



Emerson Park Academy

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Reviewed July 2023
Review Sept 2024

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

This policy document on attendance and punctuality has been produced to explain to all concerned (Students, Parent / Carers & Staff) the rights, responsibilities and rules relating to the attendance of students at this school.

Emerson Park Academy values the importance of high attendance and good punctuality at its school and has high expectations for all of its students. It recognises that a high level of attendance and punctuality maximises student educational opportunities and contributes significantly to a students' achievement, progress and overall attainment at school, as well as promoting wellbeing and community cohesion, all valuable attributes for successful working life after leaving school.

We seek to ensure that all our pupils receive a full-time education which they are entitled to, which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her full potential.

Emerson Park Academy is committed to providing a full and inclusive education for every student and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued and secure. School staff are committed to working with students and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge those who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents / carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Each year the Academy examines its attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is improving and continues to work towards the target set. Currently we are working towards a Whole School Attendance Target of 96% as we continually work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students.

END of YEAR <i>(All figures are Sept – July)</i> <i>(* Pandemic)</i>	Emerson Park Academy Attendance	National Attendance	Havering Attendance	Emerson Park Academy Persistent Absence	National PA	Havering PA
2014-2015	94.51	94.70	94.44	14.06	13.82	15.21
2015-2016	95.10	94.79	94.67	9.54	13.06	13.23
2016-2017	93.73	94.65	94.47	15.27	13.54	13.76
2017-2018	93.45	94.47	94.53	17.13	13.91	16.65
2018-2019	93.18	94.51	94.73	18.67	13.69	13.43
2019-2020*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2020-2021	95.01	94.51	95.7	12.27	14.83	10.52
2021-2022	92.31	91.00	92.30	23.37	27.70	22.90

School attendance is subject to various educational laws and this school's attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Government, Department for Education and Havering Council.

- <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>
- <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance>
- <http://www.havering.gov.uk/Pages/Category/Schools-and-colleges.aspx>

Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent(s) or carer(s).

Guidance for Parents / Carers

You have a legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school every day. By law, only the school can approve absences not parents. It is for the school to judge whether the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence. Parentally condoned unauthorised absence is a serious problem and the school will involve the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) at an early stage if necessary.

Why must my child attend school regularly?

- A good education will help give your child the best possible start in life. If your child does not attend school regularly, he/she will not be able to keep up with the work and will miss out on other aspects of school life such as friendship groups and life skills
- Employers look for reliability and good school attendance and punctuality is an important indication of this. Children who have not attended their school regularly have less chance of getting a good job
- Young people who are absent from school for no good reason are at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse. They may also be drawn into anti-social behaviour or criminal activity

What is an authorised absence?

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval / consent in advance for a student to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence or as a result of a serious breach of the school's rules.

Acceptable reasons for absence may include:

- Illness
- Emergency medical / dental appointments
- Family bereavement
- Day of religious observance
- Suspensions results from a decision taken by the school to suspend. The school is responsible for setting work for the students for the first five days.

Please note that all of the above are counted as an absence from school and will reduce a student's overall level of attendance.

Consent in advance for an authorised absence may be also granted by the Head teacher when a student is asked, for instance, to represent a recognised organisation (e.g. Scouts, Cadets etc.) and may be obtained, in advance, from the head teacher following a request in writing.

Excessive amounts of authorised absence can seriously disrupt a student's continuity of learning. Inappropriate use of authorised absences can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence.

School Procedures

Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. The Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on his behalf will authorise absence if appropriate. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. A range of support for parents / carers will be made available where they (the parent \ carers) are seeking the schools assistance to encourage a child to attend school more regularly. Emerson Park Academy will not ask students to remain at home, other than those that are formally fixed term or permanently suspended, unless there is a serious risk to the student in question or other students in the school. In this case the school will seek advice from their Safeguarding Team and the LA to establish a way forward.

What is an unauthorised absence?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. Unacceptable reasons for absence may include:

- Arriving late after the morning register has closed
- Any Parent / Carer condoned absence
- Holidays
- Visiting relatives
- Shopping
- Birthday Trips
- Looking after siblings
- Routine medical/dental appointments (these should be arranged after school or during school holidays).

What steps must I take if my child is absent?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school daily to report an absence, ideally before 8am (Absence line: 01708 463065 or 01708 475285 ext. 267).

Parents should provide the following information:

1. Student's Form class including Year Group & House Name (Brunel, Cavell, Hepworth & Redgrave)
2. Reason for absence – please provide as much detail as possible.

However, we may require a medical certificate to justify frequent or extensive absences. If your child is absent for four or more schools days then you are required to provide medical evidence. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we may not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's report.

The school operates Groupcall a SMS / text based system. Groupcall generates a text message to the first named parent of the student informing them if their child does not register for AM registration. If you receive a Groupcall text we would like you to either reply to the text or call the school on the 01708 475285 ext. 267 to confirm their absence or if you believe they should have registered in school, please call immediately.

Unexplained absences and / or frequent absences can be a serious cause for concern and therefore in terms of the Safeguarding of Children and Young People, any unexplained absences will be a priority for this school.

Why are registers important?

- Registers are legal documents which record whether parents or carers have fulfilled their legal obligations and may be produced as evidence for an offence
- They are the best way to track students in cases of emergency (e.g. in the unlikelyhood of a fire)
- They assist the Academy in fulfilling its safeguarding duties.

What happens if my child is late?

Ideally your child will be on site no earlier than 8am, ideally on site no later than 08.30am and be in class by 08:40am for morning registration that starts at 08:40 am. If your child arrives after registration has started he/she will be marked as late.

- Late marks will be shown on your child's report
- In circumstances such as bad weather or transport difficulties the Academy may keep the register open for a longer period to accommodate this
- A student arriving after the register has closed will receive an unauthorised absence mark. This will be counted as an absence from school and will reduce a child's overall attendance.

Medical Appointments & Students Signing Out

It is best where possible to make medical appointments outside of school hours. If you require your child to leave school during the day for any reason, then please notify the school in advance of the date.

Please note - Students must always sign out at the school reception before leaving site and Students when returning to school after an appointment must sign back in, again via reception.

Can we take family holidays during term time?

In short - Family holidays can only be taken during school holiday periods. Information on the Academies term dates and INSET days and early finishes can be found on our own Academy website. <http://www.emersonparkacademy.org/>

Since September 1st 2013, following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) regulations 2006; head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

As a result of this change parent / carers will be issued penalty fines according to the regulations set out below.

In September 1st 2013 amendments made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** came into force (see Appendix 1).

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their suspended child is not in a public place during the first five days of a suspension.

- Please note we do not authorise requests for leave retrospectively.
- Parents of all students and especially those in Years 10 and 11 are strongly discouraged from taking their child on holiday during term time.

Term time leave

Head teachers of schools will consider all term time leave requests. Each request must be considered on its own merit and the impact upon the child's learning and wellbeing must be central to the decision made. However, a Head Teacher may take into account previous leave requests and other factors related to the child when making their decision.

Parents/carers who do not request term time leave and take their child on 'unauthorised leave', or fail to keep the school informed of changed to leave arrangements, may receive a fine, be prosecuted and/or the children may lose their place at their school.

Requesting of term time leave in exceptional circumstances

Requests for exceptional term time leave must be made at least 20 school days in advance of any arrangements being made. This will allow sufficient time for the request to be considered by the school. The request should be made in writing using the 'Request for Leave' form (Appendix 3) and can be found on the Academy website. A separate form should be completed for each child.

Exceptional term time leave requests must include specific start and end dates, as this will formally constitute the leave period. Where no specific dates are provided, then the request cannot be considered or granted.

Parents/carers who are intending to travel abroad with their children during term time should not book travel prior to securing approval from the school.

Any changes to date agreed by the school will require a re-submission for authorisation prior to departure.

The Head teacher's decision is final.

Family Emergency – where no leave has been requested

There will be some occasions where it has not been possible for the parent/carer to make a request for exceptional term time leave.

Whilst emergency situations are often difficult, parents/carers are still required to contact the school at the earliest possible opportunity and submit a written request for exceptional term time leave.

This written request can be made on behalf of the parent/carer. The request must include a specific leave period including a return date.

Where parents/carers have not requested leave from the school which their child attends, the child is at risk of losing their place at the current school in accordance with Section 8 (h).

Considering the exceptional time leave request

The Academy will consider all exceptional term time leave requests on their own merit, in accordance with current legislation and guidance. We may seek advice from our Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), prior to making a decision, however, the final decision remains with the Head Teacher.

The following factors may also be considered prior to reaching a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term Time leave requested/taken in previous years
- Whether parents/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holidays
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child

The decision and informing

The school will reach a decision and send a written response within 14 days of the leave request being received.

The decision will result in the term time leave request being either

- Authorised
- Unauthorised
- Part Authorised and Unauthorised.

For example; Mr X has requested 3 weeks term time leave for his child. The school acknowledges that the reason given is important, but feels that 3 weeks is excessive and authorise 1 weeks leave, with the remaining 2 weeks being unauthorised.

What steps do I take if my child is avoiding school?

- Contact your son / daughters Head of Year immediately or Attendance Officer on 01708-475285 ext. 276
- It is important that we identify the reason for your child's absence (such as difficulties with work, family difficulties or bullying)
- If difficulties cannot be resolved, the school may refer the child to the Educational Welfare Office (EWO)
- In some cases you may find it helpful to contact the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) yourself. Duty line contact number is 01708 431777

Guidance for Students

Students are responsible for their own punctuality and attendance. We expect our students to aim for 100% attendance and lateness should be rare or non-existent. On return from an authorised absence, students should submit a note from their parent explaining the reason for their absence.

Why must I attend school?

- It is a legal requirement to attend school
- To keep up with school work and achieve the best possible results
- Good attendance and punctuality shows reliability – your attendance will be included in your reference for an apprenticeship, job, sixth form or other college placement.

Punctuality to lessons

It is equally important that you are on time to each lesson. The most important work in a class happens in the first few minutes when previous work is re-visited and understanding checked or the lesson aims & objectives are discussed by your subject teacher. If you are late to lessons, your subject teacher will impose a sanction in line with our school Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Having problems?

Problems with school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at home? You may think that bunking school is the answer but it can make things worse. *TALK TO SOMEONE* – your Form Tutor, your Head of Year, the Education Welfare Officer or your parents / carers. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

What happens if I'm late?

- The warning bell for registration sounds at 08:35 after which registration period starts at 8.40am. Students who arrive after 08:40 will be recorded as late by the Form Tutor
- In the afternoon, the moving bell will sound at 2.05pm, period 5 starts at 2.10pm. Any Student who arrives after 2.10pm will be recorded as late (Coded 'L') by the teacher.
- Students who arrive late to school after 8.40am must report to the Main Office and sign in giving a reason. They will be coded 'L'
- Any Student who arrives on site after 09:35am will be marked as absent and will not receive an attendance mark for the morning school session, this is in line with the DfE guidance on when a school closes its morning registers and the student will be coded as a 'U'.
- Lateness is monitored by our Head of Year & Attendance Officer weekly and action is taken in line with our Attendance and Punctuality Procedures.

What does the school do to enhance attendance and punctuality?

We are working towards reducing our unauthorised and authorised absences rates so that we can increase our overall attendance figures. The ultimate aim is to ensure that our whole school attendance figures are higher than the National and Havering averages and our PA is below both.

To enable us to work towards this we have a number of strategies and initiatives which run throughout the academic year which include;

Attendance Officer:

- The Attendance Officer sends regular communications to all parents/carers to inform them of their child's level of attendance via email using SIMS module called 'In Touch'
- Text messages are used to alert parents of students who do not arrive at school, this is done via GroupCall.
- Our Attendance Officer meets weekly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and particular attention is given to those students who fall into one of the schools identified vulnerable categories and / or who are persistently absent (missing more than 10% of their schooling).
- The Attendance Officer in consultation with Heads of Year, will send letters to parents / carers of students with attendance ranging between 86-90%.
- Attendance Officer in conjunction with our Education Welfare Officer sends letters to parents / carers of students with attendance less than 85%.
- Attendance Officer will produce for all Form Tutors lists of those students who should be awarded PRIDE points (Monthly 96% and above, plus Termly those with 100% attendance).

Heads of Year:

- Heads of Year will be asked by the Attendance Officer (AO) to hold meetings with the parents / carers of any individual student identified by AO / EWO / SLT with poor attendance. These meetings will be monitored by the Attendance Officer and agreed actions from the meetings will be reported back to the SLT (Attendance).
- Heads of Year will ensure that attendance & punctuality is on the Agenda for all Year Group Meetings and will monitor that their Form Tutors are awarding monthly PRIDE points.
- Head of Year will work closely with their individual teams of Form Tutors to tackle issues around attendance and punctuality
- A great deal of work is done during morning form time / assemblies to encourage good attendance and punctuality e.g. at the end of every term Heads of Year will reward those students with 100% attendance with certificates and Trophies are awarded for the Form Group in each Year group with the best Attendance & Punctuality as well as groups of students being invited to attend breakfast on the House events.

Form Tutors:

- Form Tutors will award PRIDE points for those students who have 96% attendance and above in a given month and / or a cumulative attendance of 100% and above for the each Term via Go4Schools.

Parents/ Carers:

- Parents/ carers now have 24-hour access to their child's attendance and punctuality via Go4Schools and can monitor in real time attendance to school and lessons.
- It is vital that you share information with the School and in some cases the school Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) which is relevant to your child's non-attendance at school, so that every effort can be made to improve the situation.

Local Authority / Educational Welfare Service:

The Academy uses the Local Authorities Education Welfare Service to support our daily work on improving attendance and punctuality for all. They are committed to the principle that all children have a right to a suitable education and must not be prevented from achieving or fulfilling that entitlement.

- Our Educational Welfare Officer(s) are deployed by the Academy to ensure parents/carers carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to school attendance for their child.
- Our EWO(s) work with us to improve attendance.
- If the school feels there is an attendance or punctuality concern regarding a specific student and the school have been unable to resolve it, the EWO's will write home to remind parents of their legal responsibilities and maybe arrange a home visit, or invite parents to the school to discuss it.
- It maybe necessary in some cases for the EWO's to take legal action in conjunction with the Academy against the Parent / Carer. This course of action will only occur if a direct resolution has been unsuccessful. Therefore, it's vital that parents share information with the Academy / EWO's which is pertinent to your child's non-attendance at school, so that every effort can be made to improve the situation.
- If the attendance issue remains unresolved, legal action may be taken
- Havering Education Welfare Officers will conduct regular 'late at the gate' checks to challenge and motivate as appropriate. Parents of those students that are stopped by our Education Welfare Officer(s) will be written to.



Attendance, Behaviour & Traveller Support Service

London Borough of Havering
9th Floor, Mercury House
Mercury Gardens Romford RM1 3SL

t. 01708
e. @havering.gov.uk
d.

Dear Parent / Carer

Holidays During Term Time

As from September 2013, Schools and Head Teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence for holidays during term time unless they deem it to be an exceptional circumstance.

I must advise you that the Local Authority will consider issuing parents who take children on term time holidays with a Penalty Notice.

The Penalty Notice will be issued in line with the Local Code of Conduct section 11 that states that a Penalty Notice may be issued:

'Where a parent has taken the pupil on holiday during term-time without the school's authorisation or (in cases where the school has authorised absence for a holiday) has failed to return the pupil to school on the date agreed with the school.'

The Penalty Notice is a £60 fine per parent, per child, rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days.

It is the Local Authorities opinion that unauthorised holidays will not be accepted. Schools require that you provide a request for your holiday leave either by completing a leave of absence form issued by the school, or by putting your intention in writing.

Your request will then be looked into by the Head Teacher and if it is felt that the request falls under the category of 'exceptional circumstances' then the request will be granted. We understand that holidays are cheaper out of term time but this does not come under 'exceptional circumstances.'

If your request is not granted then your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised and you may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

Yours sincerely,

Tracy Bowden
Senior Attendance & Behaviour Co-ordinator

Appendix 2: School Attendance Codes

CODE DESCRIPTION MEANING

/ Present (AM)	Present
\ Present (PM)	Present
B Educated off site	(NOT Dual registration) - Approved Education Activity
D Dual registration	(i.e. pupil attending other establishment) - Approved Education Activity
E Excluded	(no alternative provision made) - Authorised absence
F Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J Interview	Approved Education Activity
L Late (before registers closed)	Present
M Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R Religious observance	Authorised absence
S Study leave	Authorised absence
T Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
# School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 3



Emerson Park Academy
A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

Request for Leave in Exceptional Circumstances

Name of Pupil..... Date:.....

Form:

Absence Dates: From..... To:.....

Further to your recent request for leave, I regret to inform you that with effect from September 2008, any holidays taken during term time will be classified as unauthorised. However, exceptional circumstances will be considered.

This decision has been approved by our board of governors.

Please state below why you are unable to make arrangements for this absence to coincide with the 13 weeks annual holiday granted to all pupils.

Name of Parent..... Signed.....

Office Use:

Approved

Unauthorised