

Emmbrook Infant and Junior Schools



Attendance Policy

Responsibility of:	Full Governing Body
Date of Adoption of Policy:	Spring 2016
Date of Review:	Spring 2019 (unless DfE updates before then)

Mission Statement

Emmbrook Infant and Junior Schools seek to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The schools will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment and make each member of the school community feel wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. **Parents of primary school pupils will have highlighted the importance of good school attendance and that getting their child(ren) into a good routine of regular attendance will set them up for their whole school career.**

The schools will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Emmbrook Infant and Junior Schools will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Whole School Policy for School Attendance – Aims

1. To improve the overall percentage of pupils at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and Governors.
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
8. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

AIM NO 1

To improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at School

1. Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
2. Designate a senior member of staff as the Whole School Attendance Lead.
3. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
4. Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
5. Monitor progress in attendance measurable outcomes.

AIM NO 2

To make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for all those associated with the School including Pupils, Parents, Teachers and Governors

1. Use staff/school handbook to ensure all staff are aware of policies regarding authorised and unauthorised absence and holidays in term time.
2. Produce termly/annual reports to parents/Governors.
3. Hold induction evenings for parents/pupils.
4. Produce newsletters.
5. Provide INSET training for appointed/promoted staff through partnership with the EWS.
6. Discuss attendance issues in Education Welfare Service/Pastoral staff evaluation meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings (eg attendance review meetings).

AIM NO 3

To develop a Framework which defines agreed Roles and Responsibilities and promotes consistency on carrying out designated tasks

1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration and ensure use of mandatory codes.
2. Make phone/letter contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.

4. Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
5. Appoint an Attendance Co-ordinator with appropriate time set aside.
6. Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure.
7. Timetable staff to meet with Education Welfare Officer, making best use of EWO time (advertise the times to parents).
8. Have clear procedures prior to referral to Education Welfare Service.
9. Review attendance regularly.
10. Be Familiar with the Education Welfare Service's referral and recording system.

AIM NO 4

To provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils

1. Highlight attendance in:
 - PHSE
 - Assemblies
 - Staff available to talk to pupils
 - Making use of available resources
 - Breakfast clubs
2. Publicise support offered by schools.
3. Set aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
4. Seek improved communication with parents eg when parents ring in.
5. Produce a "frequently asked questions" page for new pupils.
6. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
7. Involve parents from earliest stage.

AIM NO 5

To Develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data

1. Consider the advantages of computerised registration.
2. Standardise recording of:
 - Authorised/unauthorised absence (and to have decided after two weeks)
 - Educational activity
 - Presence
3. Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.
4. Decide what information, if any, is provided for:
 - Governors
 - Pastoral staff
 - Other school staff
 - Parents
 - Pupils (individual or groups)
 - Education Welfare Service
5. Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

AIM NO 6

To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication between Home and School

1. Initiate first day absence contact.
2. Make full use of computer generated letters (SIMS Handbook).
3. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.
4. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships (see Aim 2).
5. Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written).
6. Encourage all parents into school.

AIM NO 7

To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions where appropriate

1. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
2. Take action which accords with objectives agreed between school and others eg Education Welfare Service, parent, Behaviour Support Service.

AIM NO 8

To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other Services and Agencies

1. Designated key staff for liaison with Education Welfare Service and other agencies.
2. Give priority to timetable meetings with Education Welfare Service.
3. Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
4. Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Education Welfare Service referral.
5. Hold termly attendance review with key school staff and Education Welfare Service.
6. Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.
7. Establish and maintain list of named contact within the local community if appropriate eg community Police Contact Officer.
8. Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.
9. Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.

AIM NO 9

To Recognise the needs of the Individual Pupil when Planning Reintegration following significant Periods of Absence

1. Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
2. Involve/inform all staff in/or reintegration process.
3. Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
4. Consider mentoring.
5. Involve parents as far as possible.
6. Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
7. Include Education Welfare Officers, parents and pupil in Reintegration Plan.

School Systems for registration and absences in line with the Department for Education Guidance;

Registration

- Registers will be taken punctually each day at 8.50am in both schools, and again at 1.00 pm in the Junior school; 1.20pm in the Infant school.
- If a pupil arrives after the registers close at 9.20am and 1.20pm (Junior)/ 1.50 (Infant) pm, she/he should report to the school office or at the clearly designated area.
- If a child has failed to arrive in school and communication has not been received about the absence by 9.20am and 1.20/1.50pm, a telephone call will be made by the office to the child's parents/carers.
- When a pupil misses registration altogether and fails to provide an adequate explanation, the pupil will be marked as an unauthorised absentee for that session.

Authorised Absences

Absences will be authorised for:

- Sickness (with medical evidence if requested)
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (whenever possible made outside school hours- with evidence)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances

Unauthorised Absence

Absences will not be authorised for:

- Truancy
- Arrival (without justified reason and evidence if requested) after registration period has closed
- Shopping
- Looking after family members (save in exceptional circumstances)
- Minding the house
- Birthdays or similar events
- Family holidays during term time (unless specifically endorsed by the Head Teacher, **please see Holiday information on page 6**)
- Sibling or parental illness

When considering individual cases of absence, the school will consider:

- The nature of the event
- Frequency of absence
- Whether advance notification is given

- Overall attendance record of the pupil

If a pupil is persistently absent and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service, through the Head Teacher/Deputy Head who will work together to provide if appropriate;

- an holistic approach and cease implementing multiple intervention programmes eg a LAC should have one plan that includes a PEP, IEP and PSP not three separate plans
- A constant approach across the Authority regarding a percentage attendance grading system
- Enhanced transitional work between Infant and Junior to help pupils prepare and parents understand the issues in advance of the start of Junior school
- Include students in meetings regarding their attendance
- Improved access to learning mentors
- "Listening Ear" Adults and older students available for pupils to speak to in areas of the school and playground
- Focus Groups with Teacher/Teaching Assistants in small group work
- Work with parents regarding peer pressure on unacceptable absences which can be caused by "friends" absences

PARENTS TAKING CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL IN TERM TIME

The Department of Education has produced a policy as of September 2013 that says that holidays in term time should only be authorised in "exceptional" circumstances. Wokingham Borough Council has a Penalty Notice (PN) code of conduct that enables PN's to be issued per parent per pupil when unauthorised holiday absence of 5 days or more per term occurs. The school Leave of Absence form contains a warning clause on the form that informs parents that a PN can be issued if unauthorised holiday absence is taken.

The current PN is a charge of £60 if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid within 22 and 28 days. If no payment is made after 28 days then parent(s) will be taken to court for non-payment.

Examples of 'exceptional' circumstances could be major illness or a close death within the family; parent(s) within the armed forces where tours of duty only end in term time.

Emmbrook Infant School Guidance

RATIONALE

By law, parents are required to send their children regularly to school. Good attendance at school is of fundamental importance. Prolonged absence, irregular attendance and lack of punctuality can all serve to undermine educational achievement and results in considerable long-term disadvantage to children.

Our policy is underpinned by the following legislation:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989

Details can be found in the Wokingham Borough Council Attendance Policy.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents

We ask you, as parents / carers, to make sure:

- your child arrives at school on time, physically and mentally prepared for the school day (children may come into school between 8.45 and 8.50 each morning, school starts at 8.50). When a child arrives after this time he/she must report to the school office where his or her name will be entered in the late book and attendance marked with an “L” in the class register
- your child attends regularly
- the school is immediately informed if the child is absent
- a request is made in writing for authorisation of leave of absence. This is only granted in exceptional circumstances (i.e. not for an annual holiday). An unauthorised leave of absence may incur in a penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.

School

The School will support attendance by using the following procedures:

- keep accurate registers twice a day, immediately at the start of the morning and afternoon session
- work with the Educational Welfare Officer to track attendances and punctuality
- inform the LA of any unauthorised absence over 5 school days
- authorise leave of absence for:
 - sickness
 - health appointments
 - bereavement
 - participation in such events as ice shows, music exams etc
 - religious festivals

The Educational Authority

The Council has a statutory duty to promote and enforce regular school attendance, this duty being carried out, in the main by Educational Welfare Officers. The EWO will follow up unauthorised absence.

CURRENT PROCEDURES AND PRACTICE AT EMMBROOK INFANT SCHOOL

Registration

Attendance is recorded in a class register twice a day, immediately at the start of the morning session and the afternoon session.

Late arrival

Children may come into school from 8.45 until 8.50 each morning, school starts at 8.50. When a child arrives after this time he/she must report to the School Office where his/her name and reason for being late will be entered in the Late Book and his/her attendance entered in the class register with an “L”. If a child arrives after the close of register at 9.20am, they will be marked as absent in the register for that session.

The Late Book is seen by the EWO when registers are also inspected. The EWO will follow up pupils who are persistently late.

Absence due to illness

When a child is not able to attend school due to illness, it is the expectation that parents will notify the school on the first day of absence. The School endeavours to contact parents / carers in the event of an unexplained absence.

Absence for the purpose of taking a family holiday

Leave of absence for a family holiday will not be authorised in the school register unless it has to be taken due to exceptional circumstances (please see Leave of Absence Policy). This is in line with the Department for Education who have advised schools to only authorise leave of absence/holidays in exceptional circumstances, hence School will not approve any absence in term time, except in such circumstances as taking your child away during the school term is detrimental to educational progress.

If holidays are taken without approval, the information will be passed to our Education Welfare Officer and a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning

Following up absences

If the School does not receive notification of the reason for a child's absence, this will be followed up. If the information is not provided the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

The EWO will follow up individual cases by either letter or home visits in order to ensure the fullest possible attendance for the child concerned.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Governors to reflect changes in school procedures and alterations to the legal framework.