

Attendance Policy

East Sheen Primary School



Approved by:

Governing Body

Date: Autumn 2025

Next review due by:

Autumn 2026

Aims:

- To work with families to achieve aspirational levels of attendance and punctuality for all students (above 97%)
- To improve attendance to support children achieving their full potential in learning
- To increase a sense of belonging at school, which is linked to better academic performance and better mental health
- To provide extra support to families who may be struggling to get their child to school regularly

Why is good attendance important?

Regular school attendance is essential for children to make the most of the educational opportunities that are available to them. Good attendance ensures better progress both academically and socially, improves children's future life chances and establishes a resilient work ethic early in life.

Punctuality also impacts the progress of children within school. When children miss school, teachers need to break from their plans and re-teach certain aspects, which can hold up the learning of all the children in the class. If a child has a special educational need, the effects can be even greater.

Lateness and poor attendance may also be potential indicators of a safeguarding concern. There is a statutory requirement for schools to maintain attendance registers showing the attendance of pupils at each session (i.e. morning or afternoon) when the school is open to pupils and to show a distinction between 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' absence (see page 4 for details).

How we celebrate good attendance:

At East Sheen Primary School, we celebrate children's achievements in all areas including attendance. Class attendance is celebrated weekly through the assemblies and the use of 'Paddington Bear' to celebrate classes that collectively reach our goal of 97% and through the weekly newsletter that is shared with the parent community.

Expectations:

ESPS's expectation is that all pupils should attend school every day. If your child's attendance falls to 90% or below, your child is missing at least half a day of school a week. We closely follow the local authority guidelines on attendance.

Useful links for parents:

[Working together to improve school attendance – statutory guidance for schools](#)

[Parent FAQ - Working together to improve school attendance](#)

[NHS - Is my child too ill for school?](#)

[Emotionally Related School Avoidance \(ERSA\)](#) – support booklet for parents

School Day Timings:

Our school day starts at 8.50am

School gates open: 8.40am

Classroom doors open: 8.50am

Morning registers taken: 8.50am

Afternoon registers taken: 1pm (YR-2); 1.15pm (Y3-4); 1.30pm (Y5-6)

School day ends: 3.20pm

Procedures:

If a child is absent, the parent/carer must contact the office by phoning the school office on 020 8876 7484 or by emailing attendance@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk on the first day of absence and then updating the school as necessary. Parents can also report absences on ParentMail, but should be specific in justifying an absence. If parents do not contact the school with a reason for absence, the school will call home after 09:00 on each day of absence. If the school is unable to reach the parent/carer they will attempt to contact the child's emergency contact(s), and where necessary make referrals to appropriate Children's Social Services.

East Sheen Primary School would encourage all parents to develop a support network with other families when needed to ensure that their children are present in school every day. Exceptional circumstances will be considered case by case and a support plan put in place if necessary.

Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay off school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 48 hours. However, children who are feeling only slightly unwell can usually be supported in school to feel well enough to access their learning. The above link can be helpful when considering whether your child is well enough to attend school.

All reasons for absence will be recorded and monitored by the school. A letter and medical evidence, if requested, must be sent in when the child returns to school to authorise the absence.

Registration:

Children's attendance is noted in the school's electronic registers. Registers are taken at the start of each morning and afternoon sessions (see above). The registers are closed at 9.30am in the morning and 1.30pm in the afternoon.

Lateness:

If a child enters class after 9.00am, they are officially marked as late. If a child enters the classroom after 9.30am when registers close, they are officially marked as absent for the morning session.

Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality:

The school will closely monitor the attendance and punctuality for individual children and where this is below our expectations, steps will be taken to highlight our concerns and work with families to improve outcomes.

- Absence data is closely monitored by the School Attendance and Welfare Officer and discussed with the Headship Team
- The school will contact the parent/carer of any child who has an unexplained absence requesting details

- When attendance is below 90%, proof of absence will be required. For example, in the case of illness, a letter or appointment card will be required
- If a child has a repeated number of absences, the parents/carers may be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem
- The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school on a regular basis and will review all cases where attendance has fallen below 90% with the School Welfare Officer and the Deputy Headteacher
- If attendance does not improve, the EWO will arrange a visit with the parents/carers at school or home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation
- The school and EWO will work with the family to support an improvement in attendance so that the case can be closed
- If these interventions do not achieve an improvement further action by the EWO may include a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution of the parents/carers

Authorised Absence:

Whilst we expect all children to attend school every day, we understand that there are some situations where a child is unable to be in school. These will be reviewed case-by-case and authorised at the Headteacher's discretion following a conversation or if suitable evidence is provided.

These could include:

- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments - evidence of appointments is required
- Days of religious observance (up to 2 days only)
- Secondary School transfer visits / entrance examinations (these should be kept as short as possible, with children returning to school at the earliest possibility)
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement or funeral

Unauthorised absence:

Term-time leave is not permitted, apart from the exceptional reasons provided above.

Any requests for leave must be made to the Headteacher in writing using '[absence in term-time](#)' application form. It is the discretion of the Headteacher, or a delegated member of The Headship Team, to consider exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Should a leave of absence be taken without permission from the Headteacher, it will be marked as 'unauthorised' in the register and could result in a **Fixed Penalty Notice**. Achieving for Children will be informed and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued. The Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, and this rises to £120 per parent, per child for the offence period if paid after 21 days, but before 28 days. Failure to pay will result in the local authority seeking court action for failure to ensure regular school attendance.

Referral to the Education Welfare Services (EWS):

Where we are unable to establish contact with a family who has a child missing in education, a referral will be made to EWS.

School Organisation:

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Along with our staff, our expectations of other stakeholders are as follows:

By law, **parents/carers** are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive full time education. They must:

- Ensure their child is on time for school every day and collected on time
- Communicate with the school the reasons for any lateness or absence
- Provide the school with two emergency contact details
- Inform the school office of medical/dental or other appointments in advance
- Requests for any absence other than illness or medical appointments must be made by completing the school's 'absence in term-time' application form available from the school office
- Holidays should not be taken during term time. These absences will always be unauthorised.

The Governing Body is responsible for reviewing and approving this attendance policy in conjunction with the Headteacher and to monitor the policy's effectiveness. Attendance will be reported at each Children, Families and Community (CFC) committee meeting, and shared in the governor dashboard.

Responsibility of Local Authority – The Education Welfare Service (EWS) hold statutory duties and responsibilities (see below). The service works in collaboration with schools across Richmond by providing advice and support to improve attendance rates and reduce persistent absence. The Education Welfare Service deals with individual school attendance cases.

Statutory duties include:

- Instigating legal proceedings and issuing cautions against parents who have failed in their duty to ensure their children's regular school attendance
- Issuing school attendance orders
- Applications to the Family Court for Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)
- Tracking children missing education
- Licensing of children in employment and performances
- Issuing matron or chaperones licences

The Education Welfare Officer for East Sheen Primary School is Julie Miller.

We strongly believe, that by working together as a whole school community and championing the importance of attendance and punctuality, our children will flourish now and in the next chapter of their education and beyond.