Every Child Matters Academy Trust
Children at the heart

Every Child Matters Academy Trust
Attendance Policy
2026-27

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Approved by Chair of Trustees	Mr. W. Ward
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1. Aims & Principles

The Every Child Matters Academy Trust is committed to promoting a culture of high expectation, achievement and excellence. Good attendance is crucial if students are to take advantage of the opportunities available to them and complete a successful journey through their time at the Trust's schools and as they move on into higher education or the world of work.

All the Trust's stakeholders (including parents, staff, Governors and Trustees) need to work in partnership to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities in our aim to promote high standards of attendance and punctuality.

The overall aim for all children should be for 100% attendance therefore any absence should only be for unavoidable and genuine reasons.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

Further guidance on attendance related matters can be found in the following documents;

- ECM Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
- ECM Suspension and Permanent Exclusion arrangements document
- BMBC Children Missing Education policy
- DFE Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- DFE Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk) Feb 2023
- DFE Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions guidance Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement July 2026

2. Why is regular attendance important?

Any absence, including family holidays, negatively affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect learning and achievement. It can also have a de-motivating effect if they are unable to access parts of the curriculum following absences. Every school day matters.

Our schools will seek to build on partnerships with parents/carers by informing them about attendance and punctuality concerns at an early stage.
The school's Attendance Officer and office staff are responsible for making daily calls with regard to children's non-attendance to parents and carers. Part of this role is also to record absence correctly on the attendance system (Arbor) for our school.

Good attendance and punctuality are recognised and rewarded in school in various ways.



3. Why is punctuality important?

It is important that all children arrive at school in good time, as it is disruptive for the child and the whole class if they arrive late. Reading, Writing and Maths takes place at the beginning of each school day. Regular lateness can mean that these important lessons are missed.

It is recognised that on occasions there may be genuine reasons for late arrival such as public transport difficulties. If there is a particular reason for your child being late, Parents/Carers should discuss this with the Attendance Officer who may be able to assist with any difficulties.

If your child arrives at school after registers are taken, they will receive a late mark. If they arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of the school day, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

If your child needs to be collected earlier than the end of the school day or you may be late collecting your child, please inform the School Office regarding these exceptional circumstances.



4. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance and has regard to current statutory guidance relating to school attendance and children missing education.
This policy has been developed with reference to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

· The Education Act 1996, as amended
· The Education Act 2002
· The Education and Inspections Act 2006
· The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
· The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
· DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance statutory guidance
· DfE Children Missing Education statutory guidance
· DfE guidance on school attendance and school census requirements

A pupil is considered persistently absent where they miss 10% or more of their possible school sessions. A pupil is considered severely absent where they miss 50% or more of their possible school sessions.
ECM Trust follows the DfE National Framework for Penalty Notices and Barnsley Council's current Code of Conduct on the Issue of Penalty Notices in Regard to Poor School Attendance when requesting that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Parents and Carers;

All Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude either by regular attendance at school or through other suitable arrangements (section 7 Education Act 1996). This applies to all children from the term in which they turn 5 years old.
Any absence from school without a valid or significant reason may be seen as an offence and persistent absence can result in legal action.
Parents and Carers can request at any time a copy of their child's registration certificate showing their attendance to date. Your child's attendance will be shared at Parent/Carer consultations in the Autumn and Spring term. A copy of your child's registration certificate will also be included in their end of year report.

Make sure your child has good attendance;

- From starting at nursery, your child should know the importance of good attendance and getting to school on time every day.
- Show an interest and ask about what they are doing at school.
- Encourage them to take part in school activities.
- Inform their teacher or Headteacher about anything of concern.
- Think about whether time off school for minor ailments can be avoided, particularly those which would not stop you from going to work.

- Where possible, make appointments after school, at weekends, or during school holidays.
- Take family holidays outside of term time and speak with school if this is not possible.

The definition of a persistently absent (PA) pupil as set by the DFE is a pupil with 10% or more absence (attendance of less than 90%). If a pupil has attended less than 50% of the time, they will be classed as severely absent.

The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and the allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will support schools Attendance Officer to address pupil related issues that may be affecting their attendance at school. If a child is referred to the EWS under the Local Authority guidelines and the Education Act 1996, the EWO will work with the parents/carers and school to address the issues.

The school attendance officer;

The school attendance officer is Amy Norman**.** They are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Communicating with parents on matters of attendance, including holding attendance panel meetings where required.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and to the headteacher.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance;

The designated senior leader is Clare Grainger-Roystone. They are responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The Headteacher is responsible for;

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

- Requesting that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices, where appropriate and in accordance with the DfE National Framework for Penalty Notices and Barnsley Council's current Code of Conduct
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents.

School office staff will;

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Refer concerns to attendance officer and senior leader responsible for attendance.

Teachers will:

- Record attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submit this information to the school office.
- Communicate the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents.
- Notice patterns and be curious, supportive and responsive in relation to children's attendance

The governing board is responsible for;

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs.
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with a specific attendance function in their role.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

6. School attendance and punctuality procedures



MONITOR

Attendance and punctuality checks take place daily by the Office Staff and Attendance Officer.

Registration

It is a legal requirement that a register has to be taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, this enables school to:

- Monitor attendance on a regular basis.
- Evaluate information and set targets/tackle areas of concern as early as possible.
- Target absence, punctuality and truancy and communicate with pupils and parents/carers about expectations.
- Have the ability to publicise the above data.
- Have the ability to give a clear and accurate picture to parents and carers.
- Have the ability to encourage and reward good attendance.

At Ladywood Primary School registers are taken at 8.45am each morning.

The school operates a 'First Day Contact' procedure and expects parents/carers to communicate the reasons for a child's absence or lateness

The school has a dedicated phone line so that you can leave a message with details of your child, class and their reason for absence or lateness. Where possible, please give an indication of the likely date of return.

If no communication has been received by the time registers are taken, Parents/Carers will be contacted by school. If no reason can be determined for the absence it will be recorded as unauthorised (O).

Where contact cannot be made and the reason for a child's absence has not been established, the school will consider what further action is appropriate. This may include a home visit by an appropriate member of staff or the Education Welfare Officer.
The timing and nature of any home visit will be determined according to the individual circumstances and level of concern. Where there are safeguarding concerns, action may be taken immediately in accordance with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.

Medical appointments

We appreciate that children may be required to attend medical appointments during the school day, however please note the following;

- Appointments should be made outside school hours, wherever possible.
- If your child attends an appointment during the school day, wherever possible, please bring your child back to school for the remainder of the school day
- Siblings are expected to attend school and their attendance should not be affected by other family member's appointments.
- School should be informed of this appointment prior to the absence where possible
- Parents/carers should notify the school of medical appointments in advance wherever possible. The school may request reasonable supporting information where this is necessary to accurately record the absence

Leave of absence requests

A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (available from the school office) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the first date of absence.

The Headteacher may not authorise any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. This is decided on a case-by-case basis.

If the school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed, appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.

When a child's attendance is falling

Parents/carers will be contacted to remind them of expectations and to check if any support is needed. This contact is crucial in raising the attendance profile of our school and enables school to communicate quickly and effectively with Parents and Carers.

When a child's attendance falls to 92%, the school will consider this an early intervention point because the child is at increased risk of becoming persistently absent. Parents/carers will be contacted to highlight concerns, understand any barriers to attendance and identify any support that may be required.

When a child is late for school

Parents/carers will be contacted to remind them of expectations and to check if any support is needed. This contact is crucial in raising the attendance profile of our school and enables school to communicate quickly and effectively with Parents and Carers.

If lateness persists, the parent/carer will be invited in to school for a meeting to establish what support is needed to ensure the child is able to arrive at school on time.

If a child's attendance falls below 90%

A pupil who has missed 10% or more of their possible school sessions is considered persistently absent. Where this occurs, the school will work with the pupil and their parents/carers to understand the barriers to attendance and agree appropriate support to secure sustained improvement.
A letter will be sent to parents outlining the concerns and the need for attendance to improve rapidly. Contact will be made with parents daily when the child is absent from school, this may include daily home visits.

If attendance does not rapidly improve, parent/carers will be invited to an Internal School Attendance Panel (ISAP) meeting to discuss the reasons for absence in more detail and identify where support is needed. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is likely to be present at this meeting. During the meeting, an agreement will be drawn up between the school and parent/carer, outlining what needs to happen for the child's attendance to improve. This agreement will take into consideration the individual needs of the child and family.

We will discuss the child's attendance with the EWO on a regular basis. The EWO may contact the parent/carer and make home visits to monitor absence.

School may suggest an Early Help Assessment or referral to other agencies who may be able to offer appropriate support.

Please also see the sections below titled facilitating support, formalising support and enforce which may be relevant to persistent absentees.

Where a pupil has missed 50% or more of their possible school sessions, they are considered **severely absent.** Severe absence will be treated as a priority for support.
The school will work with the pupil, their parents/carers, the Local Authority and other relevant partners to understand and address the barriers to attendance. Where appropriate, this will include consideration of whether wider support or safeguarding intervention is required.
Please see the sections below titled 'facilitate support', 'formalise support' and 'enforce', which would be relevant in the case of a child having attendance at such a concerning level.

All contact with home is recorded and monitored by the Attendance Officer and the Safeguarding Team.

We understand that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or those who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and we will work closely with parents/carers to improve attendance and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

LISTEN & UNDERSTAND

The school team are here to support children and families with all aspects of attendance.
We understand that there are many factors that can contribute to difficulties in attending school. Where mental health is affecting attendance, we will refer to the DFE 'Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance'.

We are here to listen to concerns and will endeavor to find solutions and offer support wherever this is possible.

If a parent/carer would like to discuss concerns about their child's attendance, they should contact the schools Attendance officer in the first instance. These contact details are shared on page 1 of this policy.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

In some cases, it may be identified that children and families require support additional to that which can be offered by school. In these cases, school will work with the parent/carer to agree other avenues of support.

Where appropriate, the school will work with the family and relevant partners to identify whether additional or multi-agency support is required. This may include community-based Early Help or Family Help, in accordance with current local arrangements and the needs of the child and family.

School may refer for the support of other agencies, such as the 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service (School Nurse) or Early Help Targeted Support (Family Support Worker).

Further information about Early Help is available here;
Early help for families (barnsley.gov.uk)

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and the support in place is not working or parents/carers are choosing not to engage, we will work with the local authority to formalise support.
This may include;

- A parenting contract or an education supervision order.
- A fixed penalty notice.
- Children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).

Further information can be found on the local authority website;
School attendance and absence (barnsley.gov.uk)

We will explain the consequences of any actions clearly and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will work with the local authority to enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The Trust will follow the current DfE National Framework for Penalty Notices and Barnsley Council's current Code of Conduct on the Issue of Penalty Notices in Regard to Poor School Attendance when requesting that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice. Further information on the National Framework can be found in Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

The national framework limits the number of Penalty Notices that may be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child to two within a rolling three-year period.

In line with the guidance, ECM Trust will prioritise the 'support first' approach ensuring that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is appropriate.

Penalty Notices are requested by schools and academies and issued by the Local Authority to the parents/carers of statutory school age children as outlined below;

First Penalty Notice within a three-year period
The first Penalty Notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular child will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Second Penalty Notice within a three-year period
A second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the first notice will be charged at £160, payable within 28 days. There is no reduced rate for a second Penalty Notice.

Third and subsequent offences within a three-year period
A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice. Where the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Leave of Absence (Holidays)
Penalty Notices can be requested by schools for leave of absence in term time for 5 or more days. This can be consecutive absence, or non- consecutive. In line with the National Framework, the Local Authority retains the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking multiple term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, or a combination of non-attendance due to leave of absence and unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence
Where a pupil has accumulated 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice has been met.
Before a Penalty Notice is requested, the school will consider whether support is appropriate and whether it has been provided. Where support is appropriate but has not been successful or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve may be issued in accordance with the National Framework and Barnsley Council's current Code of Conduct. A Notice to Improve will set out the attendance concerns, support that has been offered or provided, the expected improvement in attendance and the consequences if sufficient improvement is not achieved.

Further information on the National Framework can be found within Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026 (publishing.service.gov.uk) July 2026

7. Children missing education or absent from education

We are aware that children who absent repeatedly or for prolonged periods or those missing education present a safeguarding concern.

We will follow the procedures outlined in the *Barnsley MBC Children Missing Education policy* and in our own *Safeguarding policy*, which take into consideration the responsibilities outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.*

The Trust recognises that repeated or prolonged absence from school can be an important indicator of safeguarding concerns and that regular attendance at school is an important protective factor.

A child missing education (CME) is a child of compulsory school age who is not a registered pupil at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Where there is reason to believe that a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, the school will act immediately in accordance with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy, including making a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police where appropriate.

Where enquiries lead the school to reasonably believe that a child will no longer be attending the school and the required information has not been provided by the parent/carer, the school will make a referral to the child's home Local Authority Children Missing Education service as soon as possible. The school will continue to support reasonable enquiries until it is agreed with the Local Authority that enquiries have concluded or there are no further reasonable actions the school can take.

The school will not remove a pupil from the admission register unless one of the statutory grounds for deletion contained within the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 has been met. Where joint reasonable enquiries with the Local Authority are required before deletion, these will be completed before the pupil is removed from the register.
The Trust will follow Working Together to Improve School Attendance, Barnsley Council's current Children Missing Education procedures and the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.

8. Suspensions and permanent exclusions

School follows the Barnsley local authority procedures for suspension and permanent exclusion, which take into consideration the *DFE Suspensions and permanent exclusions guidance*.
Further details on our procedures can be found in our *Suspension and permanent exclusion policy*.

9. Mental health and attendance

Where a pupil is experiencing mental health difficulties that are affecting their attendance, the school will work with the pupil, their parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand the barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support.
The school will have regard to the DfE's Summary of Responsibilities Where a Mental Health Issue is Affecting Attendance and Working Together to Improve School Attendance. Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

We will;

- Promote children's mental health and wellbeing through our curriculum and whole school ethos.
- Recognise that there can be attendance challenges where a child has a social, emotional or mental health issue, particularly a severe issue for which the child is receiving clinical treatment.
- Work with the pupil and their parents/carers from an early stage to put plans in place that aim to maintain the pupil's regular attendance.
- Make reasonable adjustments in order to overcome specific barriers to attendance.
- Make referrals for the support of external professionals where this is necessary.

More information about the support we offer can be found in our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. Schools would also refer to ECM Trust Safeguarding Policy in relation to supporting children's mental health.