

Attendance and Lateness Policy



ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS POLICY

Ensuring good attendance is the responsibility of everyone within our Eatock Primary School community: pupils, parents, the local authority and all staff.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels safe and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school has established an effective attendance and timekeeping monitoring system and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. We also use the support systems that are available through Bolton Council. We work closely with the Early Intervention Team and issue Penalty Notices when necessary.

Our attendance procedures also form an important part of our Safeguarding commitment to keeping our children safe.

Our whole school attendance target is 96%.

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils and their families in achieving the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to their education;
- Support pupils in developing their confidence, social skills and understanding of the world, which is supported by regular school attendance;
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to attendance;
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

Expectations for Good Attendance

With the support of their families, we expect children to:

- Attend school every day
- Arrive at school on time
- Be prepared for school and learning

We expect parents / carers to:

- Ensure that children arrive on time and are ready to learn
- Email or telephone school **daily** (press option 1 to report your child's absence) **before 9am** if your child is absent from school. If no contact is made with school before 9:30am your child's absence will be unauthorised.
- Make appointments outside of school hours whenever possible
- Provide school a copy of appointment cards when appointments are within school hours
- Communicate well with school to discuss any issues that might affect your child's attendance or punctuality
- Make an appointment to meet the Headteacher before making any travel arrangements

We expect that the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Promote and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Communicate well with parents regarding all aspects of their child's attendance and punctuality
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality and monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality closely
- Carry out our safeguarding duty to keep our children safe, which includes contacting parents, other family members or external agencies when needed to ensure that unexplained absences are followed up on as quickly as possible
- Support children and their families with issues relating to their attendance and punctuality

If your child is absent from school for any reason. School will:

- Expect parents to contact school with a reason for their child's absence – for safeguarding, we are unable to accept reasons from pupils or siblings
- Make phone calls to families on the first day of absence to obtain explanations for any unexplained absences
- Use a fair and consistent system for marking absence as authorised or unauthorised (including retrospectively marking an absence as unauthorised if contradictory evidence is found) – please see further information later in the policy
- For any child on the Child Protection register, school is required to contact the Social Worker and / or Early Intervention Team on the first day of absence

When attendance falls below 90%, school will:

- Inform parents of their child's attendance %
- Speak to parents to discuss how school can support with any emerging attendance or punctuality concerns
- In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, school will ask for evidence of medical appointments, but will also work alongside parents and medical professionals to put a Medical Plan in place to ensure that we are best able to support the child in accessing a good quality of education

When attendance falls below 80% (persistent absence), school will:

- Monitor individual children's attendance more closely
- Arrange an Attendance Support Meeting with parents to discuss ways of improving attendance
- Work with parents to set targets for improving attendance or punctuality
- Seek advice from other agencies if necessary
- Have regular contact with the Education Attendance Officer if needed to monitor and support individual's attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Attendance Officer if parents are not engaging with school support
- Issue individual warning letters/Penalty Notices if poor attendance is due to unauthorised absence and parents are not engaging with school support

Examples of absences (authorised/unauthorised)

Authorised absences:	Unauthorised absences:
• Genuine illness of the pupil • Hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil with proof of appointment provided • Major religious observances • Visits to prospective new schools • External exams or educational assessments • Approved sporting, cultural or competitive activity	• Holidays during term time • Shopping / day trip / visit to a theme park / weddings • A birthday treat • Oversleeping due to a late night • Looking after other children/other family member • Appointments for other family members • Arriving in school after 9.30am

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Being in school on time is crucial as lateness causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It also enables the children to start the school day in a calm and settled way along with their peers.

- **The school gates open at 8.30am. Classroom doors open at 8:40am. All children should arrive on time and be in class ready to learn at 8.45am.**
- Pupils who arrive after 8:45am must enter via the School Office **with a parent or carer, who will be asked to sign their child in.**
- Children who arrive after 10am will be marked as authorised absence. This counts towards the 10 unauthorised sessions that can result in a fixed penalty notice being issued. A late code will be used up to this time.
- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Afternoon registration is at 1.15pm. All children should be in class at this time.
- **Persistent lateness by a pupil may lead to referral to the Education Attendance Officer and could result in a fixed penalty notice.**
- In circumstances such as bad weather, or public transport difficulties, school may keep the register open for a longer period of time.

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours, school staff are legally 'in loco parentis' (acting in the place of a parent) and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school. Parents must contact school if they wish to take their child out for any reason - an adult must collect the child.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, within school hours, parents are to report to the School Office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- Wherever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Proof of appointment must be provided.
- Children attending medical appointments whose parents have given school prior notice and proof of the appointment will receive a 'medical' registration mark. School can only authorise medical appointments if proof is provided.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return by office staff.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission, their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family, it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.

Leave of Absence

School holiday/term dates are published a year in advance. In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will not be authorised.

Parents should make an appointment to speak to the Headteacher before arranging any leave of absence for their child. An 'absence request form' should then be completed by parents – these can be obtained from the School Office.

The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- The Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holidays and make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- The Governing Body of Eatock Primary School has determined that no holidays taken in term time will be authorised and, in accordance with Bolton Local Authority guidance, a fixed penalty notice may be issued for any unauthorised holidays of 10 or more sessions (5 days or more). ***Any illness which is immediately before/after a known holiday, may not be authorised.***
- In "exceptional circumstances", permission may be granted for Leave of Absence providing your child has good attendance and the Headteacher is satisfied that the request complies with the "exceptional circumstances" requirements.
- Exceptional circumstances are considered as one-off situations (once in a life time events). If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorised. Each application will be judged on its own merit.
- If leave is taken **without prior notice being given to school**, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Attendance Officer will be notified.
- School staff are not able to provide additional work for children during the leave period.

Extended Leave of Absence

Where a pupil is absent from school for 10 or more consecutive days, the school must inform the Local Authority. Extended leave of absence must be requested and risks the child's school place being revoked and filled by another pupil.

The school will take the following steps:

- Parents should in the first instance, make an appointment with the Headteacher. Flights and accommodation should not be booked before this meeting has taken place.
- Request copies of travel and or accommodation tickets.
- Agree a return date.
- Inform parents of possible loss of place if leave is 20 days or more – pupils will be at risk of being removed from school roll.
- Parents are expected to contact school if any circumstances change.
- Parents should sign an agreement acknowledging the risk.

Children Missing in Education

The school recognises that children missing education are at risk of underachieving and may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. We follow the LA guidelines in monitoring such children. If school has reason to believe that a child is “missing”, we endeavour to find that child as soon as possible, working with partner agencies, including the Police and Social Care if necessary.

The Headteacher and the Eatock staff work closely with families to support good attendance. Where there are serious concerns, we work closely with Education Welfare and other agencies to ensure that children are safely in school. Where a child goes missing, we make every attempt to contact the family by phone, letter and home visits. Children missing for more than 10 days **MUST** be referred to the LA (or earlier where there are existing safeguarding concerns), who will attempt to trace the family.

Children who do not attend for more than 20 days without notification are at risk of being removed from the register and losing their place in school.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued from the Local Authority for unauthorised absence, including persistent punctuality issues or if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

The Department for Education announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes came into effect on 19 August 2024.

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a rate of £80 per parent per child. This will be doubled to £160 if it is not paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences because of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

This policy was last reviewed in January 2026

Ratified by Governors February 2026