Attendance Policy
September 2026

Reviewed by:	Keely Folker	**Agreed by FGB:**	Oct 2026
Review Cycle:	Every 3 years	**Next Review due:**	Oct 2029

Legislation and guidance

This policy follows the requirements and guidance as set out in:

Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026

Aims

- Every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- The school aspires to high levels of attendance for all pupils and will work with pupils and families to identify and remove barriers to regular attendance;
- Increase parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance;
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to improve attendance to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school;
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance;
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence; and
- Ensure all pupils achieve their best attainment and wellbeing outcomes to enable positive wider life chances.

Nationally in 2018-19 the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 had higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%).

Eastcombe Primary School provides a calm, orderly, safe, learning environment, where we work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. Pupils attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. This enables them to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

> *'It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above. We would encourage you to read the NHS 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance which has further information.*

In addition to respiratory illnesses, we are aware that children may be absent from school due to symptoms of anxiety. Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it.'

Yours sincerely,

Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, England

Pat Cullen, General Secretary, Royal College of Nursing

Professor Kamila Hawthorne, Chair, Royal College of General Practitioners

Dr Camilla Kingdon, President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

William Roberts, Chief Executive, Royal Society for Public Health

Dr Lade Smith, President, Royal College of Psychiatrists

Letter to School Leaders September 2023

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor & Listen and understand

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible. When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable

families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where support is not working, is not being engaged with, or is not appropriate in the circumstances, the school and/or Local Authority will consider appropriate statutory intervention in accordance with the National Framework and Gloucestershire County Council's procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

The governing body:

- ✓ Promote the importance of attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- ✓ Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties; and
- ✓ Review and challenge attendance data termly, including whole-school attendance, persistent absence, severe absence, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and key attendance interventions.

The Headteacher - who is the Senior Attendance Champion at Eastcombe Primary School:

- ✓ Implements this policy at the school with strategic attendance leadership;
- ✓ Offers a clear vision and leads attendance across the school;
- ✓ Monitors school-level absence data and reports it to governors;
- ✓ Supports staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- ✓ Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- ✓ Delivers targeted intervention and support to pupils and families;
- ✓ Devises specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified;
- ✓ Monitors the impact of any implemented strategies; and
- › Refers to the Local Authority to issue penalty notices, where necessary.

Class Teachers:

- ✓ Record attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submit this information to the school office via SIMS.
- ✓ Celebrate positive and/or improved attendance; and
- ✓ Question absence as appropriate to seek clarity and provide positive messaging about attendance.

School office staff:

- ✓ Take calls and monitor emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system; and
- Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance if necessary.

Parents/Carers:

- ✓ Ensure their child attends every day on time;
- ✓ Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return;
- ✓ Provide the school with 3 emergency contacts numbers for their child; and
- ✓ Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Pupils:

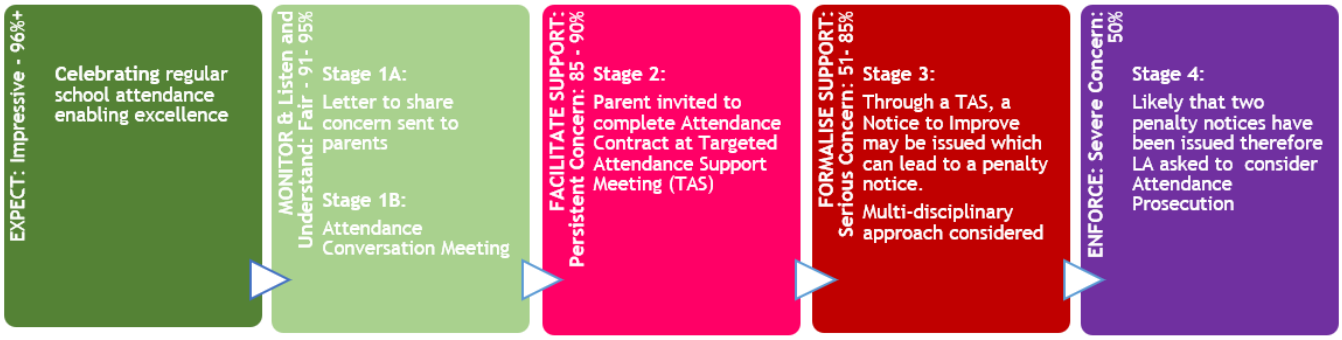
- ✓ Attend school every day on time.

Children with SEND and medical needs

Eastcombe Primary School recognises that some pupils face additional barriers to attendance due to SEND, medical needs, mental health difficulties or other vulnerabilities. The school will work collaboratively with families and external agencies to identify barriers and provide appropriate support, making reasonable adjustments where required.

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents should provide advance notice of medical and dental appointments wherever possible. Where an appointment cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours, the pupil should be absent for the minimum time necessary.

School procedures



Attendance register

Attendance registers will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the first session following lunch using DfE attendance codes as set out in Chapter 8 of Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026.

School doors open at 8:45am and registers are taken at 8:55 and 13:00

Attendance monitoring

The school office monitors pupil absence daily.

Parents are expected to call (01452 770227) or email admin@eastcombe.gloucs.sch.uk the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. It can be helpful to also let class teachers know.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Where there are genuine concerns about the regularity or authenticity of illness-related absence, the school may, where appropriate and proportionate, request supporting evidence. Medical evidence will not be requested routinely or unnecessarily.

- If the authenticity of illness is in doubt and/or the parent/s have been issued a Notice to Improve, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified.

✓ Absence without notification will result in a telephone call to confirm reason on morning of absence.

✓ If main parent/carer is unobtainable other individuals on the Emergency Contact details list will be phoned. Eastcombe Primary School requires at least 3 emergency contacts per child.

✓ Where a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will make reasonable attempts to establish the reason for absence and make contact with parents/carers and emergency contacts where appropriate.

✓ Where the school is unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts or has concerns about the pupil's welfare or safety, it will follow its safeguarding procedures and, where appropriate, seek advice from or make a referral to the Local Authority, children's social care or the police.

Lateness and punctuality

The morning register opens at 8.55am and closes at 9.05am.

Pupils arriving after 8.55am but before the register closes will be recorded as late using code L.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be recorded using code U, where appropriate. Code U counts as an unauthorised absence for statistical purposes.

Celebrating Excellence

Attendance and improved attendance will be celebrated through assemblies, class recognition and individual acknowledgement. The classes with the best attendance will be celebrated in assembly and may have a visit from the Dog Mentor.

Reporting to parents

Weekly from Autumn 2

1. Parents/carers of any pupils with attendance 95% or below and/or with poor punctuality will be receive a Stage 1 letter.
2. Parents/carers of any pupils with absence that is becoming persistent, attendance is deteriorating or there are identified barriers requiring targeted support, will be invited to an Attendance Conversation Meeting.
3. Parents/carers of any pupils with attendance 90% or below will be requested to attend a Targeted Attendance Support Meeting (TAS) with the Headteacher where an Attendance Contract will be drawn up to ensure all available support is in place.

Reports to parents on their child's attendance record will be issued at Parent Meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms and annually in the written end of year report.

If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 50%, the pupil will be classified as a severe absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Granting approval for term-time absence

There is **no** entitlement to holiday during term time and the school is not obliged to authorise absence whether notified or not.

1. Any **exceptional** requests for term-time absence should be made to the Headteacher in writing by completing an Absence Request form (refer appendix A). It may be pertinent to supply additional documents to evidence the request is for 'exceptional' reason. School may request additional

information and/or documentation to ensure due consideration has been made with all available evidence.

2. A minimum of 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised G-coded holiday/leisure absence from school during term time, in order to take a holiday, within the immediately preceding 10-week period will be referred to the Gloucestershire County Council Education Inclusion Team, who may issue a penalty notice.
3. If pupils do not return to school by the agreed date further absence will be unauthorised.

Legal sanctions

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution that the Local Authority can issue to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The payment must be paid directly to Gloucestershire Local Authority. The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

The decision on whether or not to request the issue of a penalty notice initially rests with the Headteacher who will follow the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This will consider:

- A number of unauthorised sessions occurring within a rolling three-year period;
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission; and
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

If a pupil has moved school in the previous three years an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil.

A Notice to Improve, in which details of what sufficient improvement will be made clear, may be issued in line with processes set out in the Local Code of Conduct for the Gloucestershire Local Authority when the support the school has offered is appropriate but has not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked. Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, a penalty notice may be issued before the improvement period has ended. For example, a Notice to Improve stated

there should be no further unauthorised absences in a 3-week period but the pupil is absent for unauthorised reasons in the first week.

Appendix A

Request for Leave during Term Time
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT(S)/CARER(S)

A Request for Leave during Term Time form must be completed and returned to the School Office if you intend to take your child(ren) out of school during term time. This should be completed prior to any absence.

Pupil	
Name	
Date of Birth	
Year	
Class/Form	
First date of absence	
Last date of absence	

Parents – Parent means: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.			
Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Telephone number		Telephone number	
Email		Email	
Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No	Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No
Signature		Signature	
Printed name		Printed name	
Date		Date	

To establish if your reasons for the above absence are for exceptional circumstances, please give as much detail as possible (including your destination).

The decision will be based on the information you provide on this form (please continue with additional information on a separate sheet if required)

Our records will reflect that you will still proceed with this absence on an unauthorised basis, however, should you decide not to take your child out of school at this time, please let us know as soon as possible.

Reasons for request:

Information for parents/carers

'*Improving attendance is everyone's business*', and it is important that we, as your child's school, work together in partnership with you, your family, your child, and the wider community.
Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice.
The penalty amount is increasing to £160 from September 2024 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period (following 1st September 2024) the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.
Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.
If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.
Nationally, Headteachers are: not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.
Where the relevant national and local criteria are met, the school will consider requesting a Penalty Notice from Gloucestershire County Council in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.
Parents/carers **do not** have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. Any requests are considered on an individual basis following guidelines issued by the DfE and LA.
Holiday absences will not be authorised if they are not considered to meet exceptional circumstances.
If a pupil goes on holiday without permission, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in referral to the LA to begin legal proceedings.

Request for Leave during Term Time

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEADTEACHER

Pupil Name	
Date of Birth	
First date of absence	
Last date of absence	

☐	Leave of absence **authorised** for the dates specified above. Please ensure your child returns to school promptly following the absence, as failure to do so may result in their removal from the school roll.	Signature of headteacher:	Date:

☐	Leave of absence **unauthorised** for the dates specified above. Should your child be absent on the dates specified above, these dates will be marked as unauthorised. This absence may result in a penalty notice being issued by the LA on behalf of the school.	Signature of headteacher:	Date:
☐	Other:	Signature of headteacher:	Date:

Parents – Parent means: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Telephone number		Telephone number	
Email		Email	
Confirmation letter sent to parent	Yes / No	Confirmation letter sent to parent	Yes / No
Date sent		Date sent	

Headteacher: Mrs Keely Folker
Office Staff: Mrs J Woodman
& Mrs B Ulett

Eastcombe Primary School, Dr Crouch's Road,
Eastcombe, Nr Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 7EA

☎ 01452 770227
admin@eastcombe.gloucs.sch.uk
eastcombe.gloucs.sch.uk

Attendance Information – Stage 1A
For Information only:

Your child's attendance is currently less than 95% - see enclosed summary.



It only takes 10 days of absence across the year to fall below 95% overall. We would like to ensure parents are fully aware of their child's current picture of attendance so as to avoid lost learning days and any unnecessary penalty notices. Further, some pupils take time off school for minor ailments or for reasons that are not appropriate – with parents seeing that a few days here and there don't matter.

If your child has 10 or more unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-school-week period, the school will consider the appropriate next steps in accordance with the national attendance framework and Gloucestershire County Council's Code of Conduct. This may include consideration of a Notice to Improve or Penalty Notice where the relevant criteria are met.

I'm sure your child will benefit from your on-going support to improve their percentage of attendance over the coming weeks.

Kind Regards,

Mrs Folker
Headteacher

Eastcombe Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs Keely Folker
Office Staff: Mrs J Woodman
& Mrs B Ulett

Eastcombe Primary School, Dr Crouch's Road,
Eastcombe, Nr Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 7EA

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admin@eastcombe.gloucs.sch.uk
eastcombe.gloucs.sch.uk

Attendance Information – Stage 1B

Your child's attendance is currently between 91 – 94%% - see enclosed summary.



It only takes 10 days of absence across the year to fall below 95% overall. We would like to ensure parents are fully aware of their child's current picture of attendance so as to avoid lost learning days and any unnecessary penalty notices.
I'm sure your child will benefit from support to improve their percentage of attendance over the coming weeks and I would love to explore this in an Attendance Conversation Meeting.

Please could you join me:

Date:
Time:

Kind Regards,

Mrs Folker
Headteacher

Eastcombe Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs Keely Folker
Office Staff: Mrs J Woodman
& Mrs B Ulett

Eastcombe Primary School, Dr Crouch's Road,
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Attendance Information - Stage 2

Your child's attendance is currently below 90%. This means that their absence is at a level where they may be considered persistently absent. We are concerned about the impact that missed school may have on their education, wellbeing and wider outcomes. We would like to work with you to understand any barriers to attendance and agree appropriate support.

Where support is not successful, is not engaged with, or is not appropriate in the circumstances, the school may consider further action in accordance with the national attendance framework and Gloucestershire County Council's procedures.

Your child's attendance is currently less than 90% - see enclosed summary.



For your child's overall attendance % to increase by the end of the year it is imperative that they attend school each day they possibly can and we're here to help where we can.
We invite you to a Targeted Attendance Support Meeting (TAS) so that we can ensure we have recorded all available support for you and your child to improve their attendance. Clearly the aim of this meeting is to ensure your child's learning is prioritised but we hope the planned actions will also avoid any future penalty notices and/or prosecution.

Please attend a TAS Meeting on:

Date:

Time:

Kind Regards,

Keely Folker
Headteacher

Eastcombe Primary School
Attendance Contract

Date/time:	
Present:	

Pupil name:						
Date of birth:			**Year Group:**			
Address:						
Current Attendance:	**%**		**Authorised:**			
	No. of sessions		**Unauthorised:**		Lates:	
Attendance target:	Ideally 98% for duration of one term		**Dates of duration:**			

Background: (outline own views on current attendance incl. any underlying issues)

From Parent/s:
From Pupil:

Actions agreed
From Eastcombe Primary School/LA:
From Parent/s and Pupils:

Date for review meeting:	

If the contract is not being adhered to, the school will notify the Local Authority, where next steps will be considered, including progression to legal processes.

I/we have agreed to this Attendance Contract and will:

(a) work with the school (and LA) as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance, and

(b) carry out what we have promised to do.

I/we also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us.

I/we understand that if attendance does not improve and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school may consider further statutory intervention in accordance with the national attendance framework and Gloucestershire County Council's current procedures. This may include consideration of a Penalty Notice or prosecution where the relevant legal criteria are met.

Signed:

…….…… :Parent/carer …….. :Pupil (if KS2)

…… :Headteacher

…… :Other (role ……..