

Elm Park Primary School

Inspiring Learners, Enriching Lives, Achieving Together

Attendance Policy



Written/revised by	Frome Valley Alliance and Victoria Franklyn (EWO) and Carol Bond
Start Date	May 2018
Review Date	May 2020
Updated by/Date	
Headteacher's Signature	
Chair of Governors' Signature	
Date ratified by FGB	

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Part 1: EIA Screening

Policies, Procedures or Practices:	Attendance	DATE:	21.05.2018
EIA CARRIED OUT BY:	C. Bond	EIA APPROVED BY:	

Groups that may be affected:

Are there concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for a positive impact
Age (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		
Disability (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication)		
Gender reassignment		
Marriage and civil partnership		
Pregnancy and maternity		
Race		
Religion and belief (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)		
Gender identity		
Sexual orientation		

Any adverse impacts are explored in a Full Impact Assessment.

School Attendance Policy

1. Rationale

Regular attendance and excellent punctuality are the foundations for academic achievement and personal development. They establish a responsible attitude towards the opportunities available at school and underpin the basis for the world of work. Attendance and punctuality are strongly linked to students' well-being and safety. Regular attendance demonstrates a commitment to learning and the school community please ensure that you and your child/children support our school rules about attendance

2. Guiding Principles

We are committed to ensuring that all students benefit from the opportunities available at Elm Park Primary School. Our expectation is that students arrive on time and attend **REGULARLY** that is - every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so.

We explain about different types of absence in this policy and we will actively promote this ethos throughout the school community and encourage our students to achieve

this. Where this expectation is not met we will identify and address the barriers that prevent this.

3. Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered students of school age attend school regularly and punctually and that they receive an education suitable for their aptitude and ability.

The school have a legal responsibility for maintaining school registers and taking the register twice a day. First thing in the morning and during the afternoon. These are referred to as sessions. The school also has a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority. We also have safeguarding responsibility and duty of care to all our students.

Student responsibilities – we encourage our students to become independent young people including taking responsibility for their attendance and punctuality when this is age appropriate.

4. Attendance

We expect our students to attend school on time every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so for example - Illness

We will celebrate and reward students who achieve our expectations of a high level of attendance and those who have shown sustained improvement

We will share attendance information with parents and students focusing on the link between attendance and achievement

We will promote high attendance and punctuality through assemblies, class discussion; always reinforcing the link between attendance and achievement

The school will communicate attendance matters to parents via text, telephone, email, letter and through the school website.

5. Absence from school

There are only two categories of absence from school:

Authorised – approved

Unauthorised – not approved

Only the Head teacher (or their delegate) can approve an absence from school. That is the law.

Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department for Education Guidance on School Attendance.

Requests for absence in term time must be submitted in writing in advance to the Head teacher who will treat every request on an individual basis and respond accordingly. The rules about what type of absence is acceptable is set out below

Authorised (approved) absence – types of authorised absence that may be approved:-

- ❖ Leave of absence - for bereavement, funeral, wedding
- ❖ Medical absence for appointments – at Hospital or Orthodontic appointments. (Non- urgent routine check-up appointments should be made for after school hours or during the school holidays.) Students are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day.
- ❖ Illness
- ❖ Religious observance
- ❖ If a student is excluded from school for a behaviour related incident, this is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised (not approved) absence – types of absence that will not be approved

- ❖ Absence due to birthday, shopping for uniform, looking after family members.
- ❖ Holiday in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed to by the Head teacher – in advance in line with changes to the law implemented in 2013.
- ❖ Late arrival to school after the register has closed has to be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absence can lead to parents /carers being fined by the Local Authority

All absence – authorised and unauthorised – will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

Persistent Absence

- ❖ A student is defined as a persistent absentee if they miss 10% or more of the overall possible sessions they should have attended school. One session = half a day. Research has shown that students who are persistently absent do

not achieve as well as those students who are not. There is a strong link between attendance and attainment and it is shown that this link is cumulative over the period of time a student is in education. Persistent absence is required to be reported to the DFE and rates of persistent absence are published about the school.

Broken Weeks/Repeat absence

- ❖ Students who have repeat absences and do not complete full weeks at school are monitored closely and parents informed. If this pattern continues parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher/Education Welfare Officer/or delegate. Students with high numbers of repeat absence miss out on education and have significant gaps in their learning which impacts on progress and attainment.

Children Missing Education

- ❖ There is statutory guidance and clear procedures for children who are missing education this includes when a school can remove a child from the school roll. These procedures are also linked to safeguarding. Children missing education procedures also include children who leave school and move away and may not be in education elsewhere. The school must ascertain as much information as possible before a child leaves the school as to their intended whereabouts.

6. How our policy works in practice

Punctuality

- ❖ Students who arrive late to registration are recorded as L (late before registration closes.) Registration takes place at – 8:55am. Students should be in school for the start of Registration at 8:50am.
- ❖ Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the school and letters sent to parents. Persistent late arrival will result in parents and students being asked to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher/Education Welfare Officer/or delegate.
- ❖ If a student arrives after the register has closed at 8:55am, in cases of Persistent late arrival this may be recorded as U (unauthorised late arrival). Unauthorised sessions can result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

Medical appointments

- ❖ We monitor the amount of time missed due to medical appointments carefully.
- ❖ We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a student having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from parents where a whole day is missed for this reason. Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school.
- ❖ Routine, check up and non-urgent appointments should be made after school time and during the 12 week school holiday.

Illness

- ❖ Students are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some students will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We will support students in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on their education.
- ❖ When a student is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, a meeting will be arranged to discuss this with the Head teacher/Education Welfare Officer /or delegate

Holiday absence in term time

- ❖ If a parent feels there are exceptional circumstances that support a request for leave of absence in term time; they must put the request in writing to the Head teacher
- ❖ Each case will be considered individually and the decision communicated to the parents
- ❖ Where this absence has not been agreed the absence is unauthorised and can lead to parents receiving a fine from the Local Authority

Procedure

Concerns about absence from school and the likely impact on a students' progress will be communicated to both students and parents through our attendance procedures. We want to work with all our parents/carers to achieve the best attendance and outcomes for our students and recognise that different cultural backgrounds may bring a different approach to school attendance. We will strive to work together to enable students to gain maximum benefit from education by regular attendance at school.

Appendix 1: Procedures

The School Day

- There are two recorded attendance 'sessions' per day: one in the morning and one in the afternoon.
- The playground gate is opened at 8:35am.
- The bell goes at 8:45am, and again at 8:55am. Teachers will greet the children at 8:45am and take them into class.
- The registers are taken before 8:55am (whole school) and at 1:00pm (KS1) or 1:15pm (KS2) daily.
- Registers are closed at 8:55.

School Procedures

The following procedures have been adopted by the school in order to promote and monitor attendance and to meet safeguarding requirements:

- Electronic registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and the afternoon sessions.
- Clear guidelines for marking registers are followed, in line with DfE and LA advice.
- **Same-day contact in cases of unexplained absence.** Where a child is absent with no prior notification or phone call, the office staff will attempt to contact the parents to ascertain the reason for the child's absence. Absence notes will not be accepted retrospectively.

- If a child leaves for or returns from an agreed absence (eg appointment), or arrives at school after the absence list has been finalised, this is recorded in the 'children's in and out book'.

Late arrival to school

A child who arrives in class after the 8:55am bell has gone will be registered as late, with the number of minutes late being recorded.

When children arrive late, parents are asked to bring them into school via the main door, so that they can be registered as present; the number of minutes late will also be recorded.

Anyone arriving late after registers close may be recorded using the code U (unauthorised late arrival to school), which counts as an absence for that session.

Illness

If a child is ill and will not be attending school, parents and carers are asked to telephone the school (answerphone: 01454 866751) before 8:45am on the first day of absence, giving the precise reason for absence, and then every further day. If the school does not receive a telephone call, the absence is entered in the register as unauthorised and the office staff telephone home to establish the reason.

Absence during term time

If absence is requested, but not authorised, the absence will be coded G (unauthorised holiday) or O (unauthorised absence).

If absence for an exceptional circumstance is authorised, but parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised (Code G or O).

Inability to contact parents when a pupil is absent

If a phone call to parents on the first day of absence receives no response, a message will be left to contact the school and a record will be made that we attempted to make contact but no response was received. If the pupil is absent on subsequent days, the office will continue to attempt to contact the family to establish a reason for absence. If no response is received by the 3rd day of absence, a letter will be sent and the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted, who will make a home visit.

Liaison with Attendance Support Services

The school maintains regular contact with our Education Welfare Officer, which includes discussion of children with unexplained absences, persistent absence (which includes a high number of broken weeks: weeks in which there is a recorded absence) or those who are regularly late.

Monitoring and reporting to parents and governors

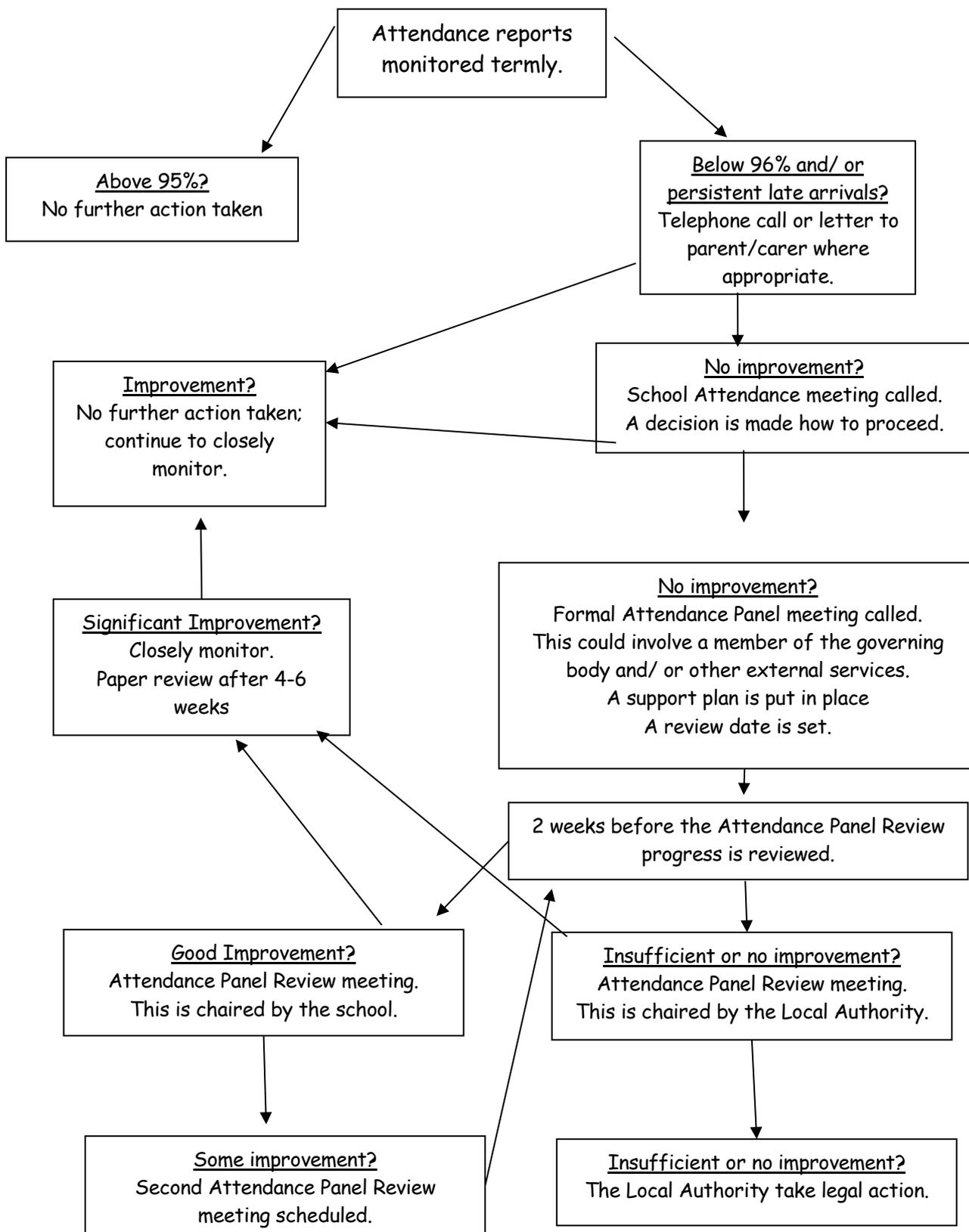
Governors have a shared responsibility for attendance and are updated regularly regarding attendance and punctuality.

- The registers and lateness are monitored on a regular basis.
- Reports are produced at the beginning of each term detailing Percentage Attendance and Broken Weeks from the beginning of the school year to the end of the previous term.
- Children whose attendance falls **below 95%** will be looked at in more detail to consider whether additional support would help
- Letters are sent to parents/carers of those children whose attendance is below 95% and/ or where there is a high number of broken weeks and/ or a high number of late arrivals.
- Where the attendance pattern becomes a concern or if no improvement is noted, an invitation will be sent to invite them to discuss their child's attendance together with the Deputy Head and the Attendance Officer. These School Attendance Meetings (SAMs) are

designed to see if there are ways in which the school, in partnership with parents, can improve attendance.

- If there is no improvement in attendance following the SAM, an attendance panel meeting is called. (see Appendix 2)
- Absences, both authorised and unauthorised, as well as 'lates', are reported to parents in their child's end-of-year report.
- Figures for absences are reported to the LA, DfE and Governors on a regular basis.

Appendix 2 - Procedures for Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality



This policy has been agreed by all schools in the Frome Valley Alliance as a whole Alliance approach

Formal guidance informing this policy

- ❖ Education Act 1996 which states if any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.
- ❖ Pupil Regulations 2006 amended DFE April 2013
- ❖ Parental responsibility measures – regarding Penalty Notices (Fines) DFE November 2013
- ❖ Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE March 2015
- ❖ Keeping children safe in education. DFE September 2016
- ❖ Educating Children with Health Needs – DFE 2013 – Ensuring children with health needs do not miss out
- ❖ Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – DFE December 2015
- ❖ Children missing education – DFE September 2016
- ❖ School Attendance – DFE 2016
- ❖ **SOUTH GLOS COUNCIL** local code of conduct with regards to issuing of Education Penalty Notices
- ❖ www.southglos.gov.uk