

Elmley Castle C.E. First School

A Little Piece of Heaven on Earth

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Attendance and Registration Policy 2021

Approved by:	The Full Governing Body	Date: March 2021
Last reviewed on:	March 2021	
Next review on:	March 2023	Produced by Nadia Underwood

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‘May God give you heaven’s dew and Earth’s richness.’ Genesis 27:28.

‘As a community we grow and flourish together. Through our core values, we seek a lifelong love of learning, pursuing wisdom and excellence so everyone achieves their best. We create opportunities to explore our own sense of spirituality and encourage all to live with thankful, forgiving hearts, respecting the preciousness of our world.’

(Updated in line with School Attendance Guidance 2018 from DFE)

This policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole staff and has the full agreement of the Governing Body. Our school vision underpins our attendance policy. The policy was written in line with the DFE document, School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities September 2018.

Rationale

Elmley Castle C.E. First School aims to create a happy, welcoming and successful school where everyone is able to share in shaping future generations. We support and encourage the rights of parents to partner us in the education of their child. We value each child, their family and the wider community, of which the school is part.



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We do understand that there are sometimes genuine reasons for absence, such as sickness and are sympathetic in these instances. However, we believe that children are only able to access the curriculum and develop to their full potential as learners and as part of the school community if they are regular and punctual attendees at school. Research shows that children who do attend school regularly are more likely to succeed than those who have a high level of absence.

It is the duty of the school to monitor and report to Government on attendance.

Attendance is a high priority area here at Elmley Castle C.E. First School and the school continually seeks to make improvements. As a result, we regularly review new initiatives to support this area and are happy to take on board any that we feel may make a positive difference to attendance.

As a school we are determined to work together with parents, children and outside agencies, such as the Education Welfare Service (Babcock Prime.) and the L.A. to improve attendance at school and to reduce the number absences and late arrival. This policy sets out to explain the measures undertaken to achieve our aims.

Procedures

It is the responsibility of **all** of us to support good attendance. Class teachers are required by law to mark registers twice daily at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. Any absences will then be recorded. Registers are legal documents and have to be completed with the correct coding.

Parents are legally required to bring their child to school every teaching day. If their child is ill or there are other circumstances that prevent the child from attending, then it is the responsibility of the parents to inform school of these reasons. We ask that they contact us by telephone on the first day of absence or by letter. If no contact has been made the school will telephone in order to establish reasons. We strongly urge that non-emergency medical and dental appointments are made outside of school hours.

Reasons for absence are marked in the registers by teachers or, if the school is informed by telephone by the secretary, using the attendance codes listed in the appendix. If, when the child is back at school and we have no notification of reasons for absence the secretary will send out an initial letter requesting that we are given an explanation. This letter goes out on the Monday of the week after the register analysis has been carried out on the previous Friday. Parents are given time to reply but if there has been no response by the following Friday then the child's absence is marked as unauthorised.

The school monitors attendance monthly and parents are contacted by letter when attendance falls below 95% and 90%. If a child's attendance level falls **below 85%** then the Headteacher may call for a meeting with the parents or report to the Education Welfare Service (Babcock Prime) or the Education Investigation Service in extreme cases.

In some cases school may identify cases of condoned absences. These may be regular absences that may have explanations but where a pattern emerges, e.g. regular absences on Fridays/ Mondays or where it is evident that, although reasons for absence have been provided it is clear that the child was not ill. These too may be referred to the E.I.S. If the school identifies children who are truanting from school action will be taken to inform parents and appropriate agencies.

In cases where pupils are attending at more than one setting the school will ensure that it will liaise with the relevant agencies and establishments. Once the school has identified any children who may be at risk of long-term absence,



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such as a prolonged stay in hospital it will work closely with agencies to ensure that the child is able to continue their education as and when appropriate. (See also our policy: Children with Medical Needs)

The school recognises that reintegration for those children that have had a long-term absence or for those who have had shared provision may be problematical. We also recognise that there are other groups of children who may need support in coming into the school environment. These may include looked after children, asylum seekers and refugees. In accordance with our equal opportunities policy all of these cases will be supported by the school. As needs will depend on the individual they will be addressed through an agreed individual pastoral and education plan.

If issues to do with absence are centred around allegations of bullying or racial abuse the school will draw on its equal opportunities and bullying policies to work through these issues with both the parents and children concerned.

Holidays

The school does not condone the taking of holidays during term time and the Governing body requests that none are taken. The government regulations which came into force in September 2013, make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. The head teacher determines the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. A family holiday is not deemed to be an exceptional circumstance by the government and the threshold of 10 days/20 school sessions has been removed.

Application forms should be completed by the parent (or carer) and forwarded to the head teacher four weeks before the planned absence is due to begin and the reason for the request must be an exceptional circumstance and not just a family holiday. The school will not authorise any holidays during May and June when final year assessments are taking place and should there be any concerns, for example average attendance below 95%, it is unlikely that further absence will be authorised in any circumstances since 10 days is equivalent to 5.2%.

Where the school and parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school the absence will be marked as unauthorised and may be referred to the E.I.S. and incur a penalty fine. Parents contemplating holidays or other absences during school time should first discuss the implications with the Headteacher before making any commitments especially if the absence is of lengthy duration.

Punctuality

Late arrival at school can be very distressing for some children and can cause them to be unnecessarily anxious. It is possible to equate this to adult life, if you have ever arrived late for an appointment and other parties are already there it can be very embarrassing and uncomfortable. This is no different for a child. It is our belief that children settle into their learning more effectively when they are on time for school. It sets the whole tone for the day and allows them to be part of any initial discussions that take place with their peers and their teacher. Our data analysis has also highlighted that children who regularly arrive late may not achieve as expected when compared with their peers.

The school day officially starts at 9.00 a.m. when the register is taken. If a child is not present by this time they will be marked as late when they do arrive. If a child arrives in school after 9.30 then they are marked as late after registration. These are closely monitored and action is taken to address this issue in the same way as any other absence.



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Teachers are always in their classrooms ready for the start of the school day and it is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their child is also on time.

Conclusion

This document has highlighted the importance of attendance in the education of children. The school remains committed to working towards the goal of a 100% attendance for all. We are always happy to support and encourage parents and children to attend. We operate an open door policy and will address individual needs to the best of our ability. In return we hope for the support of both parents and children in achieving the best possible levels of attendance that we can.

For further information on the Education Investigation Service, please visit the following website address.

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20272/education_welfare/490/education_investigation_service

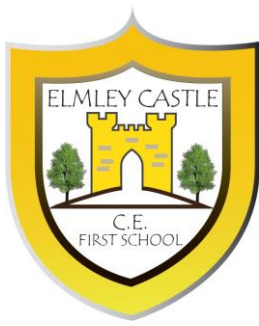
file:///winsvr-vfs-01/Users/Staff/pcroke/Desktop/Guidance_on_school_attendance_Sept_2018.pdf

Appendix for teaching staff

1. Please mark registers sheet in ink with an \ or / or the correct code for the absence (as listed behind, on the clipboard).
2. Pupils who you know are late (after 9.30am). Pupils who are late before 9.30 should have marked an L
3. Pupils who are absent can only have their absence authorised by their parents if the reason is medical and confirmed in writing. The following will clarify this –
 - Any pupil sent home from school ill, will have the rest of the day authorised by the class teacher.
 - If a pupil is brought into school following a medical appointment, or leaves early for a medical appointment, this can be authorised by the class teacher, and this should be confirmed by the parent by phone or letter.
4. If a pupil is absent for the **2nd day** without notification, the Headteacher should be informed and the office staff contact the parent in order to ascertain the reason for absence.
5. The following information will be given to parents in writing, via the School Prospectus and the annual newsletter.

"It is the parents' responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a pupil's absence as soon as possible, preferably by telephone or personal contact before 9.00 a.m. If we do not receive this information, we will follow this up with a telephone call home. When a child is ill the school should be notified of the nature of the illness. Schools are required to report to their Education Authority any cases of prolonged absence or irregular attendance, and these will be investigated by an Educational Investigation Service Officer."

Regulations state that the school is responsible for authorising absence, not the parents. Excessive amounts of authorised absence can seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection.



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Absences which can be authorised cover illness, medical or dental appointments, family bereavements and religious observance.

Absences which cannot be authorised not only cover obvious examples such as truancy or lateness, but also shopping, birthday treats, visits to shows and theme parks, even where the parent has given 'permission', and written a note. In such cases, or where no explanation is forthcoming, the absence must be treated as 'unauthorised' and shown as such on a pupil's report.