



# Edgewood Primary School

## Building skills and values for life

Headteacher: Mr Ed Seeley

(0115) 956 1337

[www.edgewoodprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.edgewoodprimaryschool.co.uk)

[office@edgewood.notts.sch.uk](mailto:office@edgewood.notts.sch.uk)

## Attendance Policy

### Aims

For all children to attend school as often as possible (97% or better).

For the average attendance to be above 97%.

Everyone in school has a responsibility to improve or maintain excellent attendance and adults in school should model these expectations as well as encouraging them (i.e. by not being late to class or to pick up the children from the playground).

### Daily Actions

School starts at 9:00am (school doors open from 8:50am).

Registration is done online on Scholarpack as soon as possible after 9am.

School doors close as soon as possible after 9:05am. Any child arriving late needs to be brought to the school office so that they can be signed into the late register and the reason for their late arrival recorded. They also need to let the office know what they are doing for lunch.

Any child arriving in class after 9:05am should be given a late mark (L) in the register.

Any child arriving after 9:30am should be given a U mark denoting an unauthorised absence.

The school bell sounds at 8:50am, 9:00am, 9:05am and 9:30 so all staff can be consistent in applying register codes and opening and closing doors. It is an expectation that all staff open their doors consistently at those times and are prompt in collecting and dismissing children.

If a child is absent, school should be informed as soon as possible so that the reason for their absence is known and can be recorded in the register correctly. If you are able to, you should give an expected date of return to school, otherwise please inform us each day of their continued absence.

If we do not hear why a child is absent by 9:30am, the school office will begin to make calls or send text messages to find the reason for your child's absence. It is vital we know that your child is safe with you or an appropriate carer and not in a situation that may endanger them as well as the reason for the absence.

If the class teacher is told directly they must put the correct code in the online register. The class teacher is responsible for the correct administration of the register and must put the correct code in wherever possible. They should also check correct information has been entered when doing the next register and take steps to correct it if not. Failure to complete the register correctly may result in disciplinary action.

During the phone conversation we may ask if there is any support or help we can provide to help your child attend school or any difficulties we should be aware of in the interests of your child's safety and attendance at school. If we feel it is appropriate, we have an obligation to suggest when a child should really be at school rather than keeping them off school. The school does not have to accept reasons given for absence and may



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Christchurch Road, Hucknall, Nottinghamshire, NG15 6HX

ask for proof of doctors or other appointments. Even when provided with a reason or evidence we may record absence as unauthorised if we believe it to be the correct course of action.

For the afternoon sessions all these actions are repeated at 12:30pm for F1, 1:00pm for F2 and KS1 and 1:30pm for KS2 with the same time gaps.

At all times we will act in a fair and consistent manner, adhering to the principles within Nottinghamshire's Code of Conduct and their Attendance Toolkit.

### Weekly actions

Every week attendance is totalled and the best class are presented with the dolphin in Monday's assembly. If a class has a child with very significantly poor attendance that child is excluded from the weekly totals so as not to discourage the rest of the class from competing for the dolphin.

### Half termly actions

At least monthly, pupils whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern are identified and the parents contacted and sent letters (see below).

If appropriate, children with low attendance will take part in a group with the learning mentor to explore their issues around school and how they can improve their attendance.

### Other actions

Children with attendance below 95% will be highlighted by staff at parents evenings (from a list given by the office). Staff are not meant to talk in detail about attendance but should point out the impact this will have on the child's progress. If the parent wishes to discuss attendance further at parents evenings they should come and talk to the headteacher if available or make an appointment to meet with him as soon as practical.

## Positive rewards

Each week every class's attendance is calculated and displayed in school on our attendance display. The class with the best attendance that week is given Dana the Dolphin as a prize that they keep and display in their class in a prominent place. Teachers should encourage their class to win the award each week and can use the school's positive behaviour rewards to help with this where appropriate.

Each half term, there will be a reward session on the last afternoon for any child with 100% attendance that half term. This is done on a term-by-term basis so every child has an equal chance of gaining the award each half term.

The rewards are planned and decided by the House Captains and are currently planned as follows (these may be subject to change during the year):

- Film with Hot chocolate
- Lucky Dip prizes chosen and wrapped by House Captains
- Film with popcorn
- Sports afternoon
- Giant game of tag around school
- Film with ice lollies

At the end of each year, every child with 100% attendance that year will also receive a certificate and a book voucher and also be able to take part in a water fight with staff.

All the above rewards should not penalise children with regular medical appointments and, as such, any absences recorded as 'M' will not count against rewards. However this does not mean dentist appointments and other appointments that could have been made out of school hours will be encouraged and parents should make every effort to make those appointments at other times.

## Actions taken when attendance/punctuality is causing concern

Attendance is beginning to cause a concern when a child is absent for a number of sessions that would lead to attendance below 95% (which is below the national average), has an identifiable pattern of absence (e.g. most Fridays) or changes suddenly without explanation. For the Autumn Term we calculate how many sessions a child would have to miss in the entire term to end with 95% (7 sessions, 3.5 days) so that a very short absence at the start of the year doesn't automatically trigger absence procedures. For the rest of the year we use percentage absence to set the threshold and send letters out as appropriate.

At this point a letter (Letter 1) and a copy of the detailed attendance record will be sent home to parents to inform them of their child's attendance and how this may impact upon their learning. This letter also informs them that we will no longer be authorising any absence without appropriate evidence (appointment cards, prescriptions etc.).

We will then start monitoring their attendance and, if there are more than 4 unauthorised sessions absence within a rolling 6 week period we will issue a letter requesting the parents contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss attendance (Letter 2). At this meeting with the headteacher we will discuss the reasons for the child's absence and if the school can help with improving attendance in any way. At the meeting we will also give you a letter detailing possible further actions should attendance not improve or be evidenced where appropriate (Letter 3).

If the parents do not reply to the letter (Letter 2) then a further letter (Letter 3a) will be sent detailing the possible further actions that can be taken and informing the parent that a lack of engagement will leave the school with no option but to refer to Early Help or issue a penalty notice (fine) unless they contact the school as soon as possible after receipt of the letter.

If there is no contact after the further letter (Letter 3a), then a final letter (Letter 4) will be sent notifying the parents that the school has requested the Local Authority issue a penalty notice. If the school has sent a referral to Early Help then the parents will be informed of that either verbally or in writing.

If, at any time, there are wider concerns about the child's welfare then safeguarding procedures will be started immediately in line with our child protection policy.

### Fixed penalty notices

After issuing letter 3 or 3a, if attendance does not improve, the school may issue a fixed penalty notice. The first monitoring period will be up to 12 weeks after the issue of the warning letter. A fixed penalty notice will be issued as soon as 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence are recorded in a continuous 6 week period. After the 12 week initial monitoring period, monitoring will continue on a rolling 6 weeks basis for the rest of the academic year.

If a child ends the year with attendance below 95% we may continue to monitor them closely the following academic year if we have cause to be concerned. All children who end the year with attendance below 90% will be monitored closely from the start of the year.

Please note a 12 week monitoring period can stretch either side of a holiday and is 12 school weeks – not including holidays.

The school follows the "Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct for penalty notices issued in respect of truancy and excluded pupils" and this is available on our website and the local authority's website.

### Incorrect reasons for absence given by parents

The school has a legal obligation to complete the register for each child accurately. To do this we rely on accurate information from parents/carers.

If the school believes that a parent/carer has given incorrect information, we are entitled to ask for evidence for that absence. If it cannot be provided, we will ask that evidence is provided for all future absences.

The most common instance of this is a parent reporting their child as being ill when they are actually on holiday, believing it will avoid a fine. If we think you have been on holiday but you have said otherwise and you cannot provide evidence to support the illness we reserve the right to not authorise the absence and issue a fine as if the absence was an unauthorised holiday.

### Fines for holidays

There has been a recent rise in the number of children being taken out of school for holidays in term-time. While it has been our policy that we do not fine for holidays automatically, we will now be issuing a fixed penalty notice when a child is off for a second period of holiday within an academic year.

We will also issue a fine for an unauthorised holiday if absence is already a concern and it falls within the terms of the persistent absence clause detailed above.

We will also not authorise a holiday if it falls in a critical period, such as the period up to and including SATs, phonics screening weeks etc. and will issue fines for these at the school's discretion.

### Home visits

It is the policy of Edgewood Primary School that staff only make home visits as a short term intervention, not a long term solution to a parent's inability to get their children to school. Home visits are never undertaken alone.

If parents do not attend the meetings detailed in Letters 2 and 3a above then referrals will be made to Early Help requesting support for the family without parental consent.

### Recording

All meetings will have notes taken and dated on our school management system (Scholarpack). Any contact with the parents regarding this matter will be noted and dated. All letters will be dated and signed and sent through the post, not handed to children. All these will be retained in the child's record and notes made on our school management system. If Early Help become involved the child will have a child protection folder kept in accordance with the school's child protection policy and the attendance documentation will be kept in there.