

Elm Park Primary School

Inspiring Learners, Enriching Lives, Achieving Together

Attendance Policy



Written by	FVA with EWO Victoria Franklin
Updated by	
Start Date	January 2022
Updated	
Review date	January 2024
Headteacher's Signature	
Chair of Governors' Signature	
Date ratified by FGB	

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Part 1: EIA Screening

Policies, Procedures or Practices:	Attendance Policy	DATE:	21.01.2022
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.

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 and provide lifelong benefits related to these. Regular school attendance demonstrates a commitment to learning and the school community. We will actively promote this ethos throughout and encourage our students to achieve this.

Please ensure that you and your child/children support our school rules about attendance. Where this expectation is not met, we will identify and address the barriers that prevent this.

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** (every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so).

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 (8.55am) and during the afternoon (1.00pm for the Infants and 1:15pm for KS2). These are referred to as sessions. The school also has a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority. We have a safeguarding responsibility and duty of care to all our students.

Student responsibilities – we encourage our students to become independent young people including sharing 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 share attendance information with parents and students focusing on the link between attendance and achievement. Parents will receive their child's attendance record at every parents' evening as well as in their end of year report.

We will promote high attendance and punctuality through assemblies and class discussion; always reinforcing the link between regular attendance and success.

Elm Park Primary will communicate attendance matters to parents via text; telephone; email; letter and through the school website.

5. Absence from school

We explain about different types of absence in this policy.

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 are set out below:

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

- ❖ Leave of absence - for bereavement, funeral, wedding of immediate family e.g parents of child.

- ❖ 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 also impacts on friendships and social interaction. 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 and/or the Education Welfare Officer. 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 in Education

- ❖ There is statutory guidance and clear procedures for children who are missing in education this includes when a school can remove a child from the school roll. These procedures are also linked to safeguarding. Children missing in 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 and arrangements made for their education.

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 8.55am and will be marked as late if they arrive after the register is taken.
- ❖ Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the school and letters/emails sent to parents. Persistent late arrival will result in parents and students being asked to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher and/or Education Welfare Officer.
- ❖ If a student arrives after the register has closed at 9.05, 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 following South Glos Medical Needs Policy
- ❖ 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 and/or Education Welfare Officer

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. We will strive to work together to enable students to gain maximum benefit from education by regular attendance at school.

To be read in conjunction with Elm Park attendance leaflet

Please see Appendix A which shows the flowchart relating to absence and Appendix B which provides references to the law and guidance that informs this policy.

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

Appendix A

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: -

- Unexplained absence from school will be followed up daily – (see Safeguarding).
- Where an explanation for absence is not specific i.e. 'unwell' we will seek to ascertain a definitive reason, so we can record absence precisely using the correct code.
- Attendance of all students will be monitored regularly, and patterns of Broken Weeks /Incomplete Weeks and low levels of attendance will be investigated.

For a full explanation -please see below: -

Stage 1	Year to date broken weeks greater than 5%	Letter/email 1 Offering support
Stage 2	Two terms or more > 5% broken weeks	Letter 2 More challenging letter, offering support and pointing out a need for change
Stage 3	Continued broken weeks > 5%	A meeting to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss impact of missed learning • investigate reasons for absence and solutions • set attendance targets
Stage 4	Previous year attendance <95% Repeated termly attendance > 5% broken weeks	Meeting with Headteacher and/or EWO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss impact of missed learning • investigate reasons for absence and solutions • set attendance targets • fining or Individual Health Care Plan creation discussed • Set review period
Stage 5	Previous year attendance < 95% 5 or more broken weeks (over two terms) Repeated termly attendance continues to be of concern and	Following School Attendance Meeting review, meeting held with Head Teacher and/or EWO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise parent/carer that a panel meeting will take place.

	School Attendance Meetings have not brought about improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Attendance Panel meeting takes place (Letter sent to arrange) • If no improvement after 4 weeks, school completes a request for an Attendance Panel review chaired by LA representative.
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Appendix B

Law and statutory 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.
- ❖ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 amended DFE April 2013
- ❖ Parental responsibility measures – regarding Penalty Notices (Fines) DFE updated May 2020
- ❖ Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE updated **December 2020**
- ❖ Keeping children safe in education. DFE updated **January 2021**
- ❖ Educating Children with Health Needs – DFE May 2013 – Ensuring children with health needs do not miss out
- ❖ Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – DFE updated **August 2017**
- ❖ Equality Act 2010
- ❖ SEND Code of practice- DFE- updated April 2020
- ❖ Children missing education -- DFE updated September 2016
- ❖ School Attendance Guidance – DFE updated March **2021**

❖ **SOUTH GLOS COUNCIL** local code of conduct with regards to issuing of Education Penalty Notices

❖ www.southglos.gov.uk

For further information and advice about school attendance