



Exeter Steiner School Attendance Policy

At Exeter Steiner School we regard any unnecessary absence as educationally detrimental. Our teaching methods make it almost impossible to catch up with work or for it to be done at home. We also regard punctuality as healthy and appropriate and consider avoidable lateness as hampering the pupil's development.

Parents' responsibility

The law requires that parents ensure that:

- All children of compulsory school age receive "an efficient education, suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude".
- All children of compulsory school age receive full-time education - 5 days per week during term time.
- All children attend regularly.

If parents do not do this they are liable to prosecution.

School's responsibility

The law requires that the school:

- Takes an attendance register twice a day, at the start of each educational session. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.

Punctuality

Parents are required to ensure that their children arrive on time. The gates to the premises open at 8am. Kindergarten is open from 8.30am and children are expected to be in by 9am. Classes begin at 9am and children are expected to be in by 8.50am. Avoidable lateness after registration constitutes unauthorised absence and the pupil will receive a late note. If a class child arrives late, they must be brought by their parent to the administrator's office. The parent signs the late register and the child is given a late slip to take to the teacher.

Registration

In accordance with legislation the teacher taking the first lesson of the day and the first lesson of the afternoon marks the attendance register using the marks as indicated inside the register. The register will show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised. The register will be kept in the classrooms.

Absence

Parents are required to telephone the school before 9am if their child will be absent, giving reasons for their absence. If a pupil is absent without prior notice the administrator will telephone the parents to ensure a) that the pupil

is safe, and b) to establish the reason for their absence and then complete the register accordingly.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. Parents may not authorise absence, only the teachers can do this on behalf of the school. The absence of pupils taking part in supervised educational activities outside the school is recorded as 'approved educational activity'.

The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used:

- Field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas;
- Participation in or attendance at approved sporting or musical activities;
- Learning support sessions;
- Interviews with prospective schools or colleges (class 5 only);
- Where a flexi-school agreement is in place.

Unauthorised Absence

All other absences must be regarded as unauthorised. Schools, including independent schools, must notify the LEA if a pupil attends irregularly or is absent continuously without authorisation for ten or more school days.

Action in unauthorised absence

- If a child/ren is absent from school without authorisation for more than one school week, or if a child is consistently absent over an extended period of time, the administrator will contact the family to ascertain the circumstances.
- The family will be invited to a meeting with the teacher and another member of staff or trustee to discuss the situation.
- The family will be sent a letter outlining any concerns the school may have, together with a copy of this policy.
- If contact cannot be made or no satisfactory response is received from the family, the school will contact the appropriate Educational Welfare Officer.
- If the problem continues, the matter will be taken to the school trustees, who will discuss the matter and decide on an appropriate course of action. The family will be sent a second letter outlining the trustees' intentions. The school is within the law at this stage to begin the

process of removing the child/ren from the roll and informing the local education authority that this step has been taken.

The school will make every attempt to ensure that a child remains within the school, subject to the family's wishes. However families must be clear that, from the standpoint of the child's own welfare, as well as curriculum planning and the school's legal obligations, regular attendance is an essential part of school life.

Note: Compulsory School Age

- If a child's 5th birthday falls between 1 April and 31 August s/he will become of compulsory school age on 1 September.
- If a child's 5th birthday falls between 1 September and 31 December s/he will become of compulsory school age on 1 January.
- If a child's 5th birthday falls between 1 January and 31 March s/he will become of compulsory school age on 1 April.

See also: Compulsory School Age form for Early Years,
 Home School Agreement for Early Years.