

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33 Attendance Policy
October 2022.

EDWINSTREE MIDDLE SCHOOL
A Voluntary Controlled Church of England Middle School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Issue Date: Jan 2024

Review Date: Jan 2025

As a Christian school we recognise the unique and wonderful in everyone.
As a community we support one another to flourish, and live life in all its fullness.

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Rationale

John 16:33

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Since COVID more children and families have struggled to attend school regularly across the UK and the Cost of Living crisis has only added to this problem. Parental capacity to support students into school has reduced and the reasons and support needed to reverse this trend is individualised and complex for many families. Those families who are multi vulnerable are most at risk to poor attendance.

We also now have strong evidence that those children at home are more likely to experience increased anxiety and to retreat further from their community.

Edwinstree School seeks to create an inclusive, caring and supportive school for child and family. For those most at risk of not attending, we offer a bespoke, and individualised support programme, to re-establish school and a safe and engaging environment to attend.

Our Aims

- To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.
- To create a timed framed flexible and bespoke curriculum and program for those children most at risk to becoming school refusers.
- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and positive mental health, that is an integral part of the school's ethos.
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Who can authorise an absence? Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence.

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If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

- Leave of absence can be applied for in advance. It is the school’s decision as to whether this is granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence). All leave of absence should be requested via our attendance email attendance@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk
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- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

What are fixed penalty notices and when are they issued?

Our school follows Hertfordshire County Council’s Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures.

- We expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems and will also offer bespoke support first prior to moving to a fixed penalty.
- If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child’s irregular attendance.

Follow guidance on HCC Grid when considering a Fixed Penalty Notice - <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absenceholiday>

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ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As an inclusive Christian community, it is the responsibility of everyone within the school community to support attendance at Edwinstree School including students, parents and school staff.

The Head is responsible for:

- Having a clear, written school attendance policy based on the expectations set out in this model policy and ensuring the implementation of this policy – ensuring compliance with DfE Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – Working together to improve School Attendance – September 2022 - [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/102222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education 2022, Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – September 2022 - [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/102222/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf)
- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory Guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England December 2015 - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/102222/Supporting_pupils_with_medical_conditions_at_school.pdf)
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that schools ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.

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- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body and Trusts the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, LA's and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Staff are responsible for:

- treating pupils with dignity
- building relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
- take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
- understanding the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity.
- communicating effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

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- delivering clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
- using physical presence to welcome and support routines and expectations on arrival and departure
- regularly communicating expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
- establishing and monitoring implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness.
- Monitoring implementation of policy and practice, for example through form time, drop in, shadow late gate, planner checks
- Engaging community businesses, partners and residents to promote attendance and report non-attendance.
- Monitoring of whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming RH SLT attendance Lead and DSP.
- **Ensuring compliance with guidance regarding Children Missing Education - see Herts Grid**
- <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/children-missing-from-education>
- Engaging pupils in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards and sanctions

The School Attendance Champion RH is responsible for:

- Implementing the policy with the Head.
 - Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
 - Championing and improving attendance.
 - Ensuring practice is in place to address persistent and severe absence is robust.
 - Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
 - Oversight of data analysis -
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other

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agencies like children’s social care and early help services which are working with families.

- Robust school systems which provide useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
 - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
 - young carers
 - children who are eligible for free school meals
 - children who speak English as a second language
 - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
- Keeping the Head and all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures
- compiling attendance data for the Head, the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO).
- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the LAAO is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- School attendance, safeguarding and pastoral support policies which should clearly outline:
 - the key principles
 - rules pupils need to follow
 - routines
 - consequence systems
- If required, holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Leading the SEND and DSP team to undertake home visits in line with school’s safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
- The escalation of procedures to address absence needs to be:

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- understood by pupils, parents and carers
- implemented consistently

- reviewed regularly ensuring that the Local Authority is notified for a pupil who fails to attend school regularly via a **10 Day Absence Form**.

See guidance on HCC Grid for form –

<https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-guidance-and-statutory-responsibilities>

The **Attendance team** includes two DSP's and representatives from SEND, our admin for registration and safeguarding first day phone calls, our receptionist, and economic wellbeing administrator and RH our SLT member. This teams' responsibilities are:

- To ensure the recording of attendance and absence data is accurate.
- To ensure robust day-to-day processes are in place.
- To track and follow up absence and poor punctuality (implement punctuality routines such as late gate or sign in procedures).
- Provide appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice.
- Carry out robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable children including children with a social worker. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.
- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents to understand why and when the pupil will return.
- Where absences are recorded as unexplained in the attendance register the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Where reasonably possible, ensure school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- Keep parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record (this should be communicated to parents in an easy-to-understand format and percentage headlines should be avoided. For example, concentrate on the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

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- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Undertake home visits in line with your safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identify and, where possible, mitigate potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and relevant support agencies.
- Implement children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate -
- See guidance on HCC Grid regarding Children Missing Education, <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/children-missing-from-education>
- Where pupils have additional vulnerabilities, which may require multi-agency meetings try to arrange those meetings outside of lesson time, where possible.
- Engage with feeder schools or organisations to access absence information in order to identify target cohorts prior to transfer, including mid-year transfers and managed moves.

Pupils at risk of persistent absence

- Provide regular attendance reports to tutors to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes
- Initiate and oversee the administration of absence procedures.

This should include:

- letters home
- attendance meetings
- engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
- work with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best, recognising potential barriers in hard-to-reach families and find methods that work and are understood
- consideration as to whether further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures
- provide regular reports to leaders on the at-risk cohort
- provide regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils

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The attendance team will look to support a package involving one or more of the following:

Welcome pupils back following an absence and provide good catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps. This could include:

- lesson resources and bespoke lessons Sunrise room.
- buddy support – pastoral team
- one to one input – Pupil Power team and or Sunrise.
- meet with pupils and parents to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems Absence team and Pastoral team.
- establish action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets. This could include: Absence team.
- lunchtime arrangements Pupil Power and SLT.
- support with uniform, transport, wake up routines or emotional wellbeing Economic Wellbeing support admin.
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support Attendance team and tutor and Head of Year.
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress Attendance team.
- consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups SENCO and Attendance team Sunrise, Pupil Power and Wellbeing team.
- prepare supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return Sunrise lead teacher
- develop targeted intervention to address gaps and build pupils' confidence (including considering small group additional support) Wellbeing team.
- contribute to action plans which attendance staff draw together where appropriate Attendance team lead but all staff to participate where appropriate.
- provide tailored praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time

The team will plan to support pupils who are persistently absent

- Develop and implement persistent absence action plans with pupils and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines
- Identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil, for example:
 - mentoring
 - careers advice and guidance input
 - sunrise and or Pupil Power room.
 - out of hours learning

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- alternative provision where appropriate
- Lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support, make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- Hold regular meetings or reviews of caseload with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team (SAPT), external partners and alternative providers to check on welfare and review progress
- Liaise with school leaders (designated safeguarding, special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments
- Coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions
- Work in partnership with SAPT and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures
- Provide regular reports to leaders on the impact of action plans and interventions

Where a part time timetable is offered to a student:

- As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable.
- The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday)
- All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part-time timetable.

Follow guidance from HCC Grid when considering a part-time timetable - <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-part-time-students>

Teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.
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- Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date;
- Monitoring class and individual attendance patterns and alerting the attendance team to concerns.
- Informing the school attendance champion/line manager (RH) of any concerns;
- Emphasising with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy and alerting the RH and BW where this conversation has taken place – linking the communication record from Behaviour watch and the team.
- Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Modeling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
 - treat pupils with dignity
 - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
 - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence handling confidential information sensitively
 - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
 - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils’ attendance and well-being

You should:

- Rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- Emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- Promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- Promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions
- Apply rewards and sanctions consistently

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- Follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- Contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality
- Review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets
- Periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments
- Proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30am at the latest.
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- proactively engage with the support offered by school to prevent the need for more formal support.
- If formal support is needed, proactively engage with this support to prevent the need for any legal intervention.
- booking any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.

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- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school
- calling staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

Working with our Local authority

- Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
- The Headteacher or Attendance Champion (SLT) will meet with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
- Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans.
- If parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO.
- If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority.
- Statutory intervention can include:
 - Parenting Contract
 - Fixed Penalty Notice application from school
 - Parenting Order
 - Education Supervision Order
 - Prosecution

The school encourages good attendance:

- Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
- The Headteacher or Attendance Champion (SLT) will meet with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
- Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans.
- Creating bespoke packages of support and curriculums to encourage our most at risk and persistent poor attenders.

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- Statutory intervention can include:
 - Parenting Contract
 - Fixed Penalty Notice application from school
 - Parenting Order
 - Education Supervision Order
 - Prosecution

We promote punctuality:

- The School gates open at 8.15 am unless registered with the before and after school provision.
- The register will be open for no longer than 30 minutes
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9.15 (and parent provides a satisfactory explanation) will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).

- **For pupils that are persistently absent the Attendance team and Head is expected to:**
 - proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. All staff
 - Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
 - Signpost and support parents to access any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
 - If the issue persists, take an active part in a multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners.
 - Act as the Lead Practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service.
 - Where the Lead Practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the Local Authority and partners.

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Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Ensure additional targeted support is in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- If there is lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents, being clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working or being engaged with, work with the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Work with other local schools, such as schools previously attended or schools of siblings.

Severe absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 50%.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils who are persistently absent.
- Agree a joint approach for all pupils who are severely absent with the Local Authority.

Pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and teachers must ensure this cohort is made the top priority for action and support.

You must be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.

Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that school ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.

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Attendance: A guide for Parents/Carers

When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should aim to arrive at school between 8:30am-8:40am. The bell goes at 8:37am in order for tutors to collect their tutees and welcome them into the classroom. The register will be called at 8.40am. If your child arrives after this time, he/she must enter via the school reception and sign the late book, which is held with the school receptionist.

What happens if my child is late?

If your child arrives after the register has been closed, he/she will be marked as absent (unauthorised), unless an acceptable reason has been given. It is the child's responsibility to sign the late book on arrival to school, which is held at the school reception with the school receptionist, so staff and parents are aware their child has arrived late into school.

Tutors will set a break or lunchtime detention if there is no valid reason for lateness. Parents are required to provide a note to explain the reason for lateness. If the school authorises the lateness, then no detention will be set. Our best form of communication is to email attendance@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk If a pupil arrives late to school on a regular basis, Senior Team, Head of Year and or Attendance will contact parents to arrange a meeting to discuss reasons or difficulties for lateness.

What should I do if my child cannot come to school?

Please email: attendance@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk before 9am, once an email has been received and the absence recorded, a written absence note will not be required when your child returns to school. Absences reported by telephone still require a note on return to school. The Headteacher will decide whether or not the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. If your child is unable to come to school for a period of time, it is appropriate to telephone the school to notify the length of absence if possible. If there is a concern from the school, the Attendance Officer will contact you at home. In the case of recurring absences through illnesses, you may be

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As a community we support one another to flourish, and live life in all its fullness.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33 Attendance Policy October 2022.

required to produce a medical certificate, other medical evidence or provide details of medical personnel to enable the school to make direct contact.

Can we take family holidays during term-time?

In line with government legislation, the school policy and Hertfordshire County Council state all family holidays should be taken in school closure periods. A ‘Leave of Absence’ may be granted in exceptional circumstances where the application has been made from the parent or carer. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence under exceptional circumstances. *NB Visiting family relatives abroad is not deemed ‘exceptional circumstances’* Where an absence has been unauthorised and the time still taken off school, the school has a duty to notify Hertfordshire Local Authority’s Education Service, and a fixed penalty fine may be issued.

What is a Penalty Notice and when would one be issued?

The law states that parents/carers are committing an offence when their children (of compulsory school age) are absent from school without good reason. A Penalty Notice is a financial penalty issued by Hertfordshire Local Authority for unauthorised absences from school. Where the penalty is not paid in full and/or within the prescribed time limit, Hertfordshire County Council is required to start legal proceedings against the parents/carers in the Magistrates Court.

What happens if my child’s attendance level falls?

The school monitors attendance very closely. Where a child’s attendance is considered to be too low, Hertfordshire County Council requires that the school will take action.

Attendance rate falls below 93% - a letter will be sent home from the school to inform the parent that the school are unable to authorise any further absences until further medical evidence is provided to the school.

Attendance rate falls to 90% or below – a meeting will be arranged with the parent/carers at the school to discuss attendance and the support school can put in place.

Where attendance does not improve, the school will contact the Attendance Improvement Officer.

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