



Esland North Limited - Exec

ED00110 Attendance Policy



Esland North Limited - Online School

ED00110 - Attendance

Introduction

This policy has been written with regard to current Department for Education guidance relating to Working Together to Improve School Attendance and Children Missing Education.

When students join our school, they have often experienced a significant period of time out of school or significant difficulties within school that have led to greatly reduced attendance.

This is due to their complex needs which may impact on their ability to manage the emotional, social, and environmental aspects of school life.

A number of students have co-morbid conditions which may also lead to reduced attendance. In cases such as this, agreement may be made with the Local Authority and the parents for part time attendance for fixed periods of time with the aim to attend full time as soon as possible.

The school has high aspirations for attendance and engagement and works with pupils and families to maximise participation in education.

Many pupils join Esland Online School having experienced prolonged periods of disrupted education, emotionally based school avoidance, significant anxiety or other barriers to attendance. The school recognises that successful reintegration into education may require a gradual and personalised approach. Attendance and engagement expectations will therefore be considered in the context of each pupil's individual circumstances, starting point and needs, with the aim of increasing participation over time and supporting long-term success in education.

Attendance in an Online School

At Esland Online School, attendance refers to a pupil's participation in their agreed educational provision. This may include:

- Live online lessons
- Tutorial sessions
- Therapeutic sessions linked to the educational programme
- Independent learning activities
- Planned intervention sessions
- Alternative educational activities agreed by the school

Attendance will be recorded in accordance with Department for Education requirements and the individual pupil's agreed timetable and provision.

Principles and Aims

The school has high aspirations for attendance and engagement. Attendance targets will take account of individual circumstances, starting points and agreed transition arrangements.

We work in partnership with parents, carers, support agencies to encourage and support all children to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Where attendance levels fall, we will work with the Local Authority/social workers to make full use of statutory duties available to encourage and ensure excellent levels of attendance. On the rare occasions when these efforts fail to improve attendance, the school will actively seek, in liaison with the Education Welfare Service (EWS), the use of legal remedies.

Actions

Celebrate success

Monitor attendance rates and offer support to families where issues are arising. Keep and maintain accurate records.

Liaise with partners, including Education Welfare Officer.

Attendance and Engagement

The school recognises that attendance alone does not provide a complete picture of a pupil's participation in learning.

Attendance information will be considered alongside engagement, participation, wellbeing and progress when evaluating the effectiveness of provision.

Engagement information may include participation in live lessons, completion of learning activities, interaction with staff, attendance at agreed interventions and progress towards individual attendance or engagement targets.

Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities

School Staff

The teacher in charge of a class must accurately take a register of attendance at the school at agreed times and in accordance with the agreed method. A designated member of the staff (School Administrator) will on the first day of absence, if no reason for the absence is known, contact the home to ascertain the reason. If there is no School Administrator or Headteacher then another member of the school staff will do this and refer to this policy for processes.

The Headteacher, (or designated member of senior staff) will regularly monitor attendance and contact parents when concerns arise.

Parents/Carers

It is their legal responsibility to ensure that the child attends school. This includes being punctual. When a child is absent it is the parents' responsibility to inform the school at the earliest possible opportunity.

Governance

The Education Director and Headteacher has a responsibility to overview schools' attendance and to monitor this. The Education Director acts as a 'critical friend' and determines targets and the impact of the attendance policies and approaches.

Standards and Monitoring

Attendance will be monitored against both whole-school expectations and individual attendance targets where these form part of a pupil's transition or support plan.

Attendance is monitored daily by school staff and reviewed regularly by the leadership team. Attendance concerns may be addressed before formal monitoring points where intervention is required.

The Headteacher (or designated member of senior staff) will check the attendance of all children on a half termly basis. At the end of each half term a summary of every child's attendance will be sent home.

Students who achieve an attendance level of above 60% at the end of a term will receive a certificate at bronze, silver or gold level outlining the percentage.

60-70% - Bronze

71-85% - Silver

86-100% - Gold

Attendance achievements will be considered in the context of individual attendance targets and transition arrangements where these apply.

Parents/Carers will be informed by letter if their child's attendance falls below 60%. This communication will be supportive and will take into account individual circumstances. Persistent levels of attendance below 50% are of concern and will be investigated.

If a child's attendance levels approach 60%, they will be discussed with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

Attendance figures are monitored and reported in the Governance reports on a half-termly basis. Attendance is also reported within the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) which is sent to the Chief Operating Officer by the Headteacher on a regular basis.

Individual Attendance Support

Where attendance concerns arise, the school will work collaboratively with pupils, families, local authorities and other professionals to understand barriers to attendance and develop appropriate support strategies.

Support may include:

- Graduated transition plans
- Timetable adjustments
- Therapeutic support
- Accessibility adjustments
- Multi-agency planning
- Reintegration planning following periods of absence

For some pupils, attendance targets may initially focus on engagement and participation in agreed learning activities rather than full-time attendance, with targets reviewed regularly as confidence and capacity increase.

Recording

Registers and all related correspondence will be kept for a period of six years.

Any correspondence regarding concerns about a child's attendance will be kept in the child's individual file. This will be passed onto the next school at the point of transfer.

Absence Reporting

Guidance for parents/carers due to ill health:

Day 1

Parent/carer to 'phone the school by 9.30am on the day of absence to confirm the following:

Child's name

Reason for absence ("unwell" is not sufficient, more details are required) Time/date of doctor's appointment (if made)

Day 2

As DAY 1

Day 3

As DAY 1

Note:

If your child does not return to school on Day 3, then from Day 4 onwards, the school reserves the right to ask parents/carers to provide supporting medical evidence, e.g. appointment card/letter; note from a doctor, specialist's

report, copy of prescription, before consideration will be given whether or not to authorise the absences (wholly or in part).

Day 4+

Parent/carer to telephone the school by 9.30am on each subsequent day of absence until either:

Child returns to school, or

As otherwise agreed with a senior member of school staff.

Any child accumulating 15 school days (30 sessions) of authorised absence due to illness within an academic year (consecutively or non-consecutively and not for a known and significant on-going health condition) will result in a meeting being arranged with parents/carers to plan a way forward. This is to ensure that the school is appropriately meeting the individual child's educational needs.

The coding of any absence from school, for whatever reason(s) given, is ultimately at the sole discretion of the Headteacher; therefore, the school may request sight of relevant evidence to support an absence of any length of time. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to obtain the relevant evidence to support any absence from school.

Unauthorised absences of 5 days (10 sessions) or more in any 12 weeks period or any patterns identified (e.g. a student not attending school every Monday) may result in your child's case being referred to the Education Welfare Service for support and advice.

Term-time Leave Requests, including holidays

Parents/carers have no entitlement to take their child out of school during term-time. Any requests for term-time leave, up to a maximum of 10 school days in an academic year, must satisfy the following conditions before they will be considered by the Headteacher:

Exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. forces personnel; significant year-round seasonal employment restrictions (a letter from the employer stating to this effect must be provided); unforeseen family circumstances etc. Financial reasons are NOT an exceptional circumstance.

Requested in advance of the proposed dates (at the earliest possible opportunity and at least four weeks' notice.)

A definite return date provided – **any child not returned to school on the expected date will be considered a 'Child Missing from Education' and will be referred to the Education Attendance Service/Welfare Service as a safeguarding concern. This may trigger a home visit and involvement from the local police.**

Children Missing Education and Loss of Contact

As a specialist online school, Esland Online School recognises that children may disengage from education without being physically absent from their home environment. The school therefore monitors attendance, participation, communication and engagement to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and safeguarding oversight.

Esland Online School recognises that children who are absent from education or who become uncontactable may be at increased risk of harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, poor mental health outcomes and educational disadvantage. The school therefore regards persistent absence, disengagement from learning and loss of contact as both an educational and safeguarding concern. This section should be read alongside the Attendance Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and relevant local authority procedures.

As an online school, loss of contact may present differently from traditional educational settings. Concerns may arise where a pupil repeatedly fails to attend scheduled lessons, does not engage with learning activities, is absent without explanation, cannot be contacted through agreed communication methods, or where parents and carers cannot be reached despite repeated attempts by the school. Repeated unexplained absence from online learning activities will be treated in the same way as absence from on-site education and may trigger attendance and safeguarding procedures.

The school will monitor attendance, participation and engagement closely. Where concerns emerge, staff will seek to establish the reasons for absence at the earliest opportunity and will work collaboratively with pupils, families and professionals to identify and address barriers to engagement. Where appropriate, support may include pastoral intervention, SEND support, therapeutic input, attendance planning or involvement from wider agencies.

Where a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will make reasonable attempts to contact parents, carers and other authorised emergency contacts. All attempts to establish contact will be recorded. If concerns remain unresolved, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher will consider whether additional safeguarding actions are required. Where the school is unable to establish contact with a pupil or family, or where there are concerns regarding the child's safety or welfare, the school may undertake welfare checks, seek advice from the local authority, make referrals to children's social care or involve other agencies as appropriate. Decisions will be based upon the individual circumstances of the child and any known vulnerabilities.

The school recognises that children with SEND, Education Health and Care Plans, social workers, mental health difficulties, experiences of trauma or other vulnerabilities may be at greater risk when absent from education. In such circumstances, additional safeguarding oversight and partnership working may be required.

A child may be considered at risk of becoming a Child Missing Education (CME) where they fail to access education over a sustained period and their whereabouts, educational provision or destination cannot be confirmed. The school will follow statutory guidance and local authority procedures where CME concerns arise. Removal from roll will only take place in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations and after all required enquiries and notifications have been completed.

Where a pupil leaves the school, the school will seek confirmation of the pupil's next educational placement and will work with parents, carers and local authorities to support a safe and appropriate transition. Wherever possible, pupils will not be removed from roll until destination provision has been confirmed in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Governing Body receives assurance that appropriate systems are in place to identify, monitor and respond to children who are absent from education, at risk of disengagement or at risk of becoming Children Missing Education. Safeguarding, attendance and engagement data are reviewed regularly to ensure that children receive timely support and intervention. For pupils accessing education remotely, attendance is measured not only through registration but also through meaningful participation and engagement in learning. The school recognises that disengagement from online education may be an early indicator of unmet need, deteriorating wellbeing or safeguarding concerns. Staff will therefore consider attendance, engagement, communication, wellbeing and learning participation holistically when assessing risk and determining appropriate support.

Removal from Roll and Statutory Notifications

Esland Online School is committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a suitable education and that no child becomes missing from education without appropriate enquiries, support and safeguarding oversight.

Removal from roll is undertaken only where lawful grounds exist and in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations, local authority procedures and statutory guidance relating to Children Missing Education.

Before a pupil is removed from roll, the school will take reasonable steps to establish the pupil's circumstances, educational destination and ongoing educational arrangements. The school will work collaboratively with parents, carers, local authorities and other professionals to support continuity of education wherever possible. Where safeguarding concerns exist, these will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school may remove a pupil from roll where permitted by legislation, including where:

- The school has received confirmation that the pupil has been admitted to another school and there is no School Attendance Order in force.
- The pupil has relocated and is no longer ordinarily resident within a reasonable distance of the school, and confirmation has been received that they have been placed on the roll of another school.
- Parents or carers have formally notified the school of their decision to electively home educate their child and all relevant local authority notifications have been completed.
- The pupil has been continuously absent from education for a period specified within statutory guidance and, following reasonable enquiries by both the school and local authority, their whereabouts cannot be established.
- Other lawful grounds for deletion from roll apply under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations.

Where a pupil leaves the school, Esland Online School will seek confirmation of the pupil's next educational placement wherever possible. The school recognises that the absence of a confirmed destination may

indicate a risk of a child becoming missing from education and will work with the relevant local authority to ensure that appropriate follow-up action is taken.

Where required, the school will notify the relevant local authority before removing a pupil from roll and will provide all information required by statutory guidance. Particular attention will be given to pupils who are vulnerable, have an Education, Health and Care Plan, have a social worker, are looked after or previously looked after, or where safeguarding concerns are present.

As Esland Online School works with pupils across multiple local authority areas, the school will comply with relevant cross-border protocols and service level agreements. Where a pupil resides in a different local authority to the one responsible for commissioning their placement, the school will work collaboratively with all relevant agencies to ensure educational and safeguarding responsibilities are fulfilled appropriately.

All decisions relating to removal from roll will be appropriately documented and retained in accordance with data protection requirements and record retention procedures. Relevant safeguarding, attendance and pupil records will be transferred securely to receiving educational settings or shared with local authorities where required by law.

Cross Border Arrangements

The Esland Online school have signed Service Level Agreements with various Local Authorities. LAs have agreed protocols with regard to children who attend school in one LA but reside in another. According to the terms of these protocols if a child who attends a school in one LA becomes CME the CME officer will notify and liaise with the CME officer of the LA in which the child resides.

Appendix 1

TERM TIME LEAVE ADVICE TO PARENTS/CARERS

Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the [Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) and came into force on 1st September 2013.

The amendments made it clear that Headteachers may only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. Any request for leave must be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance.

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education (DfE). However, from discussion with the DfE and professional associations, it is suggested that exceptional leave would be:

Rare Significant Unavoidable Short

(National Association of Headteachers, 2014)

Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts learning and teachers have to spend time helping children catch up when they return. Parents/Carers should arrange holidays during the school holiday periods. The school is open 190 days per year which leaves 175 days of the year for holidays.

Government website link

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

Class

I wish to apply for term time leave for (child's name):

- from
- to

inclusive

The Exceptional Reasons for this request are:

Signature

(Parent/Carer)

Date

Please make your request prior to making any bookings and at least four weeks before the anticipated leave date.

Appendix 3

APPROVAL LETTER

Dear

Name of Child:

Re: Request for Term Time Leave

Thank you for your request for term time leave.

I am in agreement this is for exceptional reasons and have authorised this leave.

The leave is from to

Should the leave be extended for any reason, the extension may be regarded as unauthorised absence which may be used in any legal action for poor school attendance.

Signature

(Headteacher) Date

Appendix 4

LETTER OF REFUSAL

Dear

Name of Child:

Re: Request for Term Time Leave

You have requested School days leave.

Your request for term time leave has been carefully considered but unfortunately it has not been possible to authorise it for the following reasons:

The reasons are not considered exceptional

The leave has not been request in advance

Other

Please be aware that if you decide to proceed with the unauthorised term time leave the school will inform the Local Authority who may take further action in the form of a fine.

Signature

(Headteacher)

Date