



Emmanuel CE Middle School

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20th July 2026

Attendance

Dear Parents and Carers,

As Emmanuel Middle's Behaviour and Attitudes lead, driving student attendance is my primary focus.

EMS aims

At Emmanuel, we are dedicated to helping our pupils attain their full potential, and excellent attendance is vital to that success. We work hard to create a safe, welcoming environment where your child feels a true sense of belonging and builds positive relationships across our school community. To support this, we monitor attendance closely and look forward to working in partnership with you.

I hope this letter serves as a helpful guide to our attendance approach and answers any questions you may have. I will share this letter again in September, put it onto the website and send gentle reminders of the key points in our parent bulletins and emails throughout the next academic year.

Our ultimate goal is for every child to be in school every day. With many factors potentially impacting attendance, we are always here to work with you individually to support your child in coming to school.

Reporting absence

If your child is going to be absent, please let us know via email, phone call, voicemail, or the Arbor app **before 8:45am**. To help us code the absence correctly, please provide specific details rather than just stating they are 'unwell' or 'poorly.' Instead, list their core symptoms (e.g. high temperature, persistent cough, vomiting, rash) or note if it is a medical appointment. If the absence relates to an ongoing medical condition, please mention this in your report.

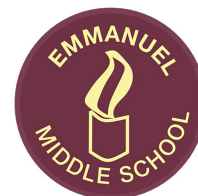
We greatly appreciate your efforts to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours. When an appointment must take place during the school day, please provide a form of evidence for our attendance records. This is inclusive but not limited to dentists, doctors, physio, and hospital appointments.

To keep things simple, we do not require formal headed paper—a quick screenshot of a text reminder or appointment confirmation from your phone is perfectly fine. You can attach this to an email when you notify us, or simply show it to the office team when dropping off or collecting your child.

Illness

If you are ever unsure whether to send your child to school, we highly recommend checking the NHS guidance: [NHS 'Is my child too ill for school?'](#) As a general rule, it is usually best to send children in if they are just feeling 'under the weather' with mild cold symptoms, such as a minor cough, runny nose, sore throat, or headache.





- **High Temperatures:** Children must stay home if they have a temperature of 38°C or above.
- **Sickness/Vomiting:** If your child has a stomach bug, they must stay home for 48 hours after the last episode. *However, if the sickness was caused by anxiety or something they ate, they are welcome back as soon as they feel better—even if that is later the same day.*

Because we take two registers a day, if your child feels better later in the morning, please bring them in or aim for our afternoon registration at 1:45 PM. If they still need a bit of support, our office team can administer pain relief or any other short/long-term medication. Please label the medicine clearly and bring it to the school office to sign a consent form.

Support

If you ever have questions regarding your child's absences, please contact their form tutor in the first instance. Please feel welcome to reach out to us at any point—we want to work closely with you to support your child and ensure they have the best possible experience at school. Emmanuel has a wonderful, supportive team, including our office and pastoral staff, who are always happy to help and discuss any worries or concerns you or your child might have.

Our attendance process

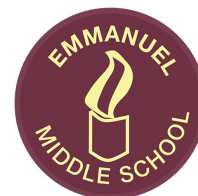
We would really appreciate your help in ensuring that your child has good school attendance.

1. If there is a concern, the tutor will make a supportive call to you so that we can work together to identify any barriers that may be preventing your child from attending school.
2. If absence continues to rise, I have a duty to write to you and present to you their attendance figure and how many days your child has missed.
3. Where these steps have failed to increase attendance, I will contact you again to invite you to a meeting where we can identify the reasons why attendance has not improved and change or adjust any interventions where appropriate.
4. Where support has continued to fail to address absence issues, the Inclusion Team at Dorset Council will want to meet with us to give further advice and support to improve attendance; the Inclusion Panel from Dorset Council can recommend several outcomes, which can include a further period of close monitoring with specified targets for attendance; issuing Penalty Notices; a Parenting Order or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine. It is hoped that such measures will not be needed.

Unauthorised school absence

You may already be aware that the Department for Education (DfE) released new statutory guidance in February 2024, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' which applies from 19th August 2024. All schools/academies in England will be required to follow the guidance, therefore I wanted to ensure that you are aware of what this means.

We have a duty to inform you that the statutory guidance means that there is a national framework for penalty notices related to unauthorised school absence. All schools and academies have to follow this. Under the national framework, all schools are required **to consider a fine** when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons including holidays. From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country was set at £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within



28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other actions like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. More information can be found about this on the DfE's website: **Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know - The Education Hub** (blog.gov.uk).

Holidays

Please do inform us of any holidays that you are planning to take. We feel this is in the best interest for your child, so that they can feel comfortable to discuss their exciting trip with their friends. The pressure it places on the child to be dishonest is an unfair burden. It also places strain on the office team who have the responsibility to know the whereabouts of your child. This is very important for safeguarding.

If absence is reported as illness in the days before or after your holiday, confirmation of travel information will be requested to correctly code the absence.

Birthdays

We wish to celebrate your child's birthday with them, so to help them feel as special as possible, we invite them to wear mufti on their birthday, **if their special day falls on a school day**. Anecdotal feedback is that the pupils enjoy the spotlighting of their special day from all members of the school community.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jemma Foord
Behaviour and Attitudes Lead