

Attendance Policy



THE EARLS HIGH SCHOOL
AD 1652

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Signature of LGB Chair

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1. Aims

We expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community. Absence from school affects attainment, wellbeing and can also be a risk to the safeguarding of students.

The Earls High School is committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every Student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Recognising that the reasons for poor attendance are varied and individual
- Promoting effective relationships with other services and agencies

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents must ensure that their children are educated; for most this means registering their child at school and ensuring their regular attendance. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- **This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold. It is also informed by the guidance document [Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities](#)**

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it parents and carers responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at the school at which they are on roll. Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent/carer does not in itself necessarily authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by letter/message will the absence be authorised. Authorised absences are time away from school that the school considers to be for a good or unavoidable reason.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The Local Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2. The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3. Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Attitudes)

The Assistant Headteacher will:

- Take the lead role in implementing the school's Attendance Policy and in creating an ethos which values and promotes excellent attendance and punctuality
- Monitor, evaluate and review the school's Attendance Policy
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Liaise with the Pastoral team regarding attendance and punctuality concerns
- Work with the Attendance Officer to ensure the statutory response to non-attendance is followed

3.4. The Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer is generally responsible for much of the day-to-day implementation of this policy and specifically:

- Checking all registers have been completed by 9.30am and 1.45pm
- Reporting to the Headteacher any inconsistency of register-taking by staff
- Completing the attendance register with the appropriate attendance codes
- Registering students arriving to school after 8.55am
- Following procedures for first-day absence
- Amending registers on receipt of authorisation of absence
- Alerting the Pastoral team of any case of suspected truancy, internal or external
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data across the school for different groups and individuals
- Reporting attendance patterns to external agencies, Pastoral Team and Senior Leadership Team
- Working with external agencies to support good attendance
- Communicating with parents to discuss attendance issues and support them in improving attendance

- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed penalty notices.
- Liaising with the Headteacher on approving applications for holidays, attendance at public performances and other periods of absence during term time Individual student support
- Meeting with students whose attendance is a concern and discuss the causes of their poor attendance
- Monitor the attendance of individual students who are vulnerable or 'at risk' on a daily basis

3.5. Pastoral Team

It is the role of the Pastoral team to:

- Work with Form Tutors to support monitoring student attendance and punctuality and intervention to improve both.
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Officer to analyse patterns of behaviour of individuals, groups (especially vulnerable groups) and the whole cohort.
- Ensure the guidance on completing registers is followed by Form Tutors
- Promote good attendance through reporting systems, parental contact and assemblies
- Monitor trends in punctuality to registration and lessons
- Recognise good attendance and punctuality
- Follow up any reported truancy or patterns of regular lateness by contacting the student's parents and issuing sanctions if necessary
- Meet with parents (with the Attendance Officer) to support them in improving attendance and/or punctuality

3.6. Form Tutors

Form tutors play an important pastoral role in supporting attendance, it is their responsibility to:

- Positively reinforce the importance good attendance, ensuring attendance communications are shared with the form
- Complete the electronic registers accurately and in good time
- Monitor students' attendance and liaise with Year Co-ordinators when there are concerns
- Support the Pastoral Team in applying appropriate sanctions for poor punctuality or truancy
- Set a good example by arriving for tutor period and assembly on time
- Seek and pass on written notifications for any absences

3.7. Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. In order to do this they will:

- Complete an electronic register every lesson within the first 10 minutes of each lesson and update the register with students who arrive late to the lesson
- Inform the Year Co-ordinator if poor attendance or punctuality are becoming a concern
- Be positive with students on their return to school and to support them in catching up on work missed by absence

- Promote the next lesson and future learning to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- When organising trips, publish the name of students, sharing a copy with the Attendance Officer
- Report any possible cases of truancy to Year Coordinator and Attendance Officer

3.8. The School Family Support Coordinator

- Develop and agree action plans for a small number of families in coordination with the appropriate Head of School, Attendance Officer, SEND team and appropriate external agencies to improve attendance
- Maintain a list of the most vulnerable students and complete calls to parents of these students if they are absent (normally by 9.30am)

4. Recording Attendance

4.1. The Attendance Register

The school will keep an attendance register and place all students 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 whether every Student is:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm and will be kept open until 2.00pm.

4.2. Unplanned Absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day and subsequent days of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible either by using the Class Charts App, email to attendance@earls.dudley.sch.uk or telephoning 01384 816108.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student'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 about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3. Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done through Class Charts or by email to attendance@earls.dudley.sch.uk.

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

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 5 outlines which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4. Lateness and Punctuality

A Student 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

Detentions are issued by the Pastoral Team for persistent lateness.

4.5. Following up Absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Send a text message to parents, usually before 10.45am
- If there is no response from home, we will then telephone to establish the reason for the absence. If contact cannot be made that day further phone calls will be made or a home visit may be made.
- Certain students who we consider to be vulnerable will be telephoned immediately an absence has been identified and visited at home if no response is received.
- Once the reason for the absence has been determined, the Attendance Officer will identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and record the correct code on the register.

4.6. Internal Absence

The school will use Class Charts and SIMS to monitor possible truancy from sessions or lessons. At the end of each day the Attendance Officer will identify any students that have both a present mark and absent mark in the same day; this report is used to identify patterns of possible truancy from registration or lessons.

Spot checks throughout the day will also be conducted using the same report. Class teachers should contact the Year Team or Attendance Officer when a student who shows as being present in the previous lesson does not arrive to their lesson.

When there is no obvious reason to explain the absence, the Pastoral Team will investigate the matter further. If truancy is proven to have occurred, appropriate sanctions will be applied and contact will be made with the child's parents/carers.

4.7. Reporting Attendance to Parents

Parents can see live attendance data for each session and lesson by logging in to Class Charts. They can also view the attendance history and statistics of their child through this platform.

Attendance will also be reported in child's Record of Achievement reports which are published each year.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1. Approval for Term-Time Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We expect parents to avoid arranging family holidays during term time. We also expect our parents/ carers, where possible, to avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveler students 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 student is attending educational provision
- Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling. Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Attendance Officer to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will evaluate the nature and frequency of the absence and how the effect of the absence on learning can be minimised.
- Absence through competing at regional, county or national level. Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from the Attendance Officer for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will evaluate the nature and frequency of the absence and how the effect of the absence on learning can be minimised. Permission for a child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher

5.2. Reducing Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is when a student's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions. Therefore, students are defined as Persistently Absent when their attendance is 90% or lower over the school year.

We strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, where each member of the school community feels valued and secure. Children are, however, sometimes reluctant to attend school. In these instances, the school and parents will work together to ensure that any barriers to attending school are removed.

All interventions by the school will be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of the student. They may involve the Form Tutor, Year Co-ordinator, Head of School, Assistant Headteacher or other members of the Pastoral Team.

We will be proactive in supporting families when attendance begins to be a concern and will meet informally with the student and their family to identify any barriers to attending school.

We may also consider:

- Short term timetable modifications or supplementary provision
- Peer support and mentoring
- Support from our Family Support Worker
- Referral to external agencies for more specialist support

The school will usually contact parents and carers by letter to inform them of any attendance concerns. These letters include:

- A warning letter if attendance is between 88% and 92% for a school term
- A warning letter when a student has missed 6 sessions in a school term
- A warning letter when a student has missed 10 sessions across a school year
- A letter to notify parents and carers of any punctuality concerns

Parents may also be invited to an Attendance Clinic when there are ongoing concerns about attendance and this will be followed by an Attendance Action Plan and planned review points where the school and parents will evaluate the impact of the action plan.

5.3. Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Every member of the school community must make attendance a high priority and communicate to students the importance of regular attendance.

Students can monitor their own attendance using Class Charts.

The school uses a variety of ways to recognise good attendance including:

- 100% attendance in a term letters and certificates.
- 100% Attendance flash for 100% across a school year
- Inter-form attendance competitions
- Good attendance is a requirement to achieve The Earls Gold Award and to attend the Year 11 Prom

7. Attendance Data

The attendance officer at our school monitors student absence on a daily basis.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national, trust 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board every term.

We collect attendance data using Class Charts. The data collected is stored in both Class Charts and SIMS. We use this data to:

- Track the attendance of individual students
- Identify whether or not there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern or worthy of praise
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support

8. Related Policies

Other policies and documents to read alongside the attendance policy include

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions

9. Data Protection Law

This policy adheres to the principles under Data Protection Law. For further information please review schools Data Protection policy published on schools website.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Attitudes). At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Body.

Appendix 1: A guide to attendance at The Earls High School for Parents and Carers

We expect good attendance and punctuality from our students. Absence from school affects attainment, wellbeing and can also be a risk to the safeguarding of students.

We consider an attendance rate of at least 96% to be good. Persistent absence (PA) is defined as an attendance rate of 90% or below and this equates to missing 19 days of school in a year. Parents/carers are responsible for making sure that their children attend school regularly and we will work with parents to support them with this responsibility.

How parents can monitor attendance of their children

Class Charts is best way for parents to monitor homework, behaviour and attendance of their children. Please contact school through info@earls.dudley.sch.uk if you would like us to resend the log in details for your Class Charts account.

If you need to report an absence

The parent/carer must notify the school on the first day and subsequent days of any unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible either by using the Class Charts App, email to attendance@earls.dudley.sch.uk or telephoning 01384 816108.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours.

Lateness to school

The school register is taken each morning at 8.40am. Students will be marked as late if they are not in their form room for registration. When students are repeatedly late for registration or for lessons during the day, they will be given a detention by their Year Co-ordinator.

When attendance becomes a concern

We strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, where each member of the school community feels valued and secure. Children are, however, sometimes reluctant to attend school. In these instances, the school and parents will work together to ensure that any barriers to attending school are removed.

All interventions by the school will be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of the student. They may involve the Form Tutor, Year Co-ordinator, Head of School, Assistant Headteacher or other members of the Pastoral Team.

We will be proactive in supporting families when attendance begins to be a concern and will meet informally with the student and their family to identify any barriers to attending school. Parents may also be invited to an Attendance Clinic when there are ongoing concerns about attendance and this will be followed by an Attendance Action Plan and planned review points where the school and parents will evaluate the impact of the action plan.

If a student's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving other outside agencies.

Holidays and other requests or leave of absence

The headteacher will only authorise holiday during term-time in exceptional circumstances.

You should put your request in writing to the school as soon as possible. If you go on a holiday without the authorisation of the headteacher, you may be liable to pay a fine and/or be prosecuted for non-attendance.

If you have any concerns about attendance, please get in touch using the attendance@earls.dudley.sch.uk email. Our full attendance policy can be found on the school website here <https://www.earlshighschool.org/information/policies-and-key-documents/>