



# Eskdale School

## Attendance Policy

### **Eskdale School aims:**

To develop as a vibrant, dynamic community committed to the principles of "Every Child Matters" so that all of our students

- are safe and healthy
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- experience success so that they are equipped to make their way in the world of work

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|--|---------------|
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| Signed (Chair of Governors)<br><i>Pen Cruz</i> |               |

# Attendance Policy

## Description

This is intended to promote the importance of regular school attendance and provide a framework setting out staff roles and responsibilities in supporting excellent school attendance.

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Eskdale School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This 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. High attainment is closely linked to good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents, and carers, teaching and support staff – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.3 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations.

1.4 Our Aim:

- For all students to achieve the national average attendance
- To ensure that there is a whole school, graduated response to improving punctuality and attendance

## 2. School's roles and responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Eskdale School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the School's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the School. The Heads of Year will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about

the importance of good school attendance). The Heads of Year will also ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 When a pupil leaves the school a CME1 (Children Missing Education) form will be completed and sent to the Local Authority informing them that a child has been removed from the school roll.

2.4 It is the attendance administration officer's duty to ensure that all children are attending school and are safeguarded if they are not. If a child is absent from school for 10 days or more without a valid reason the attendance administration officer will need to report this to the local authority and complete a 'possible pupil missing education risk assessment'.

### **3. Parents'/carers' responsibilities**

3.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and fulltime 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 Eskdale School.

3.2 Eskdale School expects parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly and punctually
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum.

3.3 Parents/carers will be expected to:

- Notify Eskdale School on the first day of absence by either telephoning the school or speaking directly to a member of the Admin or Pastoral team.
- Update Eskdale School on the third day of non-attendance if the absence is expected to continue.
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time and wearing the correct uniform.
- Request leave for exceptional circumstances in advance (Where possible). The Head Teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher determines the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending review meetings and consultation, taking an interest in their children's work and activities.
- Work with the school and any other agency to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance.

### **4. Pupils' responsibilities**

4.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher, Key worker, or other responsible adult.

4.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

### **5. Collection and analysis of data**

5.1 Registration – The school attendance register is a legal document and will be inspected by Ofsted and can be called on as evidence in a court of law. It therefore essential that it must be marked accurately every lesson and contain all relevant information. It is the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure that the register is marked twice daily and between lessons. Parents should ensure pupils are in school in time for the start of the morning and afternoon registration. The late arrival of students disrupts the smooth running of the school and impacts on the learning of the late child and their peers.

- A pupil arriving between the start of registration and the published register closing time will be marked late, this counts as present.

- A pupil arriving in school after the register has closed should follow school procedures for late arrivals. These students will be marked as absent through lateness.

- Where a pupil is arriving persistently late for school, the parent/carer of the pupil may be issued with a £60.00 penalty notice. If the notice remains unpaid after 21 days, the penalty increases to £120.00. If the notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority may commence proceedings under section 444 (1) of the 1996 Education Act in the Magistrates Court. The School gates will be closed at 9:00am and students will have to report to the reception to sign in. Electronic registers will be closed after 9.15 am. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but will be dealt with under the School's policy on punctuality and lateness.

## 5.2 Categorising absence

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 absence (O) 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 date, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment are distinguishable. The ultimate decision whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised lies with the Head of School. Eskdale School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent and continuous and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Eskdale will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note of explanation from a pupil's home does not mean that an absence is automatically authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school. If no explanation about an absence is received by the School within two weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised. Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) Where leave has been granted by the School in advance, for example:

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority.
- a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered.
- in exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance.

(b) Where the School is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend.

(c) Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours whenever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand.

(d) Where there is unavoidable cause for 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 pupil's parents belong.

(f) The pupil lives more than three miles from the School and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority.

(g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the previous 12 months.

(h) In other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

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

- No explanation given by the parent/carer;
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- The pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- The pupil is shopping during school hours;
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- The pupil is absent from school on a family holiday or visit without prior permission.
- The pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

Approved Educational Activity where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the School will check his/her attendance daily before entering the appropriate code in the register. Staff Training The School's Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers including any temporary or supply staff receive sufficient training/information to enable them to perform the task accurately and in line with School policy. Below is the Attendance Codes:

#### **Code Meaning and Statistical category**

∧ - Present at registration present.

L - Late but arrived before the register closed present.

B - Educated off-site (not dual registration) approved educational activity.

D - Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU) approved educational activity.

P - Approved sporting activity approved educational activity.

V - Educational visit or trip approved educational activity.

J - Interview approved educational activity.

W - Work experience (not work based training) approved educational activity.

C - Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) - authorised absence.

F - Agreed extended family holiday - authorised absence.

H - Agreed family holiday - authorised absence.

I - Illness - authorised absence.

X - Pupils who are absent from school due to contracting Covid-19.

M - Medical or dental appointment - authorised absence.

S - Study leave - authorised absence.

E - Excluded but no alternative provision made - authorised absence.

R - Day set aside exclusively for religious observance - authorised absence.

T - Traveller absence - authorised absence.

N - No reason for the absence provided yet - unauthorised absence.

O - Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions) - unauthorised absence.

G - Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement) - unauthorised absence.

U - Late and arrived after the register closed - unauthorised absence.

X – Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils not required to attend.

Y - Partial and forced closure not required to attend.

Z - Pupil not on roll yet not required to attend.

# - School closed to all pupils not required to attend.

## **6. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

Attendance matters have a very high profile at Eskdale School and the importance of good attendance is raised at reviews and meeting with parents. The School is always looking to find new ways of maintaining this message through other systems of communicating with parents and pupils.

**First-day absence calling:** Eskdale School has in place a system of first day calling. This means that parents/carers will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge and thus potentially vulnerable to harm. Where it is not possible to contact parents/carers on the first day of absence, the School will send a letter home asking parents to contact the school as a matter of urgency. Meetings with parents/carers: Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a three or four week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the School will invite parents/carers to a meeting to discuss the reasons for these absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than six weeks. It will be explained to parents/carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

**Lateness and punctuality:** Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (SEE SECTION 5) will be marked absent for a whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the School is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the taxi, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service. Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be dealt with in accordance with the School's approach to behaviour management. The Heads of Year are responsible for this and will consider such factors as frequency and circumstances. It is important not to punish a pupil when the lateness is not his or her fault. It may be that the fault lies with the parent/carer and as such the Heads of Year should discuss with the SLT lead or Head of School and contact be made with the parent/carer. For reasons of health and safety it is important to know who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to Reception and be signed in by a member of the admin team. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure. For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment) or returning to school later in the day sign in and out at Reception. Parents/carers are expected to collect their child from Reception and take responsibility for checking that their child is signed in or out in the correct manner.

**Post-registration truancy:** Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, but it also renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Eskdale School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If a member of staff or pupil reports that a pupil is missing, then the class teacher and the Head of

Year should be alerted immediately. If the child has not been signed out of school SLT will be contacted. The classroom, where the child should be in lesson, will be visited to check that the child has not arrived late. The teacher/TA's and pupils will be spoken to and any relevant information gathered. A search of the building will then be organised. Toilets, changing rooms and the main buildings should all be checked before looking in the School grounds. Heads of Year should be informed immediately the pupil has been discovered. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the School will try to contact his parents/carer immediately and the local police alerted.

## **7. Term-time Holidays**

Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time. Eskdale School will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is not a right. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended holiday. Eskdale School will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- those working in the holiday industry or in farming when school holidays coincide with peak times for their business;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- Parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term.

Eskdale School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision. All requests for holiday will be agreed with social worker and /or the Local Authority. We will also inform attendance officers if required Eskdale School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, e.g. GCSE's.

## **8. Extended Leave of Absence**

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Eskdale School will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a 'normal' holiday;
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents/carers may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of the child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents/carers could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of the trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved.

Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

## **9. Conclusion**

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring each pupil reaches their maximum academic attainment.

- attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children, the best way to safeguard children is to ensure that they attend school regularly
- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
- 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 lifestyle.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Eskdale School**

#### **Attendance Policy - Actions**

(To be read in conjunction with DfE and NYCC policy statements)

**The highest standards of attendance and punctuality are encouraged for all pupils at all times. School will endeavour to work with all parents/carers to assist them in carrying out their duties as required by the DfE. Where a child's attendance causes concern, the following parameters and actions will be considered by the Headteacher:**

**(Each case will be considered individually based on circumstances)**

| <b>Cause for concern</b>                                     | <b>Action(s) to be considered</b>  |
|--|--|
| 95% attendance or below at any point within an academic year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendance will be monitored by the School and attendance history considered</li><li>• Contact with parents/carers if deemed necessary</li></ul>   |
| 90% attendance or below at any point within an academic year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letter to parents/carers asking them to work with school to improve attendance</li><li>• Discussion with parents/carers to develop a plan of action</li></ul>  |
| 85% attendance or below at any point within an academic year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with Prevent Service re possible referral for consideration within NYCC policy and practice guidance</li></ul>  |
| Repeated incidences of illness-related absence               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with parents/carers</li><li>• Referral to school nurse</li><li>• Request that parents/carers provide proof of doctor's involvement (appointment card with child's name on / letter / copy of prescription etc)</li><li>• Work for the pupil might be sent home to be completed</li></ul>                                  |
| Repeated arrival at school after 8.55am                      | This will be marked in the class register as a LATE. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letter to parents/carers requesting that the matter is addressed and offering support</li><li>• An action plan to be established</li><li>• Consideration of request from outside agencies through the Common Assessment Framework</li></ul>                                     |
| Repeated arrival at school after 9.15am                      | This will be marked in the class register as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE for the session. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An action plan to be established</li><li>• Consideration of request from outside agencies through the Common Assessment Framework</li><li>• Referral to Prevent Service for consideration within NYCC policy and practice guidelines</li></ul> |

## **Appendix B**

Following Government guidelines ALL students are required to attend their education provision as from September 2020.

You can find the updated guidelines on: **<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>** If your child is absent from school please continue to follow the school procedure detailed in section 3.