



Essendon C of E (VC) Primary School

Encouraging Everyone's Light to Shine.

Attendance Policy

Date Ratified: October 2018
Review Date: September 2021

1. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

In keeping with our vision, *Encouraging Everyone's Light to Shine*, we take our responsibility to promote good attendance and punctuality very seriously. We understand that regular attendance at school is important to our children's future. We believe that all pupils, regardless of their background or starting place, are entitled to achieve their full potential, establish good routines and attitudes, and avoid the risk of antisocial behaviour. We know that pupils who do not have good attendance are less likely to achieve well in later life. We also recognise the negative impact on pupils' self-esteem and well-being if they miss time from school – the pressure of trying to catch up work missed and slotting back into friendships that have continued in their absence can be very daunting and affect their happiness.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy, rewarding and safe environment for all children.

We believe in supporting families with any difficulties they may be experiencing which may lead to non or poor-attendance.

At Essendon School, the Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance. SIMS is used to record daily attendance of pupils.

This policy is to assist the Headteacher and Governing Body in maximising attendance and punctuality.

Our attendance procedures are also an important part of Keeping Children Safe at Essendon School. In particular, they help us to fulfil our statutory duties in relation to Children Missing from Education.

Families will be reminded regularly via the school Newsletter of the importance of good attendance and time keeping and kept up-to-date with any changes to the school day.

2. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL

The school will take a register each morning and afternoon and record whether pupils are present, absent or on an approved educational activity.

For pupils of compulsory school age, the school will differentiate in registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised if:

- There is no satisfactory explanation for the absence;
- The school considers the information received from the family is not sufficient to justify the absence as authorised; or
- Pupils arrive at school after the registers have closed (see Section 4).

We will:

- Give a high priority to attendance and punctuality;
- Apply a fair and consistent approach to dealing with absence and lateness;
- Work actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole;
- Telephone the family of any pupil not present at school when registers close;

- Support parents and families in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance;
- Be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and families, including recognising that some parents and carers have difficulty understanding written communications or are reluctant to come into school;
- Celebrate good attendance;
- Report to families how any absence has been recorded;
- Report to families what the attendance for all pupils throughout the year has been;
- Review attendance of all pupils regularly and meet with the family of any pupil whose attendance is not in line with peers;
- Work with the family during any pupil's long term absence due to sickness (such as a stay in hospital) to support the pupil, and keep the pupil and family informed of school news and provide work to help the pupil to keep up;
- Work with the family of any pupil who have been absent from school for a significant period to support the pupil's reintegration.
- Work closely with outside agencies to support families;
- Ensure that Governors are well-informed regarding attendance via the Headteacher's report; and
- Notify the school's attendance officer regarding all unauthorised absence or lateness.

3. RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents or carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most families fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Families whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Families should:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn;
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly;
- Impress upon their children the need to observe the school's behaviour policy and code;
- Take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending consultation evenings or other relevant meetings for families;
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance;
- Notify the school if their child is going to be absent on an unplanned basis such as illness before 9.20am (when registers close) on the first day of absence and on every subsequent day of absence. This can be done by phone or email and should include an explanation for the absence which will be recorded in the register;
- Avoid arranging medical or dental appointments during school hours wherever possible;
- Avoid booking holidays during term time; and
- Work with the school's attendance officer following long-term or persistent absence.

4. THE SCHOOL DAY AND PUNCTUALITY

The school operates a "soft start". Pupils may arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am. The school day starts at 8.50am.

Late Arrivals

Pupils arriving at school late (any time after 8.50am) need to enter via the main entrance.

Any pupil arriving after 9am but before 9.20am will be marked in the register as “late” but present for the session.

Registers close at 9.20am. Pupils arriving after this time must be noted in the late arrivals book together with a reason for the lateness. Signing in pupils is extremely important in case of an emergency evacuation of the building. **They will be recorded as absent for the whole morning and the absence will be unauthorised** (unless the Headteacher chooses to authorise it on the basis that there are relevant exceptional circumstances).

Occasionally, the school will keep the registers open, for up to 30 minutes, beyond 9.20am where local circumstances require this because lateness is unavoidable (for example in the event of snow or a road closure).

Any lateness is monitored and followed up. After four sessions of unauthorised absence on grounds of lateness, families will be invited to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the lateness and whether there is any support the school can offer. If, following this meeting, the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Team who will be able to give additional advice and support. The school reserves the rights to consider taking legal action against any parents and carers who repeatedly fail to meet their responsibility of ensuring their child is at school on time. This could result in a fixed penalty notice (fine).

Early Departures

The school day ends at 3.15pm. Any pupil being removed from school before 3.15pm will need to be signed out of school, including stating the reason why the pupil is leaving early.

Children are not permitted to stay in school out of school hours unless they are attending an after-school activity. If parents and carers are unavoidably detained and are unable to collect their children on time, we ask them to attempt to arrange for a responsible friend or family member to collect them in the first instance and to notify the school office by telephone. We appreciate that from time to time, parents and carers are unable to make alternative arrangements when they are delayed. Children whose parents and carers have not arrived to collect them on time will wait in the library area, where they will be safe. The Headteacher will monitor and follow up any persistent cases.

5 HOW FAMILIES SHOULD REQUEST PLANNED ABSENCE

For any planned absence, families should use a Leave of Absence Request Form (see Appendix A) setting out details of the reason for the requested absence.

The Headteacher (or nominated delegate) will inform the family whether the request is authorised. Please note that because of the importance of school attendance, **only truly exceptional** circumstances will be authorised (examples of absence which may be authorised include a day of religious observance, a funeral of a close family member or friend, a medical appointment such as a hospital appointment which cannot be scheduled at any other time).

Family holidays will not be authorised. Our term dates are published on our website. Please make sure you check them before making any travel arrangements.

Please note that it is not appropriate to ask class teachers to provide catch up or homework where families have removed their child from school in unauthorised circumstances (such as for a family holiday). Our teachers already work very hard and it would be unfair to ask them to do extra in these circumstances.

6 HOW ABSENCE IS COMMUNICATED TO PARENTS

Stage 1: Early Warning

Families will be informed (either in person or by letter as appropriate) if a pupil's attendance falls to 95% whether, because of authorised or unauthorised absence. The family will be reminded of the need for good attendance. If the absence is as a result of repeated illness, you may be asked to provide medical evidence to support any further absence due to illness if it is to be recorded as authorised. A meeting will be offered so that school can support in any way we can with the underlying reasons for any absence.

Stage 2: Repeated Unauthorised Absence

Once attendance drops to 90%, the local authority consider this to be **persistent** absence. If a pupil's attendance is nearing 90%, and the attendance is unauthorised, the family will be contacted to ensure that they are aware.

At this point, a meeting with the family to discuss the reasons for absence and to offer any support to improve attendance will be expected. **Families will be notified that any further absence can only be authorised with medical evidence explaining the absence (a copy of a prescription or an appointment card etc).**

Stage 3: Persistent Absence

If the situation does not improve and attendance falls **below** 90%, the school will then contact the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Team. This may result in them contacting families directly and working with them. However, as a last resort, the school also reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents and carers who repeatedly fail to meet their responsibility of ensuring their child's regular full-time school attendance. If this is necessary, families will receive a final warning of a fixed penalty notice (fine).



Essendon C of E (VC) Primary School

Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works

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Headteacher

Ms Belinda Canham

At Essendon, we have high expectations for all our pupils. Evidence has demonstrated that pupils who miss out on time at school are less likely to achieve well academically or be well-prepared for their next stage of life.

We therefore encourage families to make medical and dental appointments for their children after school or in school holidays whenever possible. If your child does need to attend an appointment during the school day, please do bring him or her in beforehand and return them to school afterwards.

Because we want the best for our pupils, leave of absence from school will only be granted in **truly exceptional** circumstances and absences for holidays cannot be authorised. If you do have exceptional circumstances requiring absence from school, please detail them below and return the form to school for consideration by the Headteacher.

✂ _____

Date:

Application for a leave of absence

I request that(name of child/ren) be granted leave of absence from Essendon C of E (VC) Primary School from to, a total of days.

Reason for the request
.....
.....
.....

Signed

Dated

The above requested absence will be recorded as authorised/unauthorised because:

.....
.....
.....

Signed

Dated

Role