

**Euston Street P.S.**

**& Nursery Unit**

**Attendance Policy**

**Commitment to keeping policies live**

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| **Date the plan came into effect** | **April 2018** |
| **Who is responsible for this document** | **Principal, SLT, SMT, staff, BoG** |
| **Issued to** | **Staff, BOG, parents, pupils (friendly version)** |
| **Reviewed** | **Covid-19 updated 2020 *Updated November 2022*****April 2022** |
| **Related Policies** | **Safeguarding, Child Protection, Intimate Care, Positive Behaviour & Citizenship, Pastoral Care Anti-Bullying**  |

**EUSTON STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Attendance Policy**

**Introduction**

**This policy reflects the school mission, vision and values.**

**Mission**

**‘Achieving Excellence Together’**

 *‘To work together for excellence in: our learning; our school; our community; and our future’.*

Our purpose therefore is to be an excellent school. We continually strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this aim we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our School Development Plan.

**Vision**

In order to achieve excellence in each aspect of school life, our vision is:

 *'To create a safe, happy learning community. A community where together, we inspire and equip our pupils so that they fulfil their potential, use their talents and follow their dreams now and always.’*

**Values**

We believe that our school is a place where the child is at the centre.

*‘We value kindness, integrity, hard work and mutual respect.'*

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil’s education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

**Definitions**

SEN Special Educational Needs

LAC Looked After Children

FSM Free School Meals

Newcomer pupils from a country other than Northern Ireland/UK

**Purpose**

It is widely recognised that here is a strong correlation between good pupil attendance and good academic progress and attainment. The purpose of this policy is to:

* Define different levels of attendance;
* Set out the responsibilities of each partner;
* Set out why the school monitors attendance;
* Explain how the school monitors attendance;
* Explain Intervention: Procedure for addressing attendance concerns and poor attendance
* Explain the procedures of early intervention: Positively promote the importance of good attendance and implement preventative measures to help support excellent attendance;
* Early intervention and transition;
* Explain intervention for SEN/Newcomer/Traveller(Roma)/LAC/FSM pupils.
* Explain intervention for other attendance barriers;
* Show targets for pupil attendance.

This policy is written in conjunction with DE Circular 2022/07 and the new tier system guidance September 2022.

At Euston Street Primary School we expect all children to attend school every day as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of absence it is essential that the school is informed of the reasons for this.

Attendance is an important issue that is taken seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child’s attendance. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child’s:-

* attainment in school
* relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
* confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others
* well being and self esteem
* life chances

**Definitions of attendance levels**

The following table clearly shows the impact that both excellent and poor attendance will potentially have on a child’s learning, attainment and wellbeing.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 100% Attendance | 0 Days Missed | Excellent |
| 95% Attendance | 9 Days of Absence1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed | Satisfactory |
| 90% Attendance | 19 Days of Absence3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed | Poor |
| 85% Attendance | 28 Days of Absence5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed | Very Poor |
| 80% Attendance | 38 Days of Absence7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed | Unacceptable |
| 75% Attendance | 46 Days of Absence9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed | Unacceptable |

The school will determine if an absence is either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

**Authorised Absence**

An absence can be 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 guardian. Authorised absences include essential medical appointments, illness or a child educated off site.

**Unauthorised Absence**

An absence can be classified as unauthorised when a child is absent from school without permission.

Unauthorised absences include:-

* parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
* truancy
* holidays not agreed
* absences that have not been explained

**Responsibilities**

Parents/carers

Parents have the main legal responsibility for their child’s regular attendance at school.

Article 28 (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) Pupils have the right to a good education.

Parents should take the following responsbilities seriously.

**Arrival & Registration**

All children should be in school ready to begin lessons at 9.00 am each day. Doors open at 8.45 am and children can enter the classroom from this time. As the day counts as two attendances the register is taken twice daily. Morning registration ends at 9.00 am. If a child arrives after the registration ends he/she will be marked as ‘Late’. Arrival after 9.15 am will be recorded as an unauthorised late mark.

Illness and Medical Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

When a child is unwell parents should notify the school as soon as possible. On the child’s return to school a written explanation should be supplied to the child’s class teacher. If no reason is provided this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Family Holidays/Absence during Term Time

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. A family holiday during term time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Improving Pupil Attendance Strategy – ***DENI 2016***

3.1.1 The attitudes of parents can have a significant impact on the school attendance levels of children. The views of parents in particular are vital in shaping the mindset and behaviours of their children, particularly younger children.

3.1.2 Parents have a legal requirement to ensure that each child of compulsory school age receives full-time education. If a parent registers their child in a school, they have a legal duty to ensure they attend that school regularly. Positive support from parents and a willingness to engage with their child’s school (and other support bodies as necessary) will make a significant contribution towards their child maximising their attendance at school and realising their full educational potential.

**Collaboration**

Parents of Euston Street are reminded of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly as outlined below. Punctuality is also stressed, as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole. Parents should support the school by following the policy and encouraging their children to follow school rules on attendance and punctuality. Parents should support the efforts of the school leadership to maintain a high attendance and cooperate with the school when poor attendance needs addressed.

**Communication**

The school provided parents with leaflets and polices that outline the requirements and importance of attendance. Attendance is a regular item on the school monthly newsletter which is also posted on the school website. Parents are made aware of the target of 96% monthly attendance through the school newsletter and via Facebook page. Attendance percentage is reported at each parent teacher meeting and the overall end of year pupil percentage attendance is reported.

The school leadership monitor attendance each month with the Education Welfare Services.

**School and Board of Governors**

* School will have an Attendance Policy in place that is approved by the Board of Governors;
* School and the Board will ensure that all pupils and parents are aware of the policy and what it means to them;
* School and the Board will have attendance targets that are communicated to pupils and parents;
* The Board of Governors will have attendance as a standing item at each meeting;
* School and the Board will promote the importance of good attendance on attainment and wellbeing;
* School and the Board will strategically aim to prevent any barriers to attendance and learning;
* School and the Board will aim to improve the capacity of staff to support pupils with attendance problems.
* School will follow up on pupil absences and lateness;
* School will be flexible in its approach to intervention depending on the needs of the pupil;

**Education Welfare Services (Education Authority)**

The Education Authority provide support and advice to school leaders in their management of attendance. The principal meets with the Education Welfare Services each month when possible. The Education Welfare Service/Officer aims to support the pupil, family and school in improving attendance. Education Welfare support the school leadership through guidance and advice in all matters of attendance. If a referral is made to Education Welfare they are responsible for making visits to the home to offer support and help ensure that the pupil attendance improves.

**Why Euston Street monitors attendance**

Recent research indicates that even a small number of days missed each month can impact negatively on pupil attainment. Higher absence rates can also impact negatively on social and emotional development, mental health, physical health, friendships, GCSE results, general happiness and future life chances.

At Euston Street we want our pupils to reach and even surpass their academic potential at each stage of development, maximise their life choices, live a happy content life and follow their dreams! Euston Street therefore aims to promote the importance of good attendance.

**How Euston Street Monitors Attendance**

In Euston Street we aim to monitor attendance as follows:

* Daily record of pupil attendance on SIMS;
* Monthly ‘Attendance Check’ with Principal/Senior Leadership;
* Letters sent home to parents (see below) as required;
* Phone calls made to parents/carers (see below) as required;
* Meetings called with parents (see below) as required;
* Senior Leadership Health Check each term;
* Monthly meetings with Education Welfare Officer;
* Discussed at each Board of Governors meeting;
* Referrals made to Education Welfare Services as required.
* The attendance of children on the CP register and LAC pupils are discussed at each Safeguarding Team meeting.

**Intervention: School Procedure for addressing attendance concerns and poor attendance**

The following procedure is followed in cases where a pupil is experiencing poor attendance. In September each year first letters will be sent to all parents/careers whose child has an attendance of less than 95%. First letters or phone calls may be sent on any day/month when the pupil attendance falls below 95%. A staff member may raise a concern about a pupil at any time and attendance may be part of the concern raised.

**High Attendance**

**Tier 1**

>95% monthly attendance

Pupils attending over 95% each month received a reward and certificate. There is a display wall celebrating those with good or better attendance each month (see Strategic intervention). These pupils are also entered into a draw for a Principal’s Award.

**Tier 2**

Parents are requested to complete a First Day’s Absence form explaining reasons for absence.

First Monthly attendance of <95%

Parents whose child attends <95% in September will receive a letter/email informing them of the attendance percentage and the potential impact on attainment if it does not improve. The teacher will talk to the pupil about reasons for their poor attendance.

90% - 95% monthly attendance

Parents whose child continues to have a monthly attendance of between 90% and 9%% will receive a second letter/email informing them of the attendance percentage and the potential impact on attainment if it does not improve. The second letter will also inform the parents that if attendance does not improve then the case will be referred to Education Welfare Services. The school will also endeavour to contact parents via telephone to explain the attendance and offer support that the school can implement.

Parents may also be contacted by phone at this stage by the school leadership or the school parent liaison worker.

Pupils with persistent poor attendance will have an attendance monitor started.

86% - 89% monthly attendance

Parents will be invited to school to discuss the reasons for the poor attendance. Other agencies involved with the child/family may be informed of the attendance. The meeting will inform the parents that if attendance does not improve then the case will be referred to Education Welfare Services. The school will also offer support that the school can implement. If the parents are unable to attend this may be discussed via a phone call.

Pupils with persistent poor attendance will have an attendance monitor started.

**Tier 3**

Below 86% attendance

A referral will be made to the Education Welfare Services in line with the Department’s Attendance ***Circular 2018/12***. School may inform other involved service/agencies as required.

Improvement in monthly attendance

If the attendance of a pupil improves, then the parents will be notified as required by the new attendance percentage outlined above. If pupil attendance fluctuates the procedure will continue as outlined above.

\*A referral may be made without parental consent if the school leadership decide it is in the best interests of the pupil and or the parents do not engage with and support the school leadership.

**Early Intervention**

**How Euston Street Promotes Positive Attendance and Prevents Poor Attendance**

Euston Street aims to support excellent pupil attendance. In doing so it strategically aims to create a positive school ethos, one in which all pupils feel welcomed, supported, challenged and celebrated. Euston Street aims to achieve this on a MACRO, MESO and MICRO level through the following:

MACRO

* Whole school Attendance Policy shared on the school website and available in school;
* Whole school targets for attendance including class targets;
* Assembly and classroom discussions of the importance of attendance;
* Banners outside and inside school promoting positive attendance;
* Monthly attendance checks;
* Monthly newsletters promoting attendance;
* Monthly newsletters informing parents about attendance levels in school and attendance targets;
* Monthly attendance checks for the whole school including nursery;
* Monthly attendance meetings with EWO;
* SLT termly health checks, to include attendance levels;
* Parent, staff and Board voice in which attendance in discussed;
* Having attendance as a standing item at every Board meeting;
* Whole school Barnardos counselling to support pupil wellbeing;
* Classroom assistants in each classroom;
* Staff capacity training in monitoring and supporting good attendance through training in highly effective Teaching & Learning, Pastoral Care, Safeguarding and Child Protection; Attendance etc.;
* A whole school healthy lifestyle policy;
* School Prospectus that identifies the importance of good attendance;
* Resilience/Wellbeing training for all pupils with Barnardos;
* NSPCC training for all pupils on staying safe;
* Whole School Breakfast Club

MESO

* Pupil and family friendly attendance leaflets;
* Monthly class wards for highest attending classes;
* Leadership opportunities for KS2 pupils;
* Whole school Barnardo’s counselling to support pupil wellbeing;
* Year 1 and Nursery meetings with parents and previous education providers for transition;
* A wide range of after school activities;
* Pupil praise notes sent home;
* Break and lunchtime healthy activities;
* Wall displays celebrating excellent attendance;
* Pupil voice in which attendance is discussed;
* Curricular meetings with parents in which the importance of good attendance is discussed (including Nursery)
* Teacher/parent meeting twice annually in which attendance is discussed;
* Love for Life training for Year 7 pupils on relationships, secularity and transition;
* ‘It’s Your Move’ training for Year 7 pupils for transition;
* School plays, shows, teams and music groups to further inspire and enthuse attendance in school.
* The winning House receives a group prize at the end of the academic year.
* Pupils are encouraged to be Attendance H.E.R.O.s (Here, Everyday, Ready, On time)
* Music Lessons for pupils;
* Extended Schools activities including drama, music, breakfast club and parent drop in);
* Parent drop in Centre (Wednesday and Friday mornings);
* Active School Council, Eco-Committee, Digital Leaders, Playground Buddy System;
* Wrap Around Care in Junior Club for Years 1 – 3;
* Extensive transition programs and inter school collaboration.
* Pupils with persistent poor attendance will have an attendance monitor started.

MICRO

* In Key Stage 2 pupils are encouraged to have ‘Top Attendance’.
* Certificates are awarded to any pupil who has 95% or better attendance.
* Attendance Heroes and Top Attendance pupils may have changes made to their weekly homework
* Points are awarded to school houses for all Top Attendance pupils and the winning house if given a prize twice annually
* Attendance Heroes and pupils with Top Attendance are celebrated in school assembly each month.
* Academic progress awards can only be awarded if a pupil has good attendance.
* KS2 drop in counselling service to support pupil wellbeing;
* Learning support for SEN pupils,
* Learning support for Newcomer pupils;
* Pupil IEP/PLP for SEN/LAC pupils;
* Classroom differentiated and challenging learning;
* Classroom assistance provided as required in line with school available resources;
* Monthly individual attendance rewards (homework passes) and certificates for excellent attendance;
* Pupil personal target setting in literacy and numeracy.
* Pupils with persistent poor attendance will have an attendance monitor started.

**General school activities and incentives**

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

At Euston Street Primary School, a number of rewards are available for good attendance and punctuality. The school also has a range of special working groups, The school playground has been zoned to stimulate active ‘play’ at break and lunch time. The playground is supervised by well trained staff and Year 7 Buddies.

The school provides a breakfast club and wide array of after school activities to engage pupils and parents.

To encourage good attendance and punctuality, rewards are linked to class Golden Time and the school Positive Behaviour Policy. An annual ‘Be on Time Week’ is also organised and prizes are given to all who manage to be on time for the given week.

Pupils are also awarded in school with badges/stickers for the following:

* Language Champions
* Horizon Group
* Numeracy (weekly)
* Literacy Writing (weekly)
* STEM
* Art & Design
* PE
* Music

School leaders receive badges for the following:

* Eco
* School Council
* Digital Leaders
* Art Gallery Team
* Pupil Voice Team
* Language Champions
* Librarians

**Nursery Unit**

Whilst attendance at the Nursery Unit is not compulsory it is good to get pupils used to regular attendance. The daily learning activities that pupils experience and engage in whilst in the Nursery Unit is of vital importance to progress when pupils move into formal education in Year 1. We encourage parents by informing them of their child’s attendance each term and remind them of the importance of regular attendance to successful school learning experiences and future attainment.

**Transition**

Transition can be a particularly difficult time for parents and pupils alike. Transition can take place:

* Between home and nursery;
* Another educational setting and nursery;
* Nursery and year 1 in Euston Street;
* Nursery and year 1 in another school;
* Year 7 and post primary;
* Another educational setting/country and Euston Street.

To ensure that the transition in all of these circumstances does not adversely impact on attendance and to help ensure that the pupil learning and attainment tis supported as best possible, the following measures are implemented in Euston Street primary School:

* Nursery meetings with parents and other educational settings;
* Nursery information sessions for parents;
* Play and stay day for pupils and parents;
* Curricular support sessions for nursery and Year 1;
* Information leaflets for nursery and Year 1 parents;
* Child Protection/Safeguarding policy for parents;
* Setting in periods for pupils in nursery and Year 1;
* Year 1 meetings with parents and other educational settings;
* Classroom assistant support;
* Newcomer learning support in Year 1;
* Polish classroom assistant in Nursery setting;
* Welcome pack for new pupils;
* Translated information leaflets and newsletters for Newcomer parents;
* Translation services for Newcomer parents;
* Translation on the school website for Newcomer parents;
* Learning support for SEN, travellers, LAC and Newcomer pupils;
* Parent teacher meetings in October and February;
* Transition training for pupils in safeguarding, e:safety, relationships and sexuality and post primary.

**SEN/Newcomer/Traveller (Roma)/LAC/FSM pupils and attendance**

To best support these groups of pupils we will identify and support all needs as outlined above. LAC pupils will be discussed in monthly Safeguarding Team meetings and Board of Governor meetings.

Other interventions in terms of needs, transitions and wellbeing are dealt with elsewhere in this policy.

In matters of concerns about attendance and poor attendance SEN, LAC, Newcomer status, traveller status will be given due consideration.

Intervention and other barriers to good attendance

There are many reasons why pupils and families struggle with poor attendance. These include:

* Illness;
* Family support;
* ACEs;
* Be averment;
* Safeguarding issues;
* Bullying behaviours;
* Language barriers;
* Low self-esteem.

Euston Street will deploy resources as available to support pupils/families experiencing these or other difficulties to help ensure good attendance and future learning and attainment of the pupil. Many of the interventions are outlined above. Each pupil experiencing barriers to good attendance will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

**Euston Street Attendance Targets**

Each year the SLT develop an Attendance Action Plan. This plan will have the following targets incorporated.

* Raise the whole school month and yearly attendance to or sustain at 96%.
* Raise to or sustain each Year Group (including Nursery) and class monthly attendance at 96% or their specific target (see Attendance Action Plan 2019 – 2020)
* Promote and communicate monthly attendance trends to the Board, parents, pupils and staff.
* Review and evaluate current monitoring arrangements and incentives in line with attendance trends.
* Track poor attendance trends of pupils and classes against academic progress and attainment.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and updated when required.

Appendix 1



**Appendix 2**

