

| Attendance Policy | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Current Status: | Operational | Last Review: | |
| Policy Owner: | Group Head of Welfare and Safeguarding | Next Review: | July 2026 |
| Roles Responsible for Review: | | Originated: | Feb 2025 |
| Approved by: | SET Curriculum | Committee: | Educational Excellence Committee |
| Type of Policy: | Staff / Students / External | Quality Assured by: | Policy Team |

1. Summary

This policy applies to all staff and any other personnel associated with Eastern Education Group (EEG) schools, which includes:

- Chalk Hill
- Duke of Lancaster School
- Priory School
- Stone Lodge Academy
- Sunrise Academy

2. Introduction

- 1.1 Our attendance policy is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually, will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.
- 1.2 We work in line with the government guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)'.
- 1.3 Our schools are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our children and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.
- 1.4 The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, carers, children and all school staff.

3. School's Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 All staff have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all children are able to learn and feel valued members of the school community.

Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

4. Registration

- 4.1 The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: at the start of the day and at the start of the afternoon session.
- 4.2 Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (see [Appendix A](#)).
- 4.3 Registers are called at the start of the day and again after lunch. Each school timing is listed below.

| School | Am Registration | Pm Registration |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Priory | 8.40 – 9.10 am | 13.40pm |
| Sunrise | 8.45 am | 12.45pm |
| Chalk Hill | 09:30am | 13:30pm |
| Duke of Lancaster | Primary is AM 8:45-9:00 Secondary is AM 8:45-9:00 | Primary - PM- 12:45-12:50 Secondary - PM 1:30-1:35 |
| Stone Lodge | 08:50 - 9:15am | 13:15 - 13:35 pm |

- Absence notes and the reason behind absence are recorded on Arbor.
- Reminders will be sent to parents who do not provide absence notes.

5. Categorising Absence

- 5.1 A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration.
 - Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate.
 - Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable.
 - Staff will amend the registers to indicate lateness if a child arrives after the register closes.
 - School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children.

- If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at our schools will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

5.2 Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - a child is involved in an exceptional special occasion e.g. family wedding
 - in exceptional circumstances, permission may be granted however this is a rare occurrence. i.e. linked to medical/social advice.
- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend having received appropriate medical evidence.
- (c) where the child has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send them to school beforehand);
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence, which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions.
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parent belongs.
- (f) the child is of no fixed abode, their parent is engaged in a trade which requires them to travel, the child has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, they have attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months.
- (g) in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

5.3 Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent/carer
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the child is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday
- the child is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission

- the child has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

5.4 Children that have not been reported absent from school and do not attend, the following procedure will be followed:

- A phone call will be made by the admin team after 9:30am to the parents and carers (all numbers will be called on the child's contact list)
- If we have not received a response by 10.00am, the emergency contact will then be contacted by the admin team and an email will be sent to the parents/carers of the students asking for an immediate response.
- If we do not have any response from any contacts, we will then phone the social worker if the child has one.
- If the child has not got a social worker or we do not get a response from the social care team, we will visit the child at their home address to check on child's well-being within two days.
- If the school are not satisfied with the response, the police will be contacted to raise our concerns.
- As geographically are students can be a long way from school, we will work together as a group, and it might be that Welfare checks are carried out by staff our families don't know.

6. Approved Educational Activity

6.1 Where a child is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check their attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

7. Collection and Analysis of Data

7.1 A member of the the admin team will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Head of School or their deputy.

7.2 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

7.3 We also report the number of children receiving free school meals daily and the number of students attending that have a social worker.

- 7.4 The safeguarding team are responsible for analysing the attendance data, liaising and informing the Head of School of any necessary information regarding child absences.
- 7.5 Children will be monitored on a daily basis, with data being drawn every half term. Concerns of any children will be raised at this meeting.

8. Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance

1. On a daily basis office staff will go through the registers between 9.30am and 10.00am and any absences will be noted.
2. If no explanation has been received, our safeguarding team will be alerted and attempt to contact the parent/carer, if no contact has been made this will be drawn to the attention of Senior Leadership Team.
3. If no contact is made by contacting parents/carers, emergency contacts will be called.
4. A welfare check to the home address will take place within two days of such an event and again at regular intervals should there be no return to school.
5. If the child returns to school with no explanation of the absence from their parent/carer, a letter/ email will be sent to the parent/carer requesting this information.
6. Termly monitoring by Senior Leadership Team / Senior Designated Safeguarding / Lead of attendance data to inform targeted plans of action for those with increased or unusual absences. Letters to be sent home on the first incidents informing parents/carers of attendance levels. If concerns continue parents/carers will be invited in to meet with Senior Leadership Team.
7. If a pattern of concern re attendance is developing, the Head of School or their deputy will speak to the parent/carer about their child's pattern of absences.
8. If there is no significant improvement, the Head of School or their deputy will contact the parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss attendance.

9. Legal sanctions and Penalty notices

- 9.1 We will work with the local authority regarding unauthorised absence from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

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 student
- 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

If issued with a first penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, 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.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the student attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the child's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996

- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

10. Trustees

10.1 The Trust Board, via the SEND Education and Excellence committee, is responsible for:

- Making sure schools have high aspirations for all students.
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students and parents/carers.
- Holding school leaders accountable for fulfilling expectations and statutory duties including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy.

11. Parents' / Carers' Responsibilities

11.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by our schools.

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says: "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered students at a school fails to attend regularly at the

school, his parent is guilty of an offence". (NB Where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she")

Our schools expect parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents/carers will also be expected to:

- notify school by telephone on the first day of absence and confirm in writing in the home/school book upon their child's return to school;
- ensure their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents'/carers' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their child's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life. Our Schools will endeavour to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

Part time students

Part time students, will have letters agreed by their paediatrician confirming their reason for a part timetable.

Part time students will have a signed agreement with parents to confirm part time attendance, this information will be shared with EWO.

Part time students' timetables will be reviewed termly by the head of school and agreed with Parents that it continues to be appropriate.

12. Alternative Provision Attendance Procedure

Daily Attendance Reporting

The external provider must phone the school by 09:30 AM each day to confirm the attendance of students accessing alternative provision.

The provider must report any absences immediately when a student fails to attend.

Escalation Process for Non-Reporting

If the school has not received a call from the external provider by 09.30 AM, the safeguarding team at the school will contact the provider request attendance information.

If the provider cannot be reached, the school will escalate the concern to senior leadership and contact parents/guardians directly.

Recording Attendance

Once attendance for the student has been confirmed, the appropriate DfE attendance code will be entered into the school register to reflect their attendance status.

Unexplained Absences

If a student is absent from their alternative provision and the school has not been notified, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised until a valid reason is provided.

The school will follow its standard absence procedures, including parental contact and intervention if necessary.

13. Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings;
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly;
- regular attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development;
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy;
- schools and the local authority have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children;

- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others;
- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

14. Reviewing the Policy

The school will review this policy annually.

15. Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been screened for potential adverse impact on specific groups within the school community. It is not believed that this policy will have any such adverse impact.

16. Other links

Suffolk County Council

[school-attendance-information-leaflet](#)

[who-is-a-parent-information-leaflet](#)

[Working together to Improve School Attendance – Explained](#)

[What-is-a-Penalty-Notice-Leaflet.pdf](#)

Norfolk County Council

[Attendance toolkit - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#)

Revision History – Attendance Policy

| Revision date | Reason for revision | Section number | Changes made |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------|---|
| 24/03/2025 | New Policy | All | Previously SEND Professional Behavioural Policy |
| | | | |
| | | | |

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

1. When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be ready in good time for the school transport to ensure that they arrive on time.

Schools registration is listed below.

| School | Am Registration | Pm Registration |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Priory | 8.40 – 9.10 am | 13.40pm |
| Sunrise | 8.45 am | 12.45pm |
| Chalk Hill | 09:30am | 13:30pm |
| Duke of Lancaster | Primary is AM 8:45-9:00 Secondary is AM 8:45-9:00 | Primary - PM- 12:45-12:50 Secondary - PM 1:30-1:35 |
| Stone Lodge | 08:50 - 9:15am | 13:15 - 13:35 pm |

2. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school on the first day of absence before registration and the record will be held on Arbor. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you.

If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

3. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Dental/medical appointment (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays, wherever possible)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Exceptional special occasions, e.g. a family wedding, where permission has been granted
- Other exceptional circumstances, where permission has been granted in advance using a Special Leave of Absence Request form
- Attending an interview e.g. for college

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

4. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays.

5. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. This is to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and their attendance percent will be shown on your child's record on Arbor.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

6. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Try to make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education.

- **7. My child is reluctant to come to school. What should I do?**

Good school attendance starts with good home routines, ensure your child gets to bed at the right time and is not in front of an electronic screen an hour before they should be going to sleep.

- Always contact school staff for help at the earliest opportunity.
- Never cover for your child's absence this only empowers a child to do what they want to do and prevents you from controlling the situation, tell the school exactly why the child is not coming into school.
- Accept help offered and respond to the advice given.
- Accept referrals to explore different strategies
- If you don't understand anything or are not happy with what is happening you need to tell school staff or Education Welfare Officer so that we can try to answer your questions or concerns.

- Attend all the appointments given where possible or if you can't attend, contact the education welfare officer (EWO) or professional to rearrange.
- Be positive about the school to your child even if you have concerns. Concerns need to be raised and addressed with school staff but never run a school down in front of your child.
- Listen to your child, spend time with them to give them space to talk about what is concerning them and reassure them that there is no problem too big or too small that they can't talk about, we have to work harder at this with teenagers than younger children and it is often best to engage a teenager in an activity to create the space for them to open up.
- If you feel your child is anxious contact your GP and/or school nurse to discuss this.
- Take a parenting class, parenting is the hardest job in the world and the most rewarding

Further support:

- [Wellbeing in Education](#)
- [The Parent Hub](#)
- [Psychology and Therapeutic Services](#)
- [Children's health and children's centre services](#)

When is my child considered too ill to come to school?

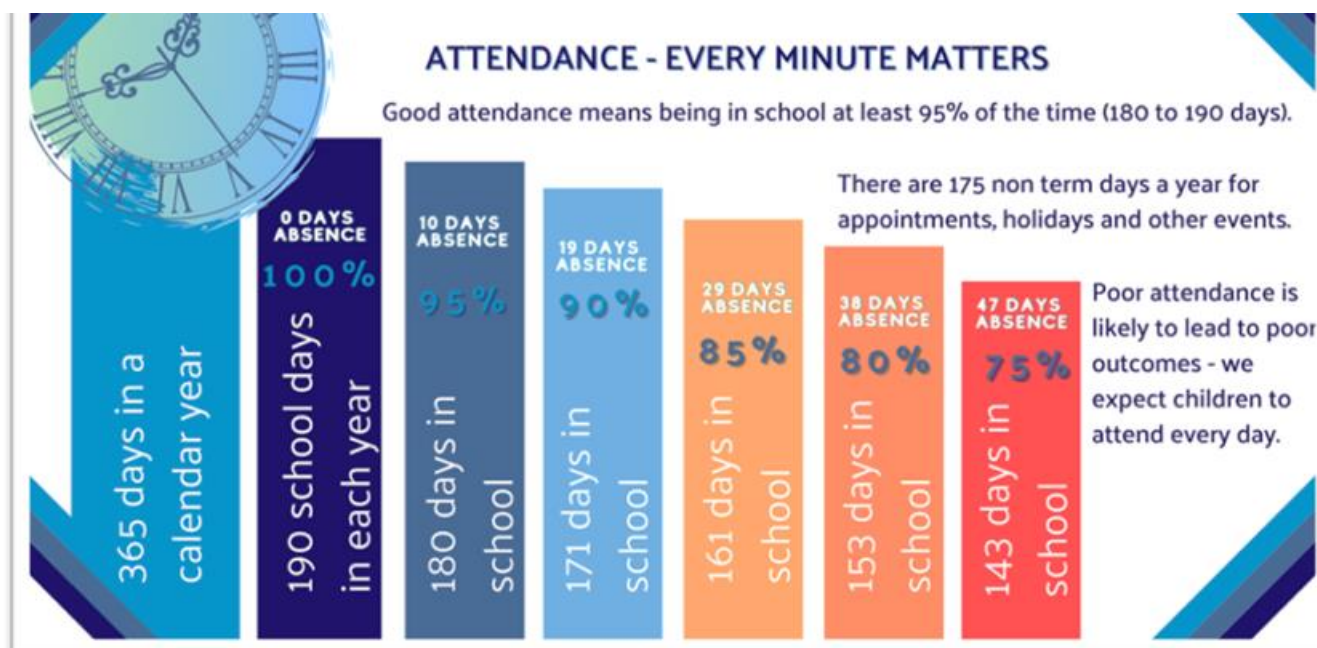
Children can attend school under normal circumstances with minor symptoms. Parents have to make a judgement on when a child is really too unwell to leave the house and needs to stay at home and rest.

However, if a child has frequent absences schools have a responsibility to verify if the level of absence is necessary. If you are unsure whether to send a child into school or not you can send them in and let the school know your concerns so they can monitor the situation and send the child home as appropriate.

How to contact an Education Welfare Officer – (EWO)

Each school in Suffolk has an allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

You can request the contact details of the Education Welfare Officer from your child's school, alternatively email schoolattendance@suffolk.gov.uk in the Email please state the school your child attends so the email can be forwarded to the correct EWO.



Appendix A

| CODE | MEANING | TYPE |
|------|--|----------------------|
| / \ | Present at the school / morning \ afternoon | Present mark |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity: - Alternative provision not arranged through the approved framework | Present mark |
| C | Authorised circumstance | Authorised Absence |
| C1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. | Authorised Absence |
| C2 | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable. | Authorised Absence |
| D | Dual registered at another school. | Present mark |
| E | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made. | Authorised Absence |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school or term-time leave not granted by the school. | Unauthorised Absence |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment). | Authorised Absence |
| J1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution. | Authorised Absence |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority: - Home tutoring - Approved framework for alternative provision - Blended learning. | Present mark |
| L | Late arrival before the registers have closed. | Present mark |
| M | Attended a medical appointment. | Authorised Absence |

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------------------|
| N | Reason for absence not yet established. | Unauthorised Absence |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances. | Unauthorised Absence |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity. | Present mark |
| Q | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements. | Not expected to attend |
| R | Religious observance. | Authorised Absence |
| S | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school. | Authorised Absence |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months. | Authorised Absence |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed. | Unauthorised Absence |
| V | Attending an educational trip or visit. | Present mark |
| W | Attending work experience. | Present mark |
| X | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school. | Not expected to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | Not expected to attend |
| Y1 | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available. | Not expected to attend |
| Y2 | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel. | Not expected to attend |
| Y3 | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes. | Not expected to attend |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water, or heating. | Not expected to attend |
| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention. | Not expected to attend |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. contrary to or prohibited by any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease. | Not expected to attend |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent. | Not expected to attend |
| Z | Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register. | Not expected to attend |