

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at Elmore Green Primary School and to establish positive life habits necessary for future success. They also minimise the risks of pupils conducting anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse.

Regular attendance encourages children to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing life skills. Children's social skills are similarly enhanced by regular attendance. Non-attendees will also inevitably not only miss out on essential learning but also other social events taking place. Irregular attendance leads to disrupted learning, which affects pupils' academic standards and risks them not achieving their full potential.

The aim of the school policy is to develop good attendance and punctuality to give the children the best chances in life.

The staff and governors of Elmore Green Primary School regard good attendance and punctuality as high priority. We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and punctuality. Elmore Green Primary School regards education as paramount whilst being sympathetic and supportive to individual family circumstances. Our aim is to ensure our school works in partnership with parent/carers and the local authority to support and promote good attendance and punctuality.

In order to achieve these aims the school will:

- Offer a safe and supportive environment for all pupils.
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration.
- Foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/carers, governors and pupils value attendance and punctuality.
- Comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.
- Have systems in place offering rewards and incentives for regular attendance and punctuality.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance.
- Support governors in taking an active role in promoting good attendance.
- Work in partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies.

Attendance and The Law

It is a legal obligation of all parents/carers/guardians to ensure their child attends regularly, by law all children of compulsory school age must get a proper full time education.

The 1996 Education Act states:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable —

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise"

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Carers

All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents/carers/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly. They should also ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy and adhere to it.

In addition to statutory obligations, parents/carers are encouraged to sign the Home-School Agreement (a section of which describes the agreed responsibilities of the parents/carers including 'a responsibility of parents/carers to make sure their child attends regularly.')

The Parents/Carers' Responsibilities

To help fulfil parents/carers important role in their child's education, and to be as informed as possible in any communications or discussions with teachers, parents/carers are requested and encouraged, to the extent feasible:

- To ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- To notify the school if their child cannot attend for any reason - this is for the child's security as well as administrative reasons;
- To work with the School and Attendance Welfare Officer to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence;
- To attend meetings as required in relation to their child's attendance;
- To ensure they obtain a 'leave of absence' for their child for all term time absence requests.

To discharge their agreed responsibilities parents/carers should always:

- Encourage good attendance making sure that their child goes to school regularly and arrives on time.
- *Take an interest in their child's schoolwork.*
- *Make sure their child understands that the parents/carers do not approve of absence from school.*
- *Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance.*
- *Co-operate with the school staff to make sure their child overcomes his or her attendance problems and gets a proper education.*
- *Discuss planned absences with the school and apply for permission well in advance.*

Parents/carers should **not**:

- *expect the school to agree to shopping trips during school hours*
- *take their own family holidays outside of the school holidays*
- *expect the school to agree to their child missing for any family holidays, or submit two leave of absence requests in any one school year.*

Pupils

Pupils are actively encouraged to **attend regularly and to arrive punctually** at school.

- Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence, e.g. bullying, racism, etc.
- Pupils must be encouraged to understand the importance of attending school and know that it is compulsory to attend school regularly.
- Pupils should all understand that only 'real' illnesses could be a reason for authorised absences.

The School

The school will:

- Ensure pupils understand the importance of 100% attendance at school.
- Encourage pupils to attend school every day.
- Promote and reward good attendance.
- Monitor attendance regularly.
- Work with parents/carers to support any issues related to attendance.
- Work with outside agencies to support full attendance and punctuality.
- Make referrals to Education Welfare as required.
- To follow the law with regards to non-attendance of pupils.

Registration

Pupils Present At Registration (SIMS Electronic Registration)

The school uses the SIMS Electronic registration system, which must be marked directly onto the computer.

/ - Is entered to show the pupil is present in the morning session

\ - Is entered to show the pupil is present in the afternoon session

N - is entered to show the pupil is absent

Any other absence codes will be added when a register review is conducted on a weekly basis. No codes other than those above will be entered by classroom staff.

If the pupil arrives late, this is recorded in the signing in register in the reception area by the parent/carer and will be added directly to the electronic system by office staff.

The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law (e.g. to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a precise day.)

The registers are marked at the beginning of each session, morning and afternoon. Registers are marked at the start of the school day and again at lunchtime. Registers are submitted to the office at 9.05am and within 10 minutes of the start of the afternoon session.

The School gate opens at 8:45am. School begins at 8:55am prompt. The school gate closes at 8.55am. School finishes for all children at 3.10pm.

Pupils arriving after the start of the school day must enter the school via the main entrance at the front of the building where they will be met by Office Staff or the Parent Support Advisor. They will record the pupil's name, time of arrival and reason for lateness, the child will also be given a late card to take to their class to say they have been marked in at the office. It is vital that any pupil arriving late is signed in, in order to comply with Health and Safety procedures.

Each class should close their register on the 9:05am. bell. Pupils arriving after registers are saved will be given a late mark (L). Any pupils arriving after 9:25am. will be regarded as absent for the full morning session even though they are present in school. This will be coded as an unauthorised absence (U) in the register. In both instances the time of arrival will be noted.

Registration will be taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session. Registration must be complete by: 12-55pm for KS1 & 1.25pm for KS2.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Head Teacher or other authorised representative of the School - this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health.

Parents/carers reporting absence should give the reason and date of return for the child. If this is unknown, regular contact on a daily basis should be kept with the school. For periods of extended absence, the school WILL seek the advice of the school nurse and PHE (Public Health England) and will only authorise the number of days that have been advised by the bodies for the illness and infectious disease.

NB- Reporting an absence does not guarantee authorisation. Authorisation will be considered in relation to the reason and the child's past attendance record is taken into consideration. Medical appointment cards and hospital letters WILL be required for all appointments, in order that an authorisation can be made. No absence below 90% will be authorised unless in extenuating circumstances.

Please note - Absences for Head lice will not be authorised.

Elmore Green Primary School **may** authorise absence in the following circumstances: -

- Personal illness (Excessive or extended absences **will require medical evidence**).
- Medical appointment (Copy of appointment card to be seen and retained).
- Family bereavement.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to child's health and safety.
- Religious observance, necessitating absence from school (limitations apply)
- Involvement in a public performance
- Approved sporting activity
- Fixed-term or permanent exclusions

From the 1st September 2013, the law gives no entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents/carers can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from school.

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the School - this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

NB - Please note that NO absences are authorised by the Head Teacher unless the pupil's past attendance record is taken into consideration.

Elmore Green Primary School will **not** authorise absence in the following circumstances: -

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house etc.)
- Truancy - a pupil is away from school without authority from the Headteacher. This includes parentally condoned absences.

- Leave of absences (which have been taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge, and/or are in excess of the time agreed by the school)
- Lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed (After 9:25am.)
- Special occasions, birthdays (when the school does not agree that leave should be given).
- Looking after siblings
- Head lice
- Family holidays in term time
- Any absence that is due to an appointment on behalf of the parent/carer.

NB:

No absences will be authorised during national testing weeks.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

The government defines persistent absentees as school-age pupils missing more than **10%** of sessions in a school year. A child with an attendance of 90% or below is a persistent Absentee. The current persistent absence (PA) threshold means a pupil has to be absent from school for around **19 days or more to meet the classification.**

Elmore Green Primary School will refer any individual child whose attendance is 90% or below to the **Education Welfare Service** at which point legal proceedings could follow.

All PAs are tracked on a half termly basis by the school. Decisive action is taken at an individual pupil level where identified. The school uses Attendance action plans to address attendance issues in this case. PA levels are reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Leave of Absence In Term Time

The law gives **no entitlement** to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must now only be in **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave.

Head teachers are **not** expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional, indeed parents/carers can now be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from school.

This school will only authorise leave absence in term time where the circumstances are proved to be exceptional.

If a request is deemed to be exceptional circumstances, but falls within the following times, the Head teacher must be convinced that absence from school is the **only** option:

- *The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils)*
- *Year 1 Phonics Screening Check week*
- *Year 2 SATs week*
- *Year six-transition days (for pupils in year six)*
- *Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six)*

Elmore Green Primary School will also take into consideration the following when deciding on the authorisation of a leave of absence during term time:

- There must be only one request for the academic year. If one holiday has been taken, we will not consider another.
- The child's current attendance levels (The school will not consider any request below 95%)

All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) should receive a suitable education by regular attendance at school. If a child is registered at school, parents/carers have the primary legal responsibility for ensuring that the child attends regularly. Prosecutions, fixed penalty notices and other sanctions may be imposed on parents/carers who choose to take term-time leave of absence.

Should parents/carers still decide to take their child/ren out of school during term time, then the absence will be recorded as "unauthorised." In line with legislation and our school attendance policy we, as a school, may refer unauthorised leave of absence to the Education Welfare Service. Such a referral may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

Government legislation (2013) also allows schools to take into consideration **any holidays taken in previous academic years**, which can now be included as evidence towards fixed penalty notices issued by the local authority.

All requests must be made via a Leave of Absence Form, which is available from the school office.

Punctuality and Lateness

The school actively discourages late arrival of pupils. Pupils who arrive late often miss out on teaching, which in-turn leads to poor academic progress.

Normal register entries do not usually indicate the severity or degree of lateness and the school therefore has systems to detect patterns of late arrival. Frequent lateness of pupils can provide grounds for prosecution of parents/carers.

The school allows the register to be kept open for up to **30** minutes from the beginning of registration, however all class teachers must ensure that registers are completed electronically by 9:05am in the morning and by 12:55 or 1:25pm in the afternoon for Key Stage 1 and 2 respectively.

The school completes a punctuality trawl each half term and targets families who are at risk. A monitoring period will then follow and if lateness does not improve, then a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made.

Lateness is often an indication of more serious problems, but can also be the result of poor time management. 2 minutes every day over 2 weeks equates to 20 minutes of missed opportunities for learning:

- The school day starts at 8.55am
- If pupils are late after the school gates have closed (8:55am); parents/carers will be asked to sign pupils into the late book and will be asked to explain why they are late (if a pupil arrives unaccompanied, the late book will be completed by office staff, who will endeavour to speak to a parent/carer to ascertain the reason for lateness)
- All late pupils are marked appropriately using code "L" if the child is late before the register closes (between 9:05am and 9:25am) "U" after the close of register (after 9:25am)

- The school will send out letters to parents/carers whose children are late on more than 5 occasions and will request meetings as appropriate (Amber Level)
- **Referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service after 10 lates (Red Level)**

Managing Attendance and Punctuality

As a school we manage the attendance of all pupils using a scaled response. We use the 'traffic lights' model as described below;

GREEN

- Attendance is above 94% and there are no immediate concerns
- Punctuality is not an issue.
- Termly attendance reports will be sent to enable parents/carers to monitor their child's attendance.
- Attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis

AMBER

If a pupil's attendance falls below 94% or there are more than 5 late marks:

- A letter is sent home informing the parents/carers that their child's attendance/punctuality is becoming a concern.
- Parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss attendance concerns. The school will offer support and agree actions to improve attendance.
- The pupil's percentage attendance/punctuality will be monitored for half a term.

RED

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. The child will be defined as a 'Persistent Absentee' and the school will liaise with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Department. The following procedure will apply:

- A letter will be sent home to the parents/carers and they will be invited in to school to discuss their child's attendance with the Deputy/Headteacher.
- The Education Welfare Department will be informed.
- Parents/carers will be invited in to school to an Attendance Panel meeting together with the Parent Support Advisor, Education Welfare Officer and Deputy/Headteacher.
- An action plan will be set up.
- A school attendance contract and support plan will be incorporated and Penalty Notice will be discussed.
- Outside agencies may be involved.
- If there is no significant improvement in attendance over a 4 week period, a fixed penalty notice will be served.
- **Further absences will only be authorised if evidence is provided (e.g. prescribed medicine, letters to verify attendance at appointments etc.)**

Fixed Penalty Notices

In law, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at a school at which they are registered. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or Section 36 of The Children Act 1989, to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

A Fixed Penalty Warning Notice will be issued when a child's attendance meets the thresholds set by Walsall Education Authority. Following a warning notice, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued in-line with Walsall Education Authority Policy.

Penalty notices are £60 per child, **per parent/carer** who are deemed to have 'parental responsibility/special guardianship to be paid within 28 days. Failure to pay within this period will increase to £120 per child.

There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- The child has been absent from school for more than the Walsall Education Authority threshold.
- The child/young person has been stopped during an attendance & exclusion sweep (accompanied or unaccompanied).
- Failure to return a child to school following fixed-term exclusion.
- General poor school attendance.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Failure to ensure attendance at any alternative educational provision.
- A parent/carer fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion from school.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.

Parents/carers/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school during term time.

Deleting Pupils From The Admissions Register

There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admissions register. If a pupil is to be removed from the admissions register because the child is moving to another area or school, staff should first find out the **name and address of the new school and when the pupil will start**, confirming this information with the receiving school. Pupils are not removed from Elmore Green Primary School's roll until we have received confirmation from a child's receiving school that they are now attending there.

As a school we would be concerned if:

- *If the parents/carers do not name the receiving school.*
- *If a pupil has 'disappeared' from the area without explanation.*
- *If a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after leave of absence in term-time.*

Where a concern exists, we alert Walsall Education Welfare without delay.

Elmore Green's Approach to Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

We believe in the use of rewards and incentives to promote good attendance and punctuality.

- Weekly 100 % raffle - All pupils who had 100% attendance for the previous week are entered into a raffle for a monetary prize (currently £5)
- The Attendance display celebrates all pupils who have achieved 100% attendance each term, in addition to pupils with the most improved attendance
- The school attendance totals are displayed weekly and referred to during assemblies

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- Every term each child receives a report to let parents/carers and the child know what their current attendance is.
- At the end of every term, every child achieving 100% receives a certificate.
- Yearly rewards are given for pupils who have achieved 100% attendance for the whole academic year. In addition, prize draws take place for children who have achieved 95-99% attendance and prizes are awarded to pupils with the most improved attendance over the year.

In addition, we work with families and their children to identify specific rewards for pupils who are targeted to improve their attendance.