

**Elstow School**  
**Attendance Policy**

**Spring 2019**

**ELSTOW SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**AIM STATEMENT**

Elstow School aims to encourage every pupil to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance in order to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them. This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence.

Elstow School strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, within which each member of the school community feels valued and secure. All school staff will be active in helping and encouraging families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. The school will acknowledge the efforts of pupils and families to improve their attendance and timekeeping, whilst challenging the behaviour of those families who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

For your children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

To meet these objectives Elstow School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, families and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## **STATUTORY FRAMEWORK**

Under Section 44 of the Education Act 1996, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered will the absence be authorised.

Legally the school has a right to refuse authorisation at its discretion. Holiday's will not be authorised in term time except where the school deems it to be exceptional circumstances.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Improving attendance at Elstow School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents, governors and all school staff.

### **PUPILS**

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support. Children with 100% attendance are rewarded with certificates and awards at the end of each term.

### **PARENTS/CARERS**

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school on a regular and punctual basis, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, parents are requested to notify the school on the first day of absence. A pupil's absence from school must be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parent. Parents/carers will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance.

Parents/carers should avoid wherever possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Parents/carers whose first language is not English or have limited literacy skills will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

### **SCHOOL**

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school will employ a range of strategies (see below) to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently, by:

- Making attendance and punctuality a priority for all of those associated with the school including pupils, families, staff and governors.
- Providing support, advice and guidance to families to further develop communications between home and school.
- Developing a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities.

- Applying the whole school attendance policy consistently.
- Specific staff developing a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To promote effective partnerships with the E.W.O and with other services and agencies.

## **REGISTRATION**

Registers will be called promptly at 9.50.am and will close at 9.00 am and immediately after the lunch time period. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, he/she will be marked as absent. Pupils who arrive after the register has closed should report to the school office and sign the School Late Book (The school will amend the register entry to read 'late after register closed'). If a pupil is persistently late, the school will contact the parent.

Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in school more than 30 minutes after the registers have closed and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the pupil has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' for that session.

The school will ensure that correct procedures are being followed in relation to recording attendance and absenteeism.

In accordance with Local Authority Guidance the school records attendance and absences with registration codes, these are detailed below:

/ Present (AM)	L Late (Before Registers Close)
\ Present (PM)	M Medical/Dental Appointments
B Educated Off Site	N No reason yet provided for absence
C Other Authorised Circumstances	O Unauthorised Absence
D Dual Registration	P Approved Sporting Activity
E Excluded	R Religious Observance
F Extended Family Holiday (agreed)	S Study Leave
G Family Holiday (not agreed)	T Traveller Absence
I Illness	V Educational Visit or Trip
J Interview	W Work Experience
# School Closed to Pupils	Y Enforced Closure
X Non-compulsory school age abs	Z Pupil not on Roll
- All should Attend/No mark Recorded	

## **AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable

cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Elstow School will decide on how an absence is to be recorded in accordance with the latest guidance from the DfE.

### **Absence can be authorised if;**

- The pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school')
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in the Education Act 1996 Section 444(6) are met.
- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil is attending an interview with a prospective school.
- The pupil is excluded
- The school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority for any of the following;  
The child's transport to and from school  
Enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home

### **Absence will be unauthorised if;**

- A holiday is being taken during term time
- No explanation is forthcoming
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- The pupil is absent for his/her birthday
- The Local Authority is in the process of undertaking statutory action for non school attendance

### **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

Parents/carers are urged strongly to avoid taking family holidays during term time. Indeed parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday.

Elstow School will not authorise any holiday taken during term time. If a child is taken out of school for this reason or an unsatisfactory reason is provided for their absence parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine following five consecutive days of unauthorised absence.

### **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AN ABSENCE**

**If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and every day that the absence continues
- Or, you can call into school and report the absence to reception. When difficulties are being encountered it will be arranged for a member of staff to speak with you.

Parents are encouraged to ensure that their contact details remain up to date and current.

## **ABSENCE EXPECTATIONS AND FOLLOW UP**

The Educational Welfare Officer and Head teacher set annual targets aimed at improving the attendance of pupils these targets and achievements of them are given to the full governing body members. Attendance figures for individual children are provided within the Annual Report sent to all parents at the end of the academic year. Attendance rates are also published in the Schools termly newsletter and on the school website.

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- If a pupil is absent without an explanation being received the school will contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence.
- If a pupil remains absent for more than two days without any notification or contact with home we will send out an absence enquiry letter.
- If the absentee is a pupil about whom there are already concerns we will make every effort to contact the parent immediately.
- Make initial follow up contact via telephone or letter when attendance first falls below 92%
- If a pupil is persistently or intermittently absent the school will write to the parent and invite them to a meeting in school, and the parent will be offered a EHA [Early Help Assessment] and ongoing TAF [Team Around the Family] meetings to support the family in improving attendance.
- If a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and the reason given for the absence is unsatisfactory, we will contact the parent.
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance falls below 92%, using the EWO referral and recording system.
- Continue with clearly defined late registration procedures, responding swiftly to lateness.
- If the school's efforts to effect an improvement in lateness and/or attendance have been unsuccessful, the situation will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Persistent Absentees**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 8% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational and social prospects and we need parent/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absentee mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

Persistent Absentee pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic intervention where absence affects attainment.

All our Persistent Absentee pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan agreed at a Parent Contract meeting. All Persistent Absentee cases are also automatically made known to the Schools Education Welfare Officer.

## **STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

- Elstow School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos will demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late and that follow up action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils needs.
- Attendance data will be monitored regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice.
- Parents will be reminded regularly, via newsletters, school brochure, parents' evenings, of the importance of regular attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will be supported in an appropriate manner and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually-tailored re-integration programmes prepared for them.
- The Head Teacher will make an annual report to the school's governing body on attendance matters.
- School staff will, when appropriate, liaise with other services and agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Regular meetings will be held with the School Family Support Worker, in order to identify how best to support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

### **Linked Policies**

SEN Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

**Date:** Spring 2019

This Policy should be reviewed: Every Two Years

**Review Date:** Spring 2021