EMERALD PLACE CLINIC SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Author: **Kate Ball**

Ratified by: **NICK ROSE, HEAD OF EDUCATION & SHEETAL SHAH, CHAIR OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

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1 Introduction

This document is produced for Emerald Place Clinic School, a division of Elysium Children and Education.

1.1. Aims

The aim of Emerald Place Clinic School's Attendance Policy is to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance. We aim to:

- Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Promote good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Parents and/or Carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- Stress the need for hospital and school staff to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

Young people are entitled to formal education during this phase of their lives. It is important that they receive the entitlement for their present and future lives. Many of our students are highly vulnerable and have greater needs than most of their mainstream counterparts. This means that they may have more genuine absences from school for medical reasons or experience greater social needs than others. As educators, it is our responsibility to work effectively with the hospital staff to encourage and support regular and frequent school attendance. Young people admitted to hospital for treatment of mental disorder should be provided with 'a routine which allows them to continue their social, personal and educational development and equal access to educational opportunities as their peers'. (S131a Mental Health Act / Mental Health Act Code of Practice - paragraphs 19.90/1)

1.2. Legislation and Practice

- This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:
- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

2 Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Missing morning or afternoon sessions- (Our record of attendance takes into consideration that students may miss sessions if they must work with the hospital staff. Any such absences will be minimised, but the mental health of the pupil will always be taken into consideration.)
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Hospital staff keeping students off school unnecessarily or without a valid reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Section 7 and 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. However, at many of our sites, we recognise the Government's Raising Participation Age of 18 and some sites are registered to take young people aged up to 25.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. This requirement must be adhered to for all students in the official school register and must accurately record students' absence and attendance using the correct codes.

Whilst the official register will be maintained in line with regulations, we may also be using a disaggregated register. This register will reflect individual students' absence and attendance in relation to their specific needs and their personal education plan. By adopting this method, the student will be able to achieve the best possible outcomes and be recognised in addition to feeling valued for their efforts.

3 School procedures

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment

(See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes)

4 Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role (The attendance office is the DHT).
- Ensuring all parents and hospital staff are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents regarding attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Parents/Hospital Staff are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children/patients to the school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children/patients.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

5 Timetable Levels at Emerald Place Clinic School

Reduced timetables are an agreement made between the clinical consultants, students and school and parents (where possible) to reduce the hours spent in education. The rationale behind this is that our young people are often disengaged from education due to their suicidal intent and being sectioned under the mental health act. Young people are at risk of harming themselves in a serious way, and this correlates with their disengagement from education.

Emerald Place Clinic School and all its staff work with young people, the families and the clinical team to ensure that challenge is made appropriate for timetable levels, with the aim to increase the amount of engagement in academic work over the duration of their stay (as well as improve their curriculum pathway also).

The outline of the school day is below:

SCHOOL DAY ACTIVITIES/TIMETABLE	
8:45-9:30	Morning Handover/Debrief (Hospital staff/school staff only)
9:30-10:15	Lesson 1
10:15-11:00	Lesson 2
11:00-11:15	Student Break / Staff PPA
11:15-12:00	Lesson 3
12:00-13:30	Student/Staff Lunch & PPA Session 4
13:30 – 14:30	Lesson 4
14:30 – 15:30	Lesson 5

6 Circumstances a reduced timetable would benefit a student:

- As part of a re-engagement approach for students who have not attended before or have been absent from school for a period of time due to illness, disability, mental health issues, family circumstances.
- If a child has long term medical needs (as can be the case with all our young people).

7 Monitoring and Review of Timetable:

Every effort is made for young people to engage in lessons and sessions, adapting young people's curriculum pathway as appropriate to re-engage learners or make work more challenging so that young people are encouraged to improve their attendance.

8 Authorised absences:

The Department for Education (DFE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences and one of the key reasons is when a child is ill or receiving medical attention. At times young people will be too unwell to access learning and/or attend school in the hospital.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum; authorised home leave should be arranged out of school hours whenever possible unless the student is attending their own school or home as part of a managed transition/reintegration.

The same applies for appointments within the hospital, i.e. family therapy or 1:1 individual therapy. In these instances, the ward will provide the school with 24 hours' notice, using an agreed letter (Appendix 2). Medical appointments (i.e. hospital appointments that are set by the receiving hospital e.g. cardiology appointments) will be handed over to school staff in morning handover and it documented on the attendance register as 'M'.

Where a student has no home school to attend due to:

- changing school,
- have been taken off roll or
- they have not been in education for an extended period of time,

arrangements must be made with parents, carers and the hospital to provide school work to be done at home. The school team (key teacher) will monitor their progress and engagement, following school procedure, set in the curriculum policy.

Occasionally young people may need to visit a new school, unit or foster placement (for example) for transition to the community. These visits should always be communicated with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to minimise the impact on the young person's education.

Emerald Place Clinic School recognises that safe and successful discharge to outside placements is a key and primary factor in a young person's admission to hospital, and these absences will be authorised on the school attendance register.

9 Unauthorised absences:

These are absences at schools where no acceptable explanation is provided by a member of the ward team. All absences that are not agreed by a consultant or ward manager should be treated as unauthorised for reporting purposes.

The school team to:

- Contact wards on day one of medical absence if no message has been received from the ward.
- Contact ward staff over any unexplained absences.
- Follow up promptly any concerns ward staff pass on to the school that may be affecting a student's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in, school.
- Involve the MDT to help pupils re-integrate into school after a period of illness or other individual circumstances.
- Regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Discuss any persistent absences with key teachers to facilitate re-engagement into school and ensure that subject teachers are utilising and documenting all strategies to re-engage young people in their learning.
- Discuss engagement with the MDT in School Engagement Meetings, MDT, or other MDT meetings as appropriate.
- Reward excellent or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

10 School Provision:

All patients have a timetable that takes account of both their current health needs and their educational needs. All patients are expected to attend school, however due to the severity of their mental health needs this can be challenging at times. It is the responsibility of all school & hospital staff to encourage attendance at school. If a young person feels unable to attend a lesson the following procedures are in place:

- School staff and ward staff to encourage them to school; this will often involve an agreed time scale for them coming, and the teacher will then go back if they have not arrived.
- The subject teacher or key teacher may go and speak to the young person to ascertain what is preventing them from attending.
- If a young person is still unable to attend the lesson, the hospital team will be alerted and asked to encourage or explore what is preventing them from attending.
- There are times when a young person is too unwell to attend group or 1-1 sessions in the school area.
- In exceptional circumstances, they may be taught on the ward. All decisions about education input for this group of young people is made in consultation with Senior Medical Staff.

- In the event of non-attendance during admissions, teachers strive to maintain contact with the pupil and their parent/carer with the aim of establishing attendance at a later point.
- Home schools maintain responsibility for tracking and recording attendance for students on their roll during and after admissions. Emerald Place Clinic School supports this by encouraging & helping parents/carers to keep home schools informed of their child's attendance and by actively supporting good lines of communication between parents, home schools, alternative provisions and the medical team.

11 Ward Education:

- Each day a member of the SLT will attend morning handover and discuss with the MDT who is able to come up to school and who is not.
- The ultimate decision of whether a young person is safe enough to leave the ward or not is up to the Nurse in Charge, but it is agreed with the MDT in each morning meeting.
- If the Headteacher believes a young person should not attend school, but the Nurse in Charge deems them safe to attend, then the Headteacher has the final say as to whether a young person enters the school.
- If a young person is on Level 3 2:1 or higher in their observation levels, then the school will ensure that work is set for the pupil. or if they have a red RAG rating (which is an indication of swallowing/ingesting)
- Occasionally, there is a ward timetable that young people will default to should they be deemed too risky to attend school on any given day. In most cases, work will be provided for the student to complete on the ward.
- If a young person is able to come to school, their regular timetable will be followed.

12 Deletions from the Register:

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system

- Failure to return from an extended holiday or home leave after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absences and the local authority and school have tried to locate the student.

Each site will follow their local authority Children Missing from Education (CME) protocol when a student whereabouts is unknown.

13 Attendance Intervention:

Attendance of young people will be subject to regular reviews- every two weeks by their key teacher. This will include capturing pupils' opinion regarding their learning and using this information to update the curriculum coverage and/or delivery.

Any young person whose attendance falls below 80% will be placed on a personalised attendance-based intervention plan, closely monitored by the key teacher. This intervention plan will encompass specific outcomes, next steps, and actionable measures designed to improve attendance significantly.

It is important to emphasise that consistent attendance below the 80% threshold is a matter of concern. In such cases, the key teacher will diligently document these instances and refer the matter to the Deputy Headteacher. They will then initiate a comprehensive follow-up process involving all relevant stakeholders, including the young person and the multi-disciplinary team (MDT).

During the two-week review, it should be noted that timetable may be adjusted as needed to facilitate the young person in reaching their attendance target. This adjustment will be carried out with careful consideration of the young person's clinical presentation and their current care setting.

Key teachers are granted the authority to establish weekly attendance-based targets within the young person's Individual Education Plan (IEP). These targets will be thoughtfully linked to therapeutic topics, and career aspirations reinforcing the importance of regular attendance in alignment with their educational journey.

Attendance is fed back to parents by key teachers during their weekly communication. It is also raised in daily handover meetings with the MDT.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Mark description
Present Codes		
**/ **	Present (am/pm)	Student is present at morning and/or afternoon
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before the register has closed
B	Off-site education activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Educational trips or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement
Authorised absences		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Students has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Student is on study leave during their public examination
Unauthorised absences		
G	Unauthorised holiday	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absences
O	Unauthorised absences	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
Other Absences		
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend OR Not able to attend due to self-isolation from COVID-19
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school

Appendix 2: Letter to EPCS for regular or one-off appointments

Emerald Place Hospital,
Farmfield Drive,
Charleswood,
Horley
Surrey
RH6 0BN

DATE

Headteacher
Emerald Place Clinic School
Farmfield Drive,
Charleswood,
Horley
Surrey
RH6 0BN

Dear colleague,

I am writing to let you know that [NAME] will not be in school on [DATE] between [TIME] and [TIME].

He/she will be seeing his/her therapist, [NAME}, and unfortunately this could not be arranged for during school time. This is part of the treatment that has been agreed by the mult-disciplinary team within the hospital.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE]