will endeavour to contact parents/carers as quickly as possible during the 'academy' day and will transfer information to the registers, alerting the Principal or other key staff, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to any wellbeing issues.

If no contact is received from parents by the end of the morning of absence, the Academy will phone or text them. The Academy will continue to make daily contact until a response is received and will also make general enquires during this time and try other contact numbers.

Parents should contact the academy each day of absence to keep the academy informed as to the wellbeing of the child as well as ensuring the academy is aware of the likely length of any absence. The local policy will outline how contact should be made and to whom.

5. Ten Days' Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days will be notified to the relevant Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance staff for the local area. This is a legal requirement. The Academy will include details of the action they have taken.

6. Absence Notes

Notes of telephone calls received and written notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the child which may require further investigation the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. **Reasons for absence should provide as much detail as possible, for example: Chicken Pox and not simply ill.**

If there are attendance concerns about the child, further medical evidence must be produced (e.g. doctor's note, prescription, medicine label). ***Principals retain the right to un-authorise absence without medical evidence.***

7. Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of all staff in each academy to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the Academy will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. Attendance is monitored regularly by Senior Leaders, Attendance Officers (where in post) and Safeguarding Leads. When a pupil's attendance falls lower than the national average or causes concern, parents will be contacted by the Academy. The Academy will look for patterns and reasons for absence, making parents aware of the number of absences and the importance of attendance etc.

Additional support may be available from outside agencies and in some cases the Academy will seek advice from the Attendance Improvement Officer. Action may include the use of the Fast Track system and/or Fixed Penalty Notices. Monitoring will continue and a Common Assessment Framework/Family Support Plan meeting could be considered.

8. Persistent Absence [PA]

All pupils whose attendance level falls below **95%** will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the Academy's Attendance Officer. The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the child's attendance and details of systems such as Fast Track, Attendance Panels, and Family Support Processes utilised by the Academy.

PA is currently set at **90% (10 sessions in a six-week period)** therefore intervention should be happening well before attendance falls to this level.

A child's absence is deemed as severe should it fall to 50% or less. Academies will work with parents and external agencies to support persistently or severely absent children back into academy. Each academy outlines its approaches to supporting and securing good attendance for all children.

9. A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence, all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil receives help to catch up on missed work and is updated on any information which has been passed to other children.

10. Safeguarding

Attendance is an important element of Safeguarding and our academies will put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. These measures are monitored as part of the trust's challenge and support to their academies.

Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. Academies should hold more than one contact number; this goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. Doing so provides academies with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing academy and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Academies should always follow-up any absences to ensure that the proper safeguarding action is taken.

DSLs should check the absence list on a daily basis to ensure that appropriate follow-up action can be taken where required.

Parents should inform academies of a change of address, phone number or email address as soon as possible after the change is made. Ideally this should be done in writing.

11. Promoting Attendance

The Eastern Multi-Academy Trust family of academies work actively together to improve attendance in our area and give consistent messages about the importance of good attendance. Each academy will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers of their responsibility to ensure that their children receive education and will make clear the links between attendance and attainment. Information about attendance, procedures and attendance rates is published in the Academy Prospectus. The Home/Academy Agreement mentions the importance of good attendance and the parents/carers' responsibility.

12. Attendance Awards

Academies will reward pupils who have good or improving attendance, in particular through praising the individual child and, for example, by awarding certificates for 100% attendance on a termly basis.

13. Holidays and absences (other than medical) in Term Time

Holidays during term time are not permitted **and will not be authorised**. Most other absences, unless medical in nature, are not permitted (see below, under Authorised Absences for possible exceptions). Parents will be reminded of the effect absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. Absences in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and parents must apply in writing in advance for permission. Further information can be found for Norfolk academies:

[Academy attendance - Norfolk County Council](#)

or for Suffolk academies:

[Academy attendance and penalty notices | Suffolk County Council](#)

All academies can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from academy with permission. All academies are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the Academy Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and academies maintained by a local authority and special academies not maintained by a local authority must do so. These circumstances are:

- *Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (For full details please see Code C1)*
- *Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.*
- *Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.*
- *A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory academy age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and academy agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend academy as part of that timetable. (For full details please see part-time timetable)*

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Exceptional circumstances: All academies can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of academies maintained by local authorities and special academies not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Academies are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the academy to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from academy.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during academy hours."

DfE Academy Attendance Guidance 2024

There is no complete definition of 'exceptional circumstances'. Each case is different and must be treated as such. Each application is individual to the pupil and it is for the Principal of the academy to come to a decision. The law tells us that even though a family may have one set of exceptional circumstances to be considered, the circumstances of each child must also be considered. Examples of exceptional circumstances could include a sudden **immediate** family bereavement, a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is unable to take leave at other times or a parent is employed by the emergency services and is required to work for a national event leading to leave being cancelled.

Should you request leave of absence for more than one child, at different academies, Principals/Principal are likely to discuss the application together and will attempt to reach one decision. Sometimes this involves academies outside of Eastern Multi-Academy Trust. Our Principals are expected to make the decision based on the child in **their** academy and the supporting evidence available. Our Principals cannot be held accountable for the decision taken by a Principal in another academy or academy.

In some Year groups, due to teacher and statutory assessments and controlled assignments, no absences will be authorised during certain periods, e.g. SATs and exam periods.

The academy will seek to respond to applications within five working days, though this is not always possible. Please remember that we must have sufficient advanced notice to consider applications. All absences taken without prior authorisation cannot be authorised after the event.

Should you not wish to accept the decision of the Principal, you may appeal to the governors in writing care of The Governance Professional to the Academy Committee at your child's academy. You should do this within 10 days of receipt of the academy's decision.

14. Categorisation of Absence

Any child who is on roll but not present in the Academy must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence

Children where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised Absence

Children who are away from the Academy for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

Authorised absences include illness, religious observance, exclusions from academy and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. Medical or dental appointments may be authorised should there be no alternative times available, as may be the case with hospital appointments. However, routine check-ups or GP visits should take place outside academy hours where possible. Illness must be notified to the academy on the first morning. Medical notes may be requested if the absence is prolonged or recurring.

3. Approved Educational Activity

Supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the Academy. Children recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

If a child is receiving education off site or is attending at a academy/academy where they are dual registered, the Academy will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

15. The Registration System

Our Academies use a computerised system for maintaining attendance records (Pupil Asset in Primary Academies and Arbor ar KLA). The attendance codes defined by the Department for Education must be used to record attendance and absence in all EMAT academies. These can be found within the local policy.

16. Record Preservation

Academies must ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years.

17. Register Security





Registers or attendance marking sheets if used must be safely stored. Registers must not be left open on computers or tablets and should be treated securely following GDPR regulations.

18. Attendance Targets

The Trust academies will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a Senior Leader will be responsible for overseeing this work. Academies will make use of the attendance data available on the ASP (Analysing Academy Performance) system when setting its target. Targets will relate to national averages.


19. Governance

Improving attendance requires constant focus, and effective whole academy approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge. Therefore, all trusts and governing bodies are expected to:

-  Recognise the importance of academy attendance and promote it across the academy's ethos and policies.
-  Ensure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
-  Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help academy leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
-  Ensure academy staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Multi-academy trust boards are expected to share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across academies.

20. Documents Used to Support this Policy:

-  [Working Together to Improve Academy Attendance \(2024\)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

Appendices

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory academy age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and [b] To any special needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at academy or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory academy age and are registered at academy is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend academy.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Absences during Term Time

Parents/carers are required under the Education Act (2006) to ensure their child attends the Academy regularly.

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments make clear that Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Academies will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education or if the absences are during Academy exam periods and SATs.

Before applying parents/carers are advised to consider very seriously how the absences will affect their child's education. Academies are not obliged to provide work for children taking leave of absence, however some may choose to do this.

The Government states that any excessive absence or any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised on the child's records. Parents/carers need to be aware an accumulation of unauthorised absences will result in Penalty Notices or legal proceedings being taken.

Penalty Notices.

Penalty Notices are fines of £80 to £160 imposed per parent per pupil. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child, of compulsory academy age, regularly attends the academy/academy where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

They can only be issued ~~by the Principal or someone authorised by and~~ through the Local Authority Officer or the police. All academies must send penalty notices to be issued to the Local Authority, and the police must send copies of penalties to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the Academy.

Penalties may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during Academy hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the Academy at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

Parents are advised to discuss with the Academy any request for leave of absence prior to making any bookings. Our Academy's designated person is ultimately the Principal. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure confirmation is received from the Academy before the trip is taken and they do not assume permission is granted if written confirmation has not been received.

“Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in

respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- 🔄 The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- 🔄 A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- 🔄 A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.

In cases where a pupil has moved academy or local authority area in the previous 3 years, an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil. Where the pupil's previous academy was in the same local authority area this check will be simple. If the pupil has moved between local authorities in the previous 3 years and the previous local authority(ies) is known they should be contacted to check whether a penalty notice has been issued to that parent for that pupil in the previous 3 years.

These checks can be made by the academy and/or local authority depending on the agreed local process. In cases where the previous local authority is not known or the information cannot be, or is not, provided by the previous local authority, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case."

Working Together to Improve Academy Attendance (2024)

Fast Track Process.

What is the purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?

The purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is for you and your child to meet with teachers, academy governors and Attendance Improvement Officers to identify the reasons for absence and to work together to improve attendance.

What will happen at the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?

The reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered. A supportive action plan will be agreed. An attendance target will be set. Whilst the intention of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is that attendance will improve, consideration will be made to legal action if attendance targets are not met. This could include prosecution in the magistrates' court, education supervision orders or parenting orders.

What happens next?

A Review Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting will be arranged and at this meeting the action plan and attendance will be reviewed. A new action plan will be agreed. If the attendance target is met, the Review Panel can recommend that no further action is required. However, the academy will continue to monitor the attendance of your child and will notify the Local Education Authority if attendance deteriorates. This could still result in legal action being taken. If the attendance target is not met, the Review Panel will recommend to the Local Education Authority that legal action is taken as specified above: i.e. prosecution in the magistrate's court, an Education Supervision Order or Parenting Order.

Who is responsible for compliance of this policy?

The Academy Council/Interim Executive Board is responsible for each academy's compliance with this policy and for the local Attendance Policy. Each Academy Council should provide appropriate challenge and support

around the current attendance, absence data (especially Persistent Absence) and the academy's actions to support good attendance of all pupils. Academy Council Members should pay particular attention to the attendance of vulnerable groups, especially disadvantaged, Looked After Children and SEND.

The local academy lead for attendance is responsible for reporting on attendance to the Academy Council or IEB.

The Principal is responsible for reporting on attendance to their Academy Council *through the Principal's Report and at each Challenge & Support Meeting. The Regional Directors/Directors of Education are responsible for offering appropriate challenge and support around the attendance data and for monitoring the effectiveness of the work of the academy in improving attendance for all children.*

The Academy Improvement Directors/Director of Education are responsible for reporting on attendance to the Board of trustees.



Attendance Policy Annex

September 2025

Policy owner	Senior Leadership Team
Author	Chris Harris, Principal

Approved by

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- It also refers to:
 - School census guidance
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education
 - Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Academy Committee

The Academy Committee is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Asking the LA to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the attendance officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including

where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Chris Harris and can be contacted via office@upa.eastern-mat.co.uk.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the principal

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the principal when to ask the LA to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Sophie Webster and can be contacted via office@upa.eastern-mat.co.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions daily, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

3.6 School Office staff

School Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Safeguarding Team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once

during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:35am and ends at 3:15pm.

Pupils must arrive in class by 8:35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45pm and will be kept open until 1:00pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than five days, or if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

If a child is absent in the week before or after a school holiday, the Safeguarding Team will visit the pupil's home to see the child as per our safeguarding procedures.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Please contact the school office via telephone 01945 773220 or email office@upa.eastern-mat.co.uk and provide proof of the appointment if possible.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours when possible. When this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a pupil is regularly late, the school will contact the parent/carer, to see if a solution can be reached

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Text the parent for reason for absence in the first instance.
- If there is no response to the text message, the office will call the pupil's parent/carer mid-morning on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school's Safeguarding Team will visit the pupil's home to speak with parent/carers.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with - issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school attendance office regularly monitors pupil attendance and reports to the principal. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. A letter will be

sent home for any child with less than 92% attendance, along with a copy of the child's herringbone. If the absence is due to recurring illness, the school will complete a joint protocol medical form with the parent, to request the relevant information from the child's GP. If the child's absence drops below 90% and there is no medical reason, the school will notify the parent/carer that no further absence will be authorised and will refer to the local authority's attendance team.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The principal will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website.

The principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

5.3 Penalty notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

For further information see the Norfolk Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalties regarding school attendance.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”

We will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the Local Authority to use legal measures.

5.4 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The academy will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

6.1 Attendance Awards:

- The academy will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance
- Weekly class certificates in KS1 and KS2 awarded to the class with the highest attendance.
- Termly attendance certificates in KS1 and KS2 awarded to the class with the highest attendance.
- Termly attendance certificates awarded to all children who achieve 100% attendance.
- Annual attendance certificate in KS1 and KS2 awarded to the class with the highest annual attendance.
- Annual attendance certificates awarded to all children who achieve 100% for the year

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the Academy Committee.

7.2 Analysing attendance

- The school will:
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Academy Committee and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee' (PA)** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as **'severely absent' (SA)**. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once every year by the principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Academy Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)

Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays