



# Elm Tree

Primary Academy

## Attendance Policy

Date:

Last updated:

Review date:

## Attendance Policy

Elm Tree Primary Academy is committed to providing all pupils with an appropriate and effective education in a safe and happy environment. Each child is welcomed, valued and respected and encouraged to respect themselves and others. We aim to empower all children to gain the essential skills both academic and social that will equip them for life.

We believe that education is essential for all. To achieve their full potential children need to attend regularly and punctually. Difficulty with attendance at school for any reason is an important issue that must be supported immediately. In all cases of attendance difficulties it is essential that early action is taken.

The Academy Councillors, Head teacher and staff acknowledge that there is a strong correlation between high attendance pupil progress.

We are required to monitor and manage all attendance and absence in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulation and Elm Tree Academy adheres to the DfE Guidance on School Attendance.

The aim of the policy is to promote the 'most effective education for pupils at Elm Tree Academy. In order to achieve this, it is vital that pupils attend school consistently and punctually.

Statements of expectations;

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

What is expected of the pupils?

- To respect themselves and others
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered.

Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

What is expected of the Parents?

- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence – and every subsequent day they are absent
- To contact school by 9am on the first and each subsequent day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, a reason should be offered for any lateness
- To work closely with the school and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special/exceptional circumstances. Requests MUST be submitted at least 2 weeks before departure
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and cooperation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

At Elm Tree Academy the register will close at 9.20. Any child arriving after 9.20 will be recorded as late, unless this is an agreed strategy with head teacher, parents and professionals.

After 9.45 pupils will be marked as U- unauthorised absence, again unless this is an agreed strategy.

What is expected of the School?

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- To meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance

- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum

School will operate the following First Day Calling Procedure for each day a child is not in school:

1. Initial text to ALL absentees by 9.30am
2. By 10am – anyone who has not replied, will be called by telephone – each number on the child’s contact list will be called until a response is obtained
3. If there is no response, school staff will continue texting/calling periodically. For any families classed as particularly vulnerable, a home visit by school staff will be considered.

#### Overall Aims

1. Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and ensuring that Elm Tree Academy is seen as a safe place for our pupils.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and Academy Council.
3. To develop a framework that defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority Attendance Service and with other services and agencies.
9. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

#### To Improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at School

1. Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
2. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
3. Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
4. Monitor progress in attendance measurable outcomes.

#### To Develop a Framework Which Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in Carrying Out Our Designated Tasks

1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
2. Make text/phone contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
4. Provide support swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
5. Appoint an Attendance leader within the school.
6. Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure.
7. Have clear procedures prior to referral to Local Authority Attendance and Prosecution Service
8. Review attendance regularly.

#### To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils

1. Highlight attendance in:
  - PSHE
  - Assemblies
  - Staff available to talk to pupils
  - Pastoral support
  - Parents evening
2. Set aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
3. Seek improved communication with parents e.g. when parents ring in.
4. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
5. Involve pupils and parents from earliest stage.

#### To Develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data

1. Standardise recording of:

- authorised/unauthorised absence
- educational activity
- presence
- illness

2. Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.

3. Decide what information, if any, is provided for:

- Academy Council
- pastoral staff
- other school staff
- parents
- pupils (individual or groups)
- education social work service

4. Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication Between Home and School

1. Initiate first day absence contact.
2. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls/texts from parents.
3. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships.
4. Provide information in a user-friendly way
5. Encourage all parents into school.

To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Education Social work Service and with Other services and Agencies

1. Designated key staff, Office staff/learning mentors, for liaison with Local Authority Attendance Service and other agencies.
2. Give priority to timetabled meetings with Education Social Work Service.
3. Provide support to identified families through the pastoral team
4. Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
5. Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Education Social Work Service.
6. Hold termly attendance review with key school staff and The Trust EWO.
7. Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.

8. Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community e.g. community police contact officer.
9. Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.
10. Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.

To Recognise the Needs of the Individual Pupils When Planning Reintegration Following Significant Periods of absence or who are struggling with attendance linked to their individual needs

1. Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
2. Involve/inform all staff/outside agencies in support planning and reintegration process.
3. Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
4. Consider peer support and mentoring.
5. Involve parents as far as possible.
6. Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
7. Include Attendance Officer/EWO , family liaison worker, pastoral staff, parents and pupil in reintegration plan.
8. If a pupil is delayed in returning to school either at the beginning of a term or due to delay in returning from a Leave of Absence, the school will expect to speak (or have contact with as appropriate to need) to the pupils during this additional absence.
9. Where a child has been absent for an extended period of time, for example an unauthorised absence, eg extended holiday, it is important to give the child opportunity to speak/communicate about what has happened while they have been absent for safeguarding reasons.

#### Monitoring Attendance

The senior management team and the EWO will review the attendance of all pupils on a termly basis and any pupils identified as cause for concern or less than 90% attendance on a more regular basis. A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance difficulties informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if after a four week period there appears to be no improvement, the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the EWO and pastoral lead to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending.

If the parent/s do not attend the meeting or after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve a formal referral to the EWO will be made. The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues. The EWO will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

School, parents and any relevant professionals will also discuss attendance as a key part of the EHCP review.

#### Requests For Leave Of Absence

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are required to complete the leave of absence form and hand in to school. This must be completed at least **2 weeks before departure**. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason by letter and the request will be noted in the electronic register. Leave of absence will not be offered to pupils for family holidays except under special / exceptional circumstances.

#### Authorised And Unauthorised Absences

The school will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no parental explanation is given.
- For extended visits overseas where no approval has been given.
- For holidays in term time (unless there are exceptional circumstances.)
- For shopping trips.
- For leisure days out.
- Where it is believed a parent is condoning an unnecessary absence.
- In other cases where it is deemed there is no reasonable explanation.

Medication – Parents/carers should be aware that in case of a child being prescribed medicines, this does not automatically mean that the child should be absent for school. Many medicines can be given outside school hours and the school's policy allows us to administer certain medicines, with written consent.

#### Change Of Address And Other Contact Details

Parents must inform the school immediately if they, or the named emergency contacts have a change of address, phone number or email address. In case of emergency we must be able to contact the parents, carers or a third named person. Parents must provide this information when they first register their child, and keep information including telephone numbers up to date.

Where children are admitted to hospital the school will contact the Children's Hospital on a regular basis. Our pastoral lead will also contact the family and will provide liaison to enable the pupil to return to school as soon as they are well enough to do so.

Pupils who arrive late at school because of difficulties with organised transport (taxi or minibus) will be marked as present. Where patterns of consistent late running by contractors occur, Travel Assist will be informed.

When classes go off site during school time details must be recorded in the school office.



## Children Out of School For Long Periods Due To Ill Health

A combination of family contact by phone, home or hospital visits, provision of relevant school work and virtual contact with school staff and pupils will be provided to support the pupil in order that they:

1. Retain contact with the school, their teachers and peers and
2. They keep up to date with as much of their school work as possible, within the limitations of their illness.

Support may include making referrals to James Brindley Home Teaching Service depending on the age of the children.

## Review

The Academy Council reviews this policy every year. The Academy Council may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the Academy Council receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved

## Child Protection Concerns

If there are any Child Protection concerns these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps.

## Attendance Plans

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 90% for non-illness related absences, the school will decide on the next step. This will probably be in the form of an Attendance Plan or an alternative support plan.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year \(September 2021\)](#)