

Eyemouth High School

School Attendance: A Guide for Parents/Carers



At Eyemouth High School, we strive to support our pupils in their attainment and achievements. Regular school attendance is essential if a young person is to fulfil their potential and improve future opportunities.

The purpose of this guide is to provide parents/carers with a clear understanding of the importance of attendance and our expectations in this matter; the types of absences and the absence procedures in place in our School.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. We hope you find it useful and would be very happy to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record at Eyemouth High School.

R Chapman
Headteacher

IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE & OUR EXPECTATIONS

At Eyemouth High School we aim for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 95%, with outstanding attendance above 96%.

Anything below 94% is weak and under 90% is poor. If attendance dips below 85%, we will be very concerned as this has serious implications on a pupil's learning and progress. Throughout the school year, we monitor attendance and provide reports on each pupil's attendance. These are discussed regularly and appropriate actions are taken.

Below is a chart which outlines attendance levels and the impact these have on a young person's learning and progress.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent	Gives your child the best chance of success and gets them off to a flying start.
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory	
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor	Less chance of success. Makes it harder to progress.
85% Attendance	27 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed Almost half a term missed	Very Poor	Serious Implications on learning and progress.
80% Attendance	36 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed Half a term missed	Unacceptable	
75% Attendance	45 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed Almost 1 whole term missed	Unacceptable	

TYPES OF ABSENCES

Authorised Absences

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, we do understand there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable.

Illness

Where a young person is absent through illness this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents/carers in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the School Nurse.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences. It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible.

Emergency Occasions

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc where it may be inappropriate for a young person to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs and these absences will normally be counted as authorised.

Approved Public Performance

Where students are invited to perform in a licensed show or concert (e.g. orchestra, pantomime) parents/carers are asked to consult with staff about how much time away from school is required. Where possible such requests will be granted and be counted as authorised absences, provided that the young person's education is unlikely to suffer. The school will also be sympathetic towards leave to participate in a recognized city, county or national sporting event.

Unauthorised Absences

Absences are coded as unauthorised where unacceptable reasons are given or where no explanation for an absence has been provided. Unauthorised absences are monitored closely by the school and by Scottish Borders Council and must be accounted for.

Examples of some reasons that are **not** acceptable absences and that will be recorded as unauthorised are:

- shopping trips
- parental illness
- care for family members
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends)

Holidays

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. The only exception is where parents/carers serve in the armed forces (this does not extend to the emergency services i.e. Police, Fire, Ambulance etc). Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to Scottish Borders Council; we are under a duty to do this.

Our duty of care in responding to unauthorised / persistent absences

We have a duty of care, shared with Scottish Borders Council, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) then, if deemed appropriate, the School or Council may make a referral to the Social work department.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Keeping School Informed of All Absences

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to inform the School every time their young person is unable to attend. If you do not do so, we have a duty to contact you to check the young person's whereabouts, as a safeguarding measure. If you receive a text to ask where your young person is please get in touch with the School **ASAP. If we do not hear from you, your young person will have an unauthorised absence on their school record – early and prompt communication is vital.**

Groupcall Xpressions App

Scottish Borders Council encourage all schools and parents/carers to use the Groupcall Xpressions App, as a simple and effective way to communicate. This app enables you to have instant access to all school messages in one place; you can send and receive messages and access key information. **It is a key tool to help parents/carers inform the school of their young person(s) attendance.** It also keeps a record of all communications sent and received and can be downloaded onto several devices, so overall is a more user friendly and efficient way of communicating with the school rather than via text and/or e-mail.

If you are not already using this app, please find below details on how to access it.

Groupcall Xpressions – How to login:

- Find 'Groupcall Xpressions App' in the App Store or Google Play
- Enter the e-mail address you provided to Eyemouth High School in association with your child in school
- Register and you will have instant access to all school messages in one place for all your children and also some key information.

Illness and Emergency Occasions

If your young person is unable to attend school through illness or due to an emergency, you should inform the school on the first day of absence before 9am either by sending a message via the **Groupcall Xpressions App** or by phoning the **school absence line 018907 50464** (this is an answering machine service so can be phoned at any time day or night). You must inform the school **every day** your young person is absent, unless you have indicated on your first message when you expect them to return to school.

Falling ill during the School day

Should a young person feel ill during the school day, it is important that they report this to a member of staff immediately. If it should happen during a lesson, they should inform their teacher. Outside of lesson times (ie. in the morning, at break and lunchtimes) they should inform the School Office.

Your young person will be seen by a First Aider. If necessary parents/carers will then be called and arrangements made to allow the young person to get the appropriate care. **It is important that your young person does not simply walk out of school without informing us. This is a safeguarding issue.** By doing so, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Where a young person needs to attend a medical or dental appointment during the school day, an appointment card should be handed into the School office before the appointment takes place or parents/carers should come first to the Office before collecting their young person. Please also bring your young person to the Office on returning from the appointment.

Leave of Absence

Where parents/carers wish to take their young person(s) out of school during term time, they should provide a written request which outlines the reasons clearly. Any leave of absence must be requested in writing a **minimum of 6 weeks** prior to the start date of the requested leave.

The reasons for the leave of absence will be considered and this will determine if the absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Lateness

Please try to ensure that your young person arrives at school in time for registration; this takes place at 8.50am each day. There is a warning bell at 8.45am to allow them time to go to their lockers and make their way to their registration class. Meeting and exchanging news with friends before school is important for a young person's social development. Lateness causes problems register marking and missed instructions. Where a genuine reason for lateness exists, this will be counted as an authorised absence but where explanations are inadequate, or the lateness is after 8.50am, then an absence (late) will be recorded and could result in a detention.

Thank you for Your Support

It creates considerable difficulty for us when parents/carers fail to inform the school of absences. The administrative time spent following up on unexplained absences means time away from important work done directly with our young people. We would ask for your support in making sure that our staff's valuable time is used to best advantage.