



Attendance Procedure: 2023-2024

Contact Details

Attendance Lead & Headteacher	Mr Jim Usher admin@embrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk
Attendance Officer	Mrs Alison Perkins admin@embrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

At Emmbrook Junior School, we recognise the clear connection between regular attendance and achievement and will, therefore, work in partnership with parents/carers, the Circle Trust and the Local Authority to ensure that pupils achieve maximum attendance.

Pupils

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year unless there are good reasons for their absence
- Arrive at school on time
- Be appropriately prepared for the day
- Notify their class teacher of any issues that may affect their school attendance

Parents/Carers

We expect that all parents/carers will ensure:

- They are fully aware of the school's attendance policy, their legal responsibilities with regard to their child's education and the requirement to ensure their child's regular attendance at school
- Their child attends school every day throughout the academic year unless school has approved the leave of absence
- Their child arrives punctually and prepared for the school day
- They telephone or email the school each day if their child is unable to attend due to illness or any other unavoidable circumstance and give an explanation for the absence providing medical evidence where requested
- They avoid making medical, dental or other appointments during the school day
- They notify school of any issues that may affect their child's attendance
- They advise school immediately of any changes to contact details

School

School staff will:

- Ensure registers are taken promptly at 8.45 a.m. and again at the start of the afternoon session

- Follow our Unreported Absence procedure on the morning of a day when a pupil has failed to arrive at school. *See below for details.
- Send a written request to parents/carers where a pupil's absence is unexplained – see note below on Authorised and Unauthorised Absence
- Provide parents/carers with their child's percentage attendance at regular intervals (End of year reports)
- Work with parents/carers when there are concerns over a pupil's lack of regular attendance
- Notify the Education Welfare Service when a when a pupil has missed 10 school days or more without permission: this being a legal requirement
- Request that the Education Welfare Service issue a Penalty Notice when a child has 10 or more sessions absent during a 10 school week period without authorisation during the school year, which may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court

* Unreported Absences

1. We will phone contact priority 1, if no reply, we will leave a message if possible then email and text priority 1
2. At 11:00am if no response has been received, we will phone priority 1 again and if no reply, we will call all other contacts in priority order, leaving messages where possible.
3. If we still have not heard from any of our contacts, a member of SLT or Nurture Lead will be told in person of the situation.
4. SLT/Nurture Lead will make a decision on the next step which will likely include a home visit and/or a call to Children's Services at Wokingham Borough Council.

Promoting Good Attendance

As a school, we promote attendance by:

- Having high expectations for every pupil's attendance at school
- Communicating these expectations clearly, strongly and consistently to parents/carers and to pupils
- Setting expectations about attendance from the outset – from pre-admission onwards
- Explaining to parents and pupils why good attendance is important and how it helps pupils to achieve
- Listening to parents carefully to find out why their children are not attending well enough so that they can act accordingly
- Challenging parents who do not make sure that their children attend, but also offer support where needed
- Having the right people in place to have these conversations with parents
- Ensuring that attendance is always recorded accurately
- Systematically analyse attendance information so that we can see patterns and trends
- Using this analysis to target our actions, both for individuals and at a whole-school level
- Making sure that attendance is 'everyone's business' in school

- Understanding that good attendance does not happen in isolation – there is an interrelationship between attendance and the quality of the school’s curriculum, ethos, behaviour and inclusivity
- Identifying the right people to work with a family once an attendance issue has become a cause for concern
- Having a relentless push for whole-school improvement
- Seeing the process of securing good attendance for all pupils as an ongoing process, never something that is ‘finished’

The School Day

	Gates Open	Registration Opens	Registration Closes
Morning	8:35	8:45	9:15
Afternoon		13:00	13:30

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Parents/carers should arrange medical, dental and other appointments outside of school time unless it is an emergency. Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out at the /School Office on leaving the school and signed back in on their return.
- When a pupil is being collected from school, parents/carers are requested to report to the School Office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- Where a child leaves school before 2:45pm and does not return before the usual end of the school day and this absence has not been agreed i.e. medical appointment, illness etc, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person or contact Social Services.

Term Time Leave of Absence

- The parent/s or carer/s with whom the pupil normally resides must complete and submit a Leave of Absence form at least one school month in advance of the requested absence. Forms are available from the School Office and our website.
- The Head Teacher will consider the application, and will decide whether the application can be granted because of ‘exceptional’ circumstances. Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending upon the specific circumstances of the particular application. School will endeavour to respond within 5 school working days to the parent/s or carer/s who submitted the application.
- Where leave of absence is granted, the pupil’s absence will be authorised.
- Supporting evidence may be asked for when considering ‘exceptional’ circumstances (Celebration invitations, letters from employers, travel itineraries, written evidence from employers restricting annual leave, formal notification from travel companies confirming changes to flight times/dates, written confirmation of secondary school interviews etc.)

- Please be aware that if holidays are taken without approval, this information will be passed to our Education Welfare Officer. Taking an unauthorised holiday is a Criminal Offence and may result, depending on the circumstances of each case, in either a Penalty Notice being issued or Prosecution in the Magistrates Court. A Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning. Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 Days is £60, between 22 and 28 days is £120. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent, per child. However, if a penalty notice is not paid then the Parents may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court. In some cases, a Penalty notice will not be offered at all and the matter referred immediately for Prosecution. In the Court the penalty is a fine of up to £1000 and a Criminal Record.
- More information can be found on the Wokingham Borough Council website or from the Education Welfare Service.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the school accepts the explanation offered as satisfactory justification or when the school considers the circumstances highly exceptional and has given approval in advance.

Unauthorised absence is when school does not accept an explanation as being reasonable justification for the absence, OR when no explanation has been provided despite a written request being sent to parents/carers, OR when the Head Teacher has not approved a parent's/carer's request for leave of absence.

Parents/carers should be aware that it is the Head Teacher's decision whether to authorise an absence or not. In the case of long term or frequent absences due to illness or a medical condition, supporting medical evidence may be requested. This could be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip from a doctor's surgery or a copy of a prescription. (Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for any cost.)

Punctuality/Lateness

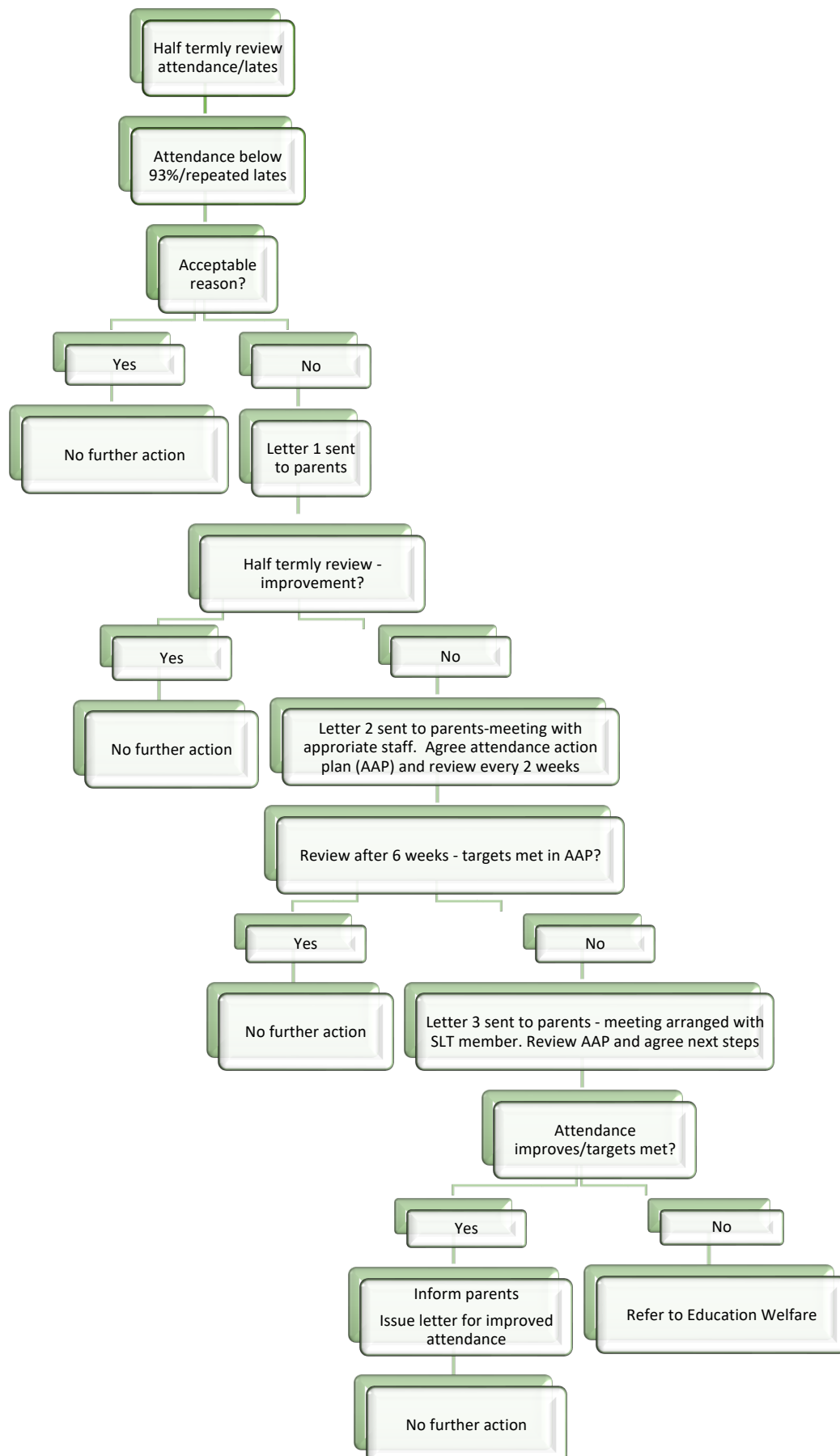
It is crucial that pupils arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of other pupils in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time.

- Registration takes place at 8.45 a.m. and pupils who arrive after that time will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.15 a.m. and after this lateness it is recorded as an unauthorised absence, (This could lead to formal legal action by the local authority if the problem persists).
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be followed up by school staff until it is resolved.

Attendance Monitoring

We collect attendance and absence data daily, weekly and monthly from the Registers. This information is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. This collecting of data enables us to identify those pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern. Should this apply to your child, the Head Teacher will write to you to make you

aware of the concern. If your child's attendance does not show an improvement, you will be invited to attend a meeting with appropriate school staff to agree an Attendance Action Plan. As part of our attendance monitoring process the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer meet regularly to discuss the children's attendance. The Head Teacher will decide on the appropriate action to take as in the following flow chart:



Reducing Persistent or Severe absence

The school tackles persistent absence by:

- Ensuring that all the basics are in place to promote good attendance generally.
- Getting to the root cause of what is stopping children from attending, there are often complex factors at play.
- Being persistent with 'Hard to reach' families and build relationships and offer support and clear communication channels
- Working with other schools to find out why issues are arising when pupils from the same family have poor attendance.
- Passing on key information when pupils move from one school to the when attendance is an issue.
- Celebrating any small improvement that is made for a child, even if the child is late but in attendance
- Managing the return of a child carefully so that the correct support is in place for learning and also wellbeing
- Working with other professionals and agencies, such as social care, local authority educational welfare officers (EWO) and virtual school headteachers, as appropriate.

The aim is that the strategies above, help support an improvement in attendance; however, if this is not the case, formalised support between the school and local authority Educational Welfare Officer will be put in place to address and this may result in a penalty notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents are likely to be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

If unauthorised absence continues, the school will engage with parents and carers and identify what improvements and actions need to be achieved over a fixed time frame (usually 8 or 12 weeks). This intervention may also be offered as an early intervention measure designed to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address school attendance concerns. If there is no improvement, the school will engage Education Welfare who may take parents/carers to court for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates' Court.

Changing Schools

It is important that if parents/carers decide to send their child to a different school that they inform the school in writing as soon as possible. An Emmbrook Junior School Exit Form should be completed. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next;
- The address of the new school; and
- A new home address if appropriate is supplied.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and after four weeks, the pupil will be registered as a Pupil Missing Education.

Elective Home Education

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law allows parents/carers to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school. This is known as Elective Home Education.

Should parents/carers wish to follow this route, they need to put this in writing to the Head Teacher with a request that their child is removed from the school roll. School will then inform the Education Welfare Service and arrangements will be made to monitor the education put in place at home.