

# Emmaville Primary School



## Attendance Policy 2024 – 2025

At Emmaville, we will work tirelessly to provide the best education for our children, including supporting families to help address gaps in learning due to absences.

Headteacher: Avril Armstrong

Attendance Governor: Bill Purvis

## The importance of excellent school attendance

As we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils, we believe good attendance is crucial to high attainment. We reward those children whose attendance is excellent; however, we recognise that every family's circumstances are different and will work to overcome any barriers that prevent children from attending school.

Research has proven that there is a high correlation between school attendance and academic performance and success. Absence from school is often the greatest single cause of poor performance and achievement.

Regular and punctual school attendance is therefore important as children cannot learn if they are absent from school. This policy sets out the reasons why we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

Emmaville Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and, on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. We recognise that missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable. Children who are persistently late or absent from school, soon fall behind in their education, they can develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

**A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.**

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to Emmaville School. Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances, it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we realise that we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

### Did you know?

Percentage Attendance	Days missed over a school year
100%	0 days missed
95%	10 days missed
90%	20 days missed
85%	30 days missed
80%	40 days missed

### Attendance at school every day is important because:

- Learning is a progressive activity; each day's lesson builds upon those of previous day(s).
- Reading the material and completing work independently does not compensate for direct interaction with the teacher and peers.
- Many teachers use discussions, demonstrations, experiments and participation of the daily learning activity, and these cannot be made up by those who are absent.

Our policy and guidelines apply to all children registered at this school (Nursery to Year 6) and this policy is made available to all parents/carers on our school website or is available from the school office for those without access to the internet.

### The 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](#)

Parents/Carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance at school. Statutory legislation applies to children in the term after they are five.

Although good attendance is the responsibility of parents/guardians, the Headteacher, members of staff and Governors at Emmaville School work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

### Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

### Attendance Categories for Emmaville

Persistent Absence	Concern	Below Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Less than 90%	90 - 93.99%	94 - 95.99%	96 - 97.99%	98 - 99.99%	100%

### Through this Policy we aim to:

- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and local partners so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence and works effectively to remove barriers to attendance;
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues;
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school;
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education;
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age;
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility;
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluate the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs;
- Make sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance;
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance;

- Recognise the role of class teachers as they will be able to identify where attendance is having an impact on attainment.

### **We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:**

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, families and pupils;
- Ensuring that parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually;
- Preparing children for adulthood with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development;
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters;
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness;
- Supporting pupils and families who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance;
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

### **Procedures**

#### **Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:**

- To maintain appropriate registration processes;
- To maintain appropriate attendance data;
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils;
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness;
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school;
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence;
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time;
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- To refer to the local partners or appropriate agencies of any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve;
- To report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the DfE where requested;
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the nominated person with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Parents and Carers

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and Regulations of 2006 and 2010, parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children.

Under education law (section 576 of the Education Act 1996), a parent is defined as:

- All-natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has responsibility for the care of a child or young person. This means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent.

It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the pupil that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

Parents should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy and work closely with school staff to overcome any problems which may affect their child's attendance.

Please note that parents/carers are discouraged from making medical or dental appointments during the school day. However, we realise that this is sometimes unavoidable but where possible children should only be removed from school for the minimum period of time.

### Parents/Carers are also responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness;
- Contacting the school office before 9.30am (0191 4132460) on the first morning of absence;
- Informing the school of any changes to their contact details;
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with;
- Collecting their children on time;
- Avoiding taking family holidays in term time;
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.

### **Pupils are responsible for:**

- Knowing the value of good attendance and punctuality;
- Arriving at school on time but no earlier than 5 minutes before the official school opening time.

### **School Personnel**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### **Class teachers are responsible for:**

- Maintaining class registers and completing them accurately in accordance with school policy, and forwarding completed registers to the school office staff after registration closes;
- Informing the nominated person where there are concerns and acting upon them;
- Where poor attendance re occurs ensuring appropriate school staff are informed;
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness;
- Ensuring appropriate school staff are informed of additional information provided by the child so it can be recorded in line with school policy;
- Discussing attendance issues at Parents' Consultation evenings where necessary;
- Rewarding children on a termly basis for good and improved attendance.

### **Avril Armstrong and Maggie McKenna, attendance officers are responsible for:**

- Overall monitoring of school attendance;
- Ensuring the safeguarding of pupils by establishing the whereabouts of all absent pupils;
- Checking trends in authorised and unauthorised absence;
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues;
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised;
- Observing attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, eligibility for free school meals, special educational needs, medical conditions and persistent absentees;
- Studying trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- Providing reports and background information every term to inform discussion with the Governing Body. The information provided should include attendance figures and progress to achieving set targets;
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence;

- Making referrals to local partners.

### Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information;
- Ensuring the safeguarding of pupils by establishing the whereabouts of all absent pupils by contacting parents if the school has not been informed of their child's absence;
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence;
- First Day Response: Contacting home if no reason for absence is received (phone call);
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed;
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early;
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head teacher;
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

For Safeguarding and Attendance purposes it is vital that for all pupils we have in place at least three emergency contact phone numbers for different adults associated with each pupil.

### Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell the parent contacts the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.



## Registers

1. Registers are legal documents and will be marked twice a day.
2. Parents must always give reasons for absence to the school.
3. Schools are to determine whether absence is authorised or unauthorised in exceptional circumstances, considering factors such as frequency, duration, attendance patterns, i.e. within reason. Staff must be observant of situations where absence is continually condoned by parents.

### The guidelines below clarify possible actions

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
Illness	Absence without a valid reason
Medical Appointment / Dental (For the time of appointment including travelling)	Latecomers beyond 40 minutes after the session has started
Family Bereavement	Persistent lateness within the first 40 minutes of the day
Religious Observance	Special occasions, e.g. birthday, christenings
Excluded Children	Holidays
Sports / Music / Exams	Shopping trips, day trips
Agreed other educational activity at the discretion of the Head teacher	Absence to look after someone

## Reintegrating Long Term Absentees

Following a long period of absence, a child may feel vulnerable, so staff may wish to arrange a phased or gradual return, allocation of a 'Key Worker', consider whether Special Needs support is appropriate, ensure that all staff are aware of the situation and nominate a key person to monitor the child's reintegration into school. All children must feel welcomed back and know from whom they can seek help.

## Registration

Registration will be carried out twice a day. It is important that pupils arrive on time for registration as late comers cause disruption both to themselves and other pupils.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance.

**Morning registration** is between 8.50am and 9am, the registers will close at 9.30am.

### Afternoon registration:

Reception and Year 1 children - 12.30pm

Year 3 and Year 4 children - 1pm

Year 6 children - 1pm

Year 2 and Year 5 children - 1.30pm

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### Lateness

Being 10 minutes late each day for one year is equal to 33 hours - approximately 6 days!

Poor punctuality is not acceptable.

Minutes lost each day by being late	Days lost per year (approx.)
5 minutes	3 days
10 minutes	6 days
15 minutes	9 days
20 minutes	12 days
30 minutes	18 days

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. They also miss out on vital information and news for the day.

Pupils who arrive late for school disrupt lessons, it can also be unsettling for the child in question and can encourage absence.

Please help us to establish good time keeping as we feel that this is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly for the purpose of 1996 Education Act. The school seeks to improve general punctuality and to improve attitude of persistent offenders by:

- a. Informing parents of our expectations and offer ways of helping combat lateness;

- b. Families of children whose attendance causes concern will be contacted, to ensure we can work together to improve the situation;
- c. Praise and acknowledge latecomers who improve;
- d. Ensure that staff set a good example by arriving punctually for lessons;
- e. All children and parents must understand that lateness is actively discouraged, although sensitivity may be appropriate in some cases;
- f. Schools may use other incentives to improve levels of punctuality.

Once the children are in school after the staggered start to the school day, the only way to get into school is via the front entrance. Any pupil who comes into school this way will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am, without a previously authorised absence, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than their start time will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will be contacted by telephone in the first instance, to discuss any issues and to work with the school to improve the situation. Should it be necessary, the school will support families by helping them to seek support and advice.

### Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with full and accurate details of the reason for their absence and expected date of return. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised

### First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will attempt to contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

## Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will communicate with parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card/letter or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries. Alternatively, we may make a referral to the School Health Advisor to offer support.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

A leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Decisions made in relation to whether a leave of absence request is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) will be applied consistently and equitably.

The Headteacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact.

## Making a Leave of Absence Request

Parents should seek permission for a leave of absence during term time prior to the leave using the request for leave of absence form (available from the school office), fully explaining the reasons for the request. Each request will be judged on a case by case basis by the Headteacher and in some cases in consultation with the Chair of Governors. Parents are reminded that the absence will have an impact on their child's education as the child will miss elements of the curriculum, causing gaps in learning.

- The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made at **least two weeks** in advance and the Headteacher may discuss with the child's parent/guardian the request before a decision is made, especially when the reasons given are unclear.
- School will reply to all application in writing stating whether or not the absence has been granted.
- If leave is not granted, the reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated, as well as the possible consequences of disregarding the refusal.
- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated, including the date the child is expected back in school and the possible consequences if the child fails to return on that date.
- If a parent removes their child from school without requesting a leave of absence or without authorisation from the Headteacher, the parents will be informed in writing that a referral is being made to the local authority requesting a penalty notice be issued.

### **Implications when a Leave of Absence is Not Authorised**

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.

#### **Penalty notices**

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £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 the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

## Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software.

A range of attendance data will be collected and analysed each half term in order to identify individual pupils or groups of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern:

- Whole school attendance rates;
- Numbers and proportion of persistent absentee pupils rates of unauthorised absence;
- Attendance/absence rates for particular cohorts and groups (year groups, gender, SEN, pupil premium).

Attendance data is always discussed in termly pupil progress meetings that are held with class teachers, headteacher and SENCo, and actions agreed.

Attendance data is also collected by the local authority and the government. Pupil group information is published as part of school accountability measures.

At Emmaville Primary School we follow a traffic light system, the purpose of colour coding helps Staff, Parents have a clear understanding of our expectations.

#### **Red Zone: Under 90%**

Students in the red zone are more likely to underachieve, find making friendships difficult. Legal action may also be taken against Parents/Carers of Red Zone pupils.

#### **Amber Zone: 91% - 95.99%**

Students in this zone are still at risk of underachieving due to the absence level. Students who miss school regularly are more likely to suffer from school related stress. If your child is in the Amber Zone we will monitor their attendance over a period of time, and if attendance does not improve, we will contact you to meet with us.

#### **Green Zone: 96% - 100%**

We expect students to have Green attendance throughout their education. Those in the Green are more likely to do well in examinations, have better job opportunities and can develop strong friendships within school.

### **Rewards & Recognition of Good Attendance and Punctuality**

Although good attendance is an expectation the school seeks to improve whole school attendance by offering incentives, these include:

- Class attendance levels included in the weekly news bulletin;
- Whole school attendance levels posted in the weekly news bulletin;
- Classes who have the best weekly attendance will receive attendance trophies;

The following certificates will be sent home via the Marvellous Me platform at the end of each term:

- Gold Certificate for 100% attendance
- Silver Certificate for 99 - 96%
- Bronze Certificate for improved attendance
- Children who have had 100% attendance for the term will have their name placed in the end of term newsletter.

- Children who have had 100% attendance for the school year will have their name placed in a draw. A prize of a gift voucher to the value of £25 will be awarded to the child whose name is picked from the draw.

### Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor attendance, and they will expect the Headteacher to provide them with information in her termly report to Governors. They will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the Headteacher and the Governing Body.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement if any aspect of the policy needs to be changed.

### Communication

Emmaville Primary School's Attendance Policy will be communicated through:

- School Prospectus
- School Website
- Weekly News Bulletins

### Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND policy

**Policy reviewed by Avril Armstrong and Maggie McKenna in November 2024**