Ethos College

Attendance Policy for Pupils

ETHOS
COLLEGE

Nurturing inclusive learning communities

ETHOS
ACADEMY TRUST

1	**Summary**	Attendance Policy for Pupils			
2	**Responsible person**	Diane Dunn			
3	**Accountable ELT member**	Rebecca Smith			
4	**Applies to**	Ethos College Pupils			
5	**Trustees and/or individuals who have overseen development of this policy**	N/A			
6	**Headteachers/Service Heads who were consulted and have given approval (if applicable)**	Rebecca Smith			
7	**Equality impact analysis completed**	**Policy Screened**	**Y/N**	**Template completed**	**Y/N**
8	**Ratifying committee(s) and date of final approval**	Executive Leadership Team			
9	**Version**	1.0			
10	**Available on**	**Every**	**Y/N**	**Trust Website**	**Y/N**
				Academy Website	**Y/N**
				Staff Portal	**Y/N**
11	**Related documents (if applicable)**				
12	**Disseminated to**	Ethos College Staff and Parents/Carers			
13	**Date of implementation (when shared)**	July 2022			
14	**Date of next formal review**	July 2023			
15	**Consulted with Recognised Trade Unions**	N/A			
16	**Adopted by Ethos Academy Trust following consultation**	N/A			

Date	Version	Action	Summary of changes
19/07/22	1.0	Local academy policy	Policy re-written from an Ethos Academy Trust policy to a local academy policy

Contents

Appendices

1. School Attendance, Absence and the Law

At Ethos College we understand how important school attendance is and how this relates to outcomes, not only academically but socially and emotionally as well. Pupils who attend school regularly benefit from fulfilling peer relationships, better academic outcomes and a vastly improved school experience which promotes successful transition onto their next stage of education. Pupils who are absent from school are a significant safeguarding concern and could be at a higher risk of harm. Our pupils are valued and are missed when they are absent or late. Through the principles of nurture, positive relationships between staff and pupils are developed and each individual is an important part of our school community.

The law requires parents to make sure their children receive full-time education suitable to their needs. As a last resort, schools and the Local Authority (LA) have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

This policy is written with due regard to the revised 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. This guidance applies from September 2022.

Any absence is detrimental for pupils and will impact on their school experience. Ethos College will always work with pupils and families to look at all attendance issues as we realise that there are often other factors to consider that may impact on a child's ability to attend school. Parents/carers are encouraged to speak with staff to ensure we are working together to address any issues. The majority of pupils on roll are dual registered with their mainstream school who retain responsibility with regard to any significant attendance issues. If we are concerned, we will work with the mainstream school to find a solution that secures improved attendance. In very rare cases we, or the mainstream school, may have to take the decision to pursue persistent absence through a legal route. We will take all appropriate steps to avoid this but it may be used as a last resort.

https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/school-attendance-and-absence/

Ethos College will pay due regard to the Education Act of 1996 and its further amendments. Since **September 2015** persistent absence (PA) data includes all pupils whose attendance is 90% or less.

The DfE and Ofsted continue to have a sharp focus on persistent absence as there is a direct link between persistent absence from school, poor attainment and 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) status.

2. Attendance expectations and daily routines

All schools are required to record details of pupils' attendance and absence. They do so at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions:

- The school day starts at 9am and finishes at 14.30;
- Morning registration is between 9 - 9.30, registers will be closed at 9.30;
- Pupils are registered in their groups by staff;
- Afternoon registration is between 12.30 - 13.00, registers will close at 13.00;
- Pupils are registered in their afternoon lesson by staff;

If a child arrives after registers close, they be marked with an L code.
If a child is absent, parents/carers should inform the academy of the reason for the absence.
Ethos College will record the absence under a particular category pre-set by the Department of Education (DfE). This data is then available to the attendance and pupil support service for each pupil. The DfE also receives annually the overall data for Ethos College.

If a child is absent, parents/carers should contact group staff to provide a reason for absence. All calls and communications will be appropriately recorded by the academy. If the academy has not received contact, group staff will attempt to make contact by 9.30. If contact cannot be made, the attendance officer is notified who will attempt to make contact via telephone and if no contact is made, a home visit will be carried out. See appendix A.

The following codes are used to record types of absence:
B - Educated off-site
T - Traveller absence
0 - Unauthorised absence
/ - Present
N - No reason given
H - Agreed family holiday
G - Family holiday, not agreed
C - Other authorised circumstances
I - Illness
E - Exclusion
V - Educational trip
Y - Enforced closure
R - Religious observance
- School closed to pupils
S - Study leave
W - Work experience
P - Sporting activity

It is the responsibility of the Assistant Head to ensure that registers are completed correctly. This responsibility may be delegated to the Attendance Officer, with the monitoring and oversight from the Assistant Head.

3. Our Responsibilities as an Academy

Every member of staff within Ethos College has a responsibility to promote and support attendance.

The Senior Leadership Teams will:

- Continually monitor and implement policies and strategies that support consistent school attendance;
- Analyse attendance data weekly and ensure procedures are in place to address issues;
- Report attendance to parents/carers in academy reports;
- Design and implement reward systems that motivate pupils to attend;
- Support colleagues with systems that are accessible and ensure positive outcomes;
- Plan a balanced and engaging curriculum that meets individual need and enables change, where necessary, through a strong focus on relationships and personal motivation;
- Foster positive working relationships with mainstream schools and referring agencies and ensure that communication is timely and effective;
- Plan a programme of celebration events where pupils' achievements are recognised and families and wider stakeholders are included;
- Report termly to the CEO and Trust board.

All staff will:

- Work to provide an environment that is welcoming and promotes good attendance;
- Ensure relationships with pupils are positive and individual needs are identified and addressed;
- Work with families to build positive, transparent relationships;
- Contact families regularly in the case of any absence and to recognise sustained and improved attendance;
- Ensure attendance is recorded including reasons behind any absences;
- Work with the data to address any reoccurring issues or patterns (such as the same day absence every week);
- Liaise with colleagues and be aware of any related issues;
- Promote a culture of mutual respect and ensure pupils are valued every day;
- Work closely with colleagues to communicate any issues that may impact attendance;
- Meet regularly with families and related professionals to address any issues affecting attendance;
- Ensure support plans are in place that make clear the roles and responsibilities of families and other professionals (including the mainstream school);
- Reward good and improved attendance in a fair and equitable way ensuring families are informed.

4. Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- Inform school of any circumstances that may impact on attendance;
- Attend regular review meetings and meet with staff on request;
- Arrange holidays out of term time;
- Actively promote good attendance by encouraging and supporting your child to attend;
- Communicate regularly with school staff, informing them of any change in circumstance that may affect their child's attendance;
- Support agreed strategies that promote school attendance by working collaboratively with staff to encourage and remove all barriers that may impact on being in school;
- Make medical or other appointments out of school time unless unavoidable;
- Work with staff to implement agreed strategies and actively promote good attendance.

What we will do if a pupil does not attend

- In case of absence we will contact families by phone and if this is not possible, a home visit will be arranged. An absence will be discussed with the mainstream school, siblings' schools will be contacted and a mainstream colleague or APSO will implement a joint visit if applicable. Any concerns will be passed to the relevant services. If there are sufficient concerns and a pupil is not seen or a family cannot confirm their whereabouts a 101 call will be made to inform the police;
- Ethos College colleagues will work with families from the first day of absence to ensure that any underlying issues are addressed in a timely manner with the relevant services. Working together with families is essential to ensure good attendance and only when this working relationship is effective can we manage any issues;
- If the non-attendance continues Ethos College staff will continue to communicate with families and mainstream schools. In a small number of cases if there are no unmet needs that staff can work to address, we would discuss with all stakeholders whether our school is the appropriate provision to meet need. For some young people the placement may not be successful and in cases where pupils are dual-registered, the referring mainstream school would consider alternatives. All related agencies would be consulted and a joint decision would be made in the pupil's best interest.

5. Persistent Absence (PA)

The Government identifies persistent absence as any pupil who has attendance of less than 90%. Ethos College recognises this figure and aspires to set this standard for all its pupils. Personalised attendance targets may be adjusted dependent on the needs of the individual pupil. Ethos College will put into place all reasonable measures to secure and sustain improved attendance.

6. Severe Absence

Ethos Academy Trust defines severe absence as those pupils attending school for less than 50% of the time. The data, targeted actions and impact measures linked to severe absence are reported into governance on a termly basis.

7. Mainstream Schools and Attendance Prosecution

As the majority of pupils at Ethos College are dual registered with a mainstream school, on rare occasions a decision may be made by the school to proceed with a prosecution for non-school attendance. This is considered only when all other strategies have been exhausted and when a family do not comply with the school policies, once all available interventions have been exhausted. In these rare cases, Ethos College will work with the mainstream school to present evidence to support a prosecution if this becomes necessary.

8. The Importance of Good Attendance

Ethos College has high expectations for our pupils and as such the expected attendance standard is at least 90%. Anything less than this is a concern and we take all appropriate measures to ensure we are addressing any barriers to attendance. We will always work to find solutions to improve attendance.

8 days absence in a year = 96%. 19 days absence = 90%

- 90% attendance = ½ day missed every week

- Over one school year this is 4 weeks of learning lost
- Over the 5 years at school the pupil will have missed half a year
- What impact might this have on a child's future?
- 17 missed school days mean that secondary school pupils could drop a whole GCSE grade.

Pupils being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

We provide a healthy breakfast at Ethos College and we know that this starts the day positively and pupils can then focus and learn. If the pupil is late then an important part of the day is missed and this can then lead to an unsettled day. It is important that we work together to ensure pupils arrive on time and are ready to learn.

We aim to ensure that all pupils recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality for the next stage of their education or training as it is a vital life skill.

9. Attendance Rewards

At Ethos College we understand how important it is that pupils attend and are punctual every day. We work to ensure that our pupils understand this and that they attend school because they are aware of the benefits to them.

Our reward system is in place to further motivate pupils and to demonstrate the benefits of school attendance. The rewards available include:

- Regular postcards and phone calls home to ensure families are kept informed;
- Half termly reward assemblies. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate success as a whole school;
- Reward points that equate to points that pupils can use, under staff supervision, to purchase items. This promotes their ability to budget and consider other people as the rewards are often used to make charity donations and to support whole-school causes;
- Promoting competition by comparing the attendance of the groups and rewarding the winning group;
- Termly reward trips that the pupils have identified as of value to them and will motivate them to keep attending;
- Invite families to celebrate success in school half-termly assemblies;
- Considering personalised motivational strategies that will work for individuals.

10. Leave of absence requests

Requesting leave during term time will affect a child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking pupils out of school in term time. The current law does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take their child out of school during term time. Any application for leave must be in writing to the Head Teacher and only be made in exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Parent/carers can be fined for taking their child out of school during term time, without consent from the academy.

11. Children at risk of missing in education

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at a school (for example, at home or in alternative provision). Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) later in life. All pupils at risk of CME are reported to the Local Authority in line with relevant guidance within agreed timescales. There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education. It is vital that local authorities make judgements on a case-by-case basis. This may include children from the following vulnerable groups below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
- Children of Service Personnel
- Missing children and runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children of new migrant families
- Children of Gypsy, Roma Traveller Families

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Effective intervention should be at the earliest opportunity in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

At Reach Academy, we appreciate that the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that all children and young people of compulsory school age receive suitable and appropriate education. School will support the Local Authority in ensuring that this duty is carried out effectively. There are specific duties in respect of Children Missing Education (CME) and there are strict guidelines in respect of both the definition of CME and the legalities of deleting a pupil from a school roll. We understand that it is essential that the DSL contact the Kirklees Education Safeguarding Service and complete a CME referral to inform them where any pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive days without a reason being provided for the absence. In line with Kirklees' Education Safeguarding Service CME guidance for schools (September 2020) and Department for Education Children Missing in Education Guidance, Reach Academy will make reasonable enquiries to locate the child in line with the Centre's duty under section 10 of the Children's Act 2004.

Reasonable enquiries to find the child include:
• Checking with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with
• Checking with the pupil's friends, siblings, and known relative
• Checking with other professionals who may be involved or have had contact with the pupil or family
• Making telephone calls to any numbers held/identified including emergency contacts
• Sending a letter to the last known address
• Carrying out home visits at different times to check who is at the home address and other known addresses and check with neighbours and known friends
• Asking for the address the family is moving to
• Requesting copies of flight information if appropriate

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive and each case will be considered on its individual merits ensuring all the facts of the case have been taken into account. Additional enquiries to those above may be necessary. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, Reach Academy will make a referral to Children's Social Care and Police in accordance with the West Yorkshire Police Truancy policy (if appropriate).

Kirklees Children Missing Education (CME) team can be contacted via the email below:
ESS.CME@kirklees.gov.uk

12. Strategy for reducing severe or persistent absence

We implement a 5-stage programme to encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality. The programme supports parents/carers to improve their child's attendance.

Stage 1
Work with group staff to identify barriers that can be easily removed. If there are no improvements in attendance, this indicates that further interventions are required and therefore we move to stage 2.

Stage 2
Home visits by group staff or the attendance officer are carried out to agree strategies to improve attendance. If there are no improvements in attendance, this indicates that further interventions are required and therefore we move to stage 3.

Stage 3
Meeting 1
This meeting will require parents/carers and the pupil to meet with a senior leader and mainstream school, for those pupils dual registered. An action plan will be put into place for an agreed period of time and outcomes will be measured and recorded. If there are no improvements in attendance, this indicates that further interventions are required and therefore we move to stage 4.

Stage 4
Meeting 2
This meeting will require parents/carers and the pupil to meet with the Head Teacher. A final action plan will be agreed for a period of time and outcomes will be measured and recorded. Processes for prosecution will be discussed

Stage 5
Processes required for prosecution will be implemented, including the involvement of appropriate agencies. Prosecution will be authorised by the Head Teacher if appropriate evidence supports this.

13. Pupils on Personalised Timetables

At Ethos College all staff at the academy have responsibility for the care of pupils who are struggling to access learning. We recognise however, that at certain stages in a pupil's school life they may struggle to access the typical provision offered as a result of their Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Even when the curriculum is reasonably adapted in line with best teaching and learning practice and the pupil is appropriately supported within our usual systems, there are occasions when they will still struggle to access full time education. In these instances, the Senior Leadership Team may consider that a personalised timetable is an appropriate means of supporting the pupil up until the point when they are better able to access full time education.
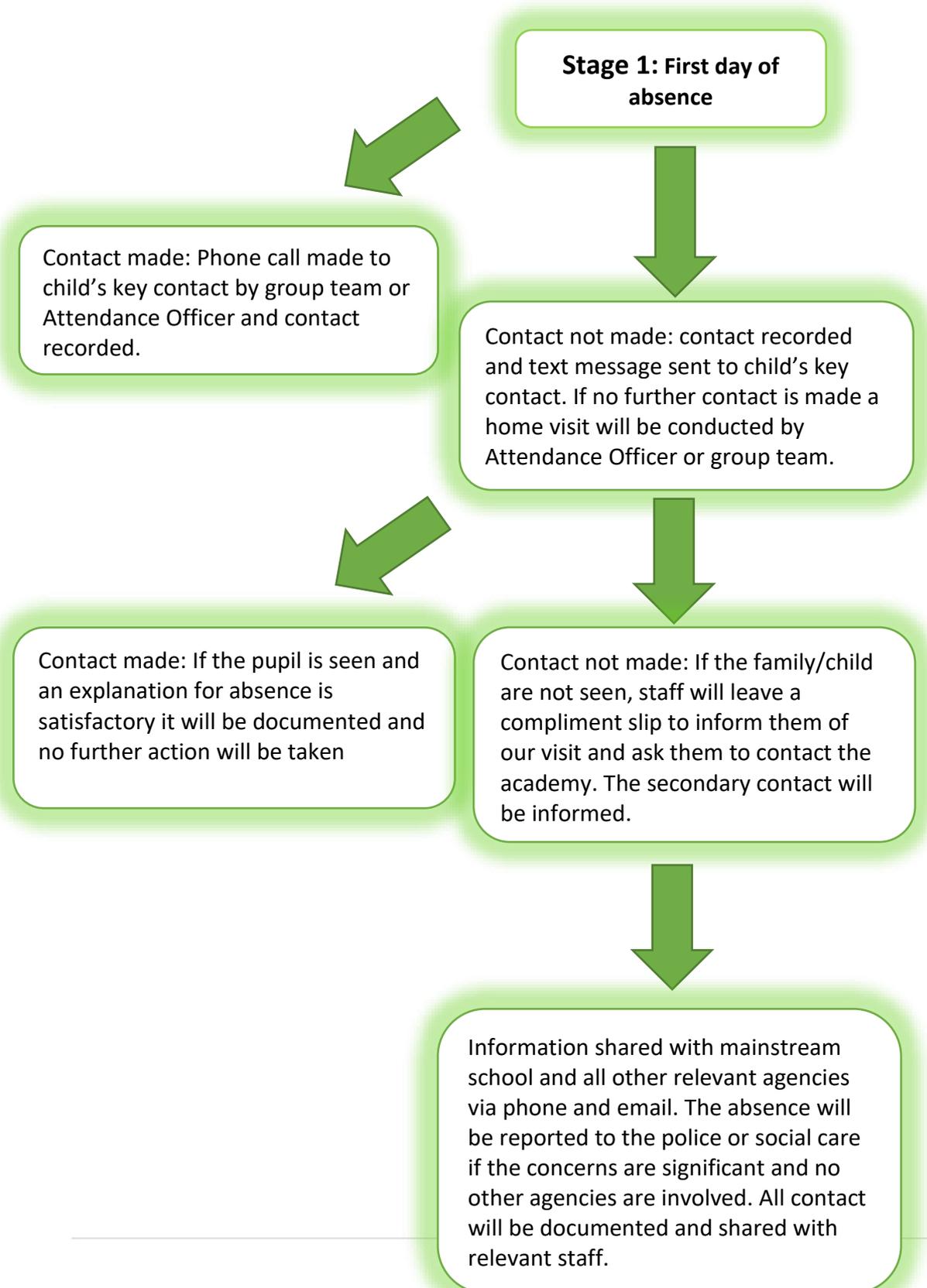Examples of when this is appropriate may include:
• At transition points – into or between settings
• When the pupil has repeated or prolonged episodes of crisis
• When a risk assessment shows that their behaviour poses a significant health and safety risk to themselves, other pupils or staff which cannot be reasonably managed within the usual academy day • When their behaviour causes repeated and significant disruption to the education of other pupils.

If the Senior Leadership Team considers a personalised timetable is appropriate, a clear plan for this should be completed. This plan and the reasons for it, will be communicated to parents/carers along with the arrangements for its regular review. The aim of a personalised timetable will always be to support the pupil so that they can return to full time education as soon as possible. The duration will however, depend on the needs of the individual. When pupils attends the academy on a Personalised timetable, they shall be marked

present (/) only for the sessions that they attend – i.e. morning or afternoon. If they are not required to attend a session, this will be marked with the C code.

Appendix A

Ethos College Attendance Flow Chart

Stage 1: **First day of absence**

Contact made: Phone call made to child's key contact by group team or Attendance Officer and contact recorded.

Contact not made: contact recorded and text message sent to child's key contact. If no further contact is made a home visit will be conducted by Attendance Officer or group team.

Contact made: If the pupil is seen and an explanation for absence is satisfactory it will be documented and no further action will be taken

Contact not made: If the family/child are not seen, staff will leave a compliment slip to inform them of our visit and ask them to contact the academy. The secondary contact will be informed.

Information shared with mainstream school and all other relevant agencies via phone and email. The absence will be reported to the police or social care if the concerns are significant and no other agencies are involved. All contact will be documented and shared with relevant staff.

Stage 2: Second day of absence

Contact made: Phone call made to child's key contact by group team or Attendance Officer and contact recorded.

No Contact made: Phone call made to child's key contact and a second home visit will be conducted.

Contact made: If the family/child is seen and an explanation for absence is satisfactory it will be documented and a discussion will take place with the family on how to report an absence.

No Contact made: All agencies informed and, if necessary, referrals made to external agencies.

Stage 3: Absence Persists

If absence persists, Ethos College will work with the mainstream school and family to address issues and seek solutions to improve attendance. Review of whether the provision is right for the child.