



Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Elliott Park School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available, to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school, on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently, develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience.

Aims and Objectives

Elliott Park School Responsibility:

- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled to by encouraging high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality is recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness to parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at Elliott Park School through good attendance
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

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We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils and staff on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.
- Rewarding good attendance.

Definitions

Understanding Types of Absence. Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence & Leave of Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. Family holidays during school time are not considered valid reasons for absence.

Leave of absences are to be requested at least 1 week prior to the leave beginning. Leave of absences are at the discretion of the Headteacher and will only be authorised if the leave is deemed as an exceptional circumstance.

If an extended leave of absence is mandatory due to parent's commitments (e.g. work/travelling/health) this should be discussed with the Headteacher. The Headteacher will discuss the impact that the extended leave will have on their child's learning progress.

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If deemed necessary, the parents/carers may choose to home educate the pupil for the duration of the leave and remove them from the school register. The pupil may return to Elliott Park School following the leave, the pupil's school place will still be available if school fees have been paid for in advance. If the child fails to return after the leave and no contact made from the parents, Elliott Park School will follow the Child Missing Education process.

Responsibilities

Elliott Park School will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher.
- Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the School Office who will text or ring the parents/carers to enquire of the absence.
- It is the responsibility of the School Office to ensure that attendance and lateness records are up to date. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if there hasn't been any explanation by the parents.
- To inform parents of their child's attendance through the individual reports and parents evening.
- To encourage all pupils to remain at school until the close of day unless agreed otherwise.

Parental Responsibility:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk.

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- Late arriving pupils disrupt lessons/assemblies which can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.
- It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent by telephone or email with an explanation why the child is unable to attend. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe.
- Parents should regularly update the school and inform on when their child is returning. Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.45 am. All pupils that arrive after 8.45am will be recorded as late (L). All pupils that arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late after registration has closed (U).

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

(a) Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up, once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

(b) Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

(c) Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence

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- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance
- Rewarding good attendance with certificates and rewards agreed with the Headteacher accordingly.

Children Missing in Education

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no information (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Registration

The school gate opens at 8.30 am when a teacher will be on duty to supervise children.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 8.45am and by 1.00pm. These registers are then returned to the allocated box in the front hallway.

Lateness

Once the gate is closed at 8.45am the only way to get into school is via the front door. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.45am will be marked in on the late register with a reason for the lateness. Records are kept of those pupils who are late. Any child who arrives for school later than 9.00am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school afterwards will have the absence recorded as a late mark, therefore does not impact the attendance significantly.

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

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Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the register. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send learning material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence.

This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make its own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

The Headteachers can grant leave of absence for any reason, however this will not be encouraged.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects a high level of attendance. Attendance is regularly reviewed and shared with government agencies and during inspections.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure

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their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded.