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Ethos College

Attendance Policy for Pupils

September 2024



Nurturing inclusive learning communities



1	Summary	Attendance Policy			
2	Responsible person	Diane Parkinson			
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	APRC			
9	Version	1.3			
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)	October 2024			
14	Date of next formal review	September 2025			
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	1.1	Local academy policy	Policy re-written from an Ethos Academy Trust policy to a local academy policy
September 23	1.2	Policy Review	Updated strategy for reducing severe or persistent absence to reflect current practice. Updated flow charts to reflect strategy.
September 2024	1.3	Policy Review	Changed timings of registration Added new attendance codes Included the Senior Attendance Champion Changed terminology from child missing in education to child not in school Added in a section for pupils on personalised timetables Made amendments to the attendance response flowchart Added in a focus on value added

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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 2024.

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. If we are concerned, we will work with external agencies to find a solution that secures improved attendance. In very rare cases we may have to take the decision to pursue persistent absence through a legal route with support from the LA. We will take all appropriate steps to avoid this but it may be used as a last resort.

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.

Further guidance can also be found at:

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

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 9.10 - 9.40, registers will be closed at 9.40
- Pupils are registered in their groups by staff
- Afternoon registration is between 12.00 - 12.30, registers will close at 12.30
- Pupils are registered by group staff

If a child arrives late, whilst registers are open, they will be marked with an L code. If a child arrives after registers close, they be marked with a U code.

If a child is absent, parents/carers should inform the school 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 shared with the DfE via an automatic link.

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 school. If the school has not received contact, group staff will attempt to make contact by 9.40. If a child is absent, the school will follow processes outlined in Appendix A.

The following codes are used to record types of absence:

B - Attending any other approved educational activity

K – Attending Alternative Provision

T - Traveller absence

O - Unauthorised absence

/ - Present

N - No reason given

G - Family holiday, not agreed

C – Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

C1 – Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking employment abroad

C2 – Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part time timetable

I - Illness

J1 – Authorised absence (preparation for Adulthood)

Q – Unable to attend school due to lack of access arrangements

E - Exclusion

V - Educational trip

Y1 – Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Y2 – Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Y3 – Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4 – Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Y5 – Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Y6 – Unable to attend due to public health guidance or law

Y7 – Unable to attend due to any of unavoidable cause

R - Religious observance

- School closed to pupils

S - Study leave

W - Work experience

P - Sporting activity

It is the responsibility of school staff to ensure that registers are completed correctly. The Senior Attendance Champion, Diane Parkinson, takes responsibility for attendance and works within this policy to ensure that procedures are in place to secure positive attendance.

3. Our Responsibilities as a School

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
- Work with external colleagues/agencies to address any barriers to attendance
- Plan a programme of celebration events where pupils' achievements are recognised and families and wider stakeholders are included
- Report termly to the Director of Education.

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 (including value added data) 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
 - Be available to staff during the school day so that any issues can be addressed in a timely manner
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- 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. 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 any involved agencies. 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 as pupils have an EHCP work will be done with SENDACT to consider if an alternative would best suit the child's needs. 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.

- A pupil who attends less than 90% of the time will be classed as a persistent absentee
- A pupil who attends less than 50% of the time is classed as a severe absentee

For both of these groups of pupils, staff will ensure that support is in place to address any barriers to learning. Close monitoring of these groups of pupils takes place and, in some cases, a personalised provision is discussed and implemented in the best interest of the pupil.

6. The local authority and attendance prosecution

Ethos College will work with the LA to seek a solution to attendance issues. In some cases, where all other strategies have not been successful, we will follow policy and work towards securing an Education Supervision Order (ESO). This is a supportive measure to work collaboratively with families to improve attendance. If a pupil reaches this stage then we will work within the guidelines to ensure a positive outcome.

7. 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.

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.

8. 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 improved school attendance. A high focus is placed on value added attendance figures, demonstrating the improvements in attendance from previous settings and throughout the academic year which are celebrated and rewarded.

The rewards available include:

- Regular 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 with families
- Reward points that equate to points which 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
- Promoting individual success and supporting pupils to celebrate this with peers in school council and reward assemblies
- Invite families to celebrate success in school half-termly assemblies
- Considering personalised motivational strategies that will work for individuals.

9. 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 of School and only be made in exceptional circumstances. The Head of School must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take their children out of school during term time.

10. Children Not in School

Children not in school 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 not in school 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 not being in school are reported to the Local Authority in line with relevant guidance within agreed timescales. There are many circumstances where a child may become absent 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 those who are absent
- 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 in 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 Ethos College, 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 not in school and there are strict guidelines in respect of both the definition of children not in school and the legalities of deleting a pupil from a school roll. We understand that it is essential that the DSL contact the local authority education service and complete a 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 Local Authority guidance for schools (September 2020) and Department for Education Guidance, Ethos College will make reasonable enquiries to locate the child in line with the school'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, Ethos College will make a referral to Children's Social Care and the Police in accordance with the West Yorkshire Police Truancy policy (if appropriate).

Where appropriate, 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. Through regular monitoring we are able to be aware of all attendance concerns and take a proactive and thorough response. When a pupil's attendance falls below the desired standard the following stages will be followed:

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 may move to stage 2.

Stage 2

Home visits by group staff 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 may move to stage 3.

Stage 3

Meeting 1

This meeting will require parents/carers and the pupil to meet with a senior leader and if appropriate any external agencies, for those pupils with additional support. 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 may move to stage 4.

Stage 4

Meeting 2

This meeting will require parents/carers and the pupil to meet with the Head of School. A final action plan will be agreed for a period of time and outcomes will be measured and recorded. Processes for the implementation of an Education Supervision Order will be discussed at this stage.

Stage 5

Meeting 3

Processes required for the Education Supervision Order will be implemented, including the involvement of appropriate agencies.

Prosecution for non-school attendance is an option only in extreme circumstances. Ethos College will follow the policy and work with families to avoid this. However, in an extreme circumstance we will work with the Local Authority to provide evidence of attendance interventions to prepare for prosecution.

12. Pupils on Personalised Timetables

At Ethos College all staff at the school 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

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 attend the school 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 C2 code.

Appendix A - Absence Response Process for Ethos College

Stage 1: First day of absence

Contact made: Phone call made to parent/carers by class staff member and contact entered onto CPOMS.

Staff will establish reason for absence and return date.

If no reason for absence, arrangements made for pupil to arrive in school on the same day.

Contact not made: entered onto CPOMS and message sent to parent/carers asking them to contact Ethos College.

If no further contact is made a home visit will be considered and appropriate actions taken

Stage 2: Second day of absence

Contact made: Phone call made to parent/carers by staff member and contact entered onto CPOMS.

Staff will establish reason for absence and return date.

If no reason for absence, arrangements made for pupil to arrive in school on the same day.

No Contact made: Phone call made to parent/carer and a home visit conducted.



Contact made: Home visit successful and contact made by staff member. Contact entered onto CPOMS including who was seen and where.

Staff will establish reason for absence and return date.

If no reason for absence, arrangements made for pupil to arrive in school on the same day.

No contact on home visit: Note left through door. Any external agencies contacted.

The absence will be reported to the police and/or social care if the concerns are significant.

Stage 3: Absence Persists

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graph TD; A[Stage 3: Absence Persists] --> B[Daily phone calls to receive update on absence. If absence seems questionable then arrangements to be made for pupil to return to school and home visit conducted if necessary.]; A --> C[If absence persists, Ethos College will work with external agencies and the family to address issues and seek solutions to improve attendance. Review of whether the provision is right for the child.];
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If absence persists, Ethos College will work with external agencies and the family to address issues and seek solutions to improve attendance. Review of whether the provision is right for the child.