2024

Attendance Policy

Victoria Academies Trust

Elm Tree
Primary Academy

Victoria Academies Trust

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Attendance Policy

The importance of good attendance

Elm Tree Primary Academy seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which enables them to maximise opportunities to reach their full potential. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families; improving attendance is everyone's business. Research shows there is evidence of a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. Pupils who regularly attend school make much better progress both socially and academically. Regular attendance enables pupils to adapt better to routines, schoolwork, and friendship groups. Therefore, those pupils will have a positive experience of learning and a more successful transition from primary to secondary and beyond to further education and training.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

School Staff that Support Attendance in	**Elm Tree Primary Academy**
The strategic leader for attendance is	Helen Hegerty
The attendance officer is	**Helen Hegerty**
Please contact the attendance officer on a day-to-day basis when your child is absent or for any queries regarding attendance.	
The parent support advisor/safeguarding & pastoral lead is	**Helen Hegerty**

Section 1: Roles & Responsibilities

The Academy Council

The Academy Council is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy and ensure the policy is reviewed annually.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school and ensuring its publication on the school's website
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Academy Councillors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary

The Designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Education Welfare Officer

The Trust EWO will:

- Support in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to improving attendance.
- Attend meetings with the school to identify children with irregular school attendance and develop strategies to ensure that all children can attend school regularly.
- Support the school in promoting attendance by providing advice, guidance and creation of action plans in relation to working together to improve attendance.
- Review referrals from school to address matters of poor school attendance when Early help and intervention has failed to improve attendance
- Carry out, in conjunction with the school, home visits and school meetings with parents to challenge barriers to poor attendance

The School Attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher and designated senior leader (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officer is Helen Hegerty and can be contacted via the school office.

The School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Record messages and communication sent via SIMS

Class teachers and support staff
Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Parents/carers
Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time for every lesson timetabled
- Contact school by **9am** on the first day of absence to inform school of the reason and when the child is expected to return. Contact the school every day of absence.
- Provide school with contact details for every adult with parental responsibility
- Understand their responsibility to keep the school up to date with at least 2 emergency contact details as required by the Children Missing Education requirements and in line with the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Impress on their children the importance of regular school attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children are only out of school when they are too sick to attend.
- Establish effective communication with the school and swiftly address any worries their children may have about coming to school so that we can work together to resolve this.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Attend any meetings called by school and partner agencies to discuss attendance.

The Pupils
Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Make sure you have everything you need for the following day
- Go to bed and be well rested to be able to enjoy your day
- Get up in good time to attend school

Section 2: Registration

Registration
The school day start time is 9.10am when our doors open.

These will close at 9.20am

Any pupils arriving after these times should report to the school office so that they can be given a late mark; pupils arriving after 9.20 am should be accompanied by a parent to be signed in via the online screen in the reception area so that a reason for lateness can be given; the number of minutes late is recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival.

The class register will close at 9:40am

School day end time is 3:00pm.

Lateness and punctuality
A pupil who arrives late:

- *Before the register* has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code: L
- *After the register* has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code: U

Persistent lateness will result targeted letters from the designated Attendance Lead or an invitation to discuss appropriate support and challenge available from school leadership.

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register twice a day, and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Section 3: Pupil Absence

Parents are expected to inform school of the reason for absences. However, it is school that makes the decision whether to authorise or unauthorised the absence. School will make this decision based on the information available to them. Parents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible and information such as appointment cards, medication or application for leave of absence will assist school in making this decision.

Re-occurring unauthorised absence will be referred to the School Attendance Support Service and this can lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on -
t: 0121 285 2880.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card or letter, text or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

The school has a responsibility to notify the Local Authority with the name and address of sick pupils who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days.

Planned absence
Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

YOU CAN CONTACT THE OFFICE ON 0121 285 2880.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Following up unexplained absence
Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Implement our school's first day absence procedure

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason by 10am. All absence reasons are logged on SIMS (School Information Management System)
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may send follow up texts via Teachers2parents in order to make contact.
- Where there is a significant Safeguarding concerns, school staff or the Trust EWO may attempt to visit the child and family at recorded home addresses.

Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised
The school will:

- Identify the correct attendance code (see Appendix 1) to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

Request for leave of absence in term time
The school has adopted the National and Local Authority code of conduct in respect of leave of absence in term time. All parents who wish to take their child out of school for any reason (other than medical reasons) should complete a leave of absence request form obtained from the school office and submitted **at least 2 weeks before departure**.
If parents proceed with the leave of absence in term time, **Elm Tree Primary Academy** may refer to the Local Authority for a penalty notice. Penalty notices may be issued due to the deliberate taking of leave of absence in term time without or against school permission (where it can be demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given)

Children Missing in Education

The school has also adopted the Local Authority Policies on Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education. Click link to find DfE guidance regarding Children Missing in Education.

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least **5 consecutive days**, the Trust EWO will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a **total of 10 days**, the family will be referred as a Child Missing in Education case for the Local Authority.

The school also follows Local Authority guidance in relation to coding absence for families who travel as part of their culture.

We acknowledge and follow guidance from The National Strategies, Department for Children, Schools and families:

On days when a pupil from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller family is known to be out of area, due to the family travelling for parents work purposes only, and is not in educational provision, then the school can use the letter code T to record the absence. Parents/ carers should make sure they let the school know in advance when they are going to be travelling, and when they expect to return, so that attendance and absence are recorded accurately.

On days when pupils, including those from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families, are absent for other reasons (whether travelling or not), schools should use the appropriate code to record that absence. If the reason for a pupil's absence is not known, it must be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Absence for participation in a performance

At least 2 weeks notice should be given before the sporting event. In these instances, the school will follow Local Authority's guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with the Local Authority Attendance Service to ensure that any performance absence is within the parameters of the law.

Absence for participation in a sporting event

At least 2 weeks notice should be given before the sporting event. In these instances, the school will follow Local Authority's guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with the Local Authority Attendance Service to ensure that any sporting event absence is within the parameters of the law.

Section 4: Promote and monitor attendance

Strategies to manage and promote regular attendance

The school will:

- Keep parents updated on the school's overall attendance and individual pupil's attendance via letters home, newsletters, social media and school/academy website.
- Follow the DfE and Government guidance in relation to school attendance.
- Follow Public Health guidance should any local lockdowns or outbreaks in school occur.
- Report to parents how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this via regular parent evenings.
- Build positive relationships between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. The link between attendance, attainment and wider wellbeing will be discussed with parents.
- Utilise attendance data, analysing patterns and trends to target attendance and punctuality improvement across pupil cohorts or individual pupils, to reduce persistent or severe absence from school.

- Account for and consider the specific needs of pupils and their families where there may be other barriers to attendance (medical conditions, mental health or special educational needs and disabilities) and provide support to overcome these barriers. (e. g. Early Help or other wider partners)
- Support pupils back into school following a length or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Notify parents when we are worried about their child's attendance by following the procedure below.

Attendance monitoring

The school will:

- Produce daily and weekly summary reports and share with the school DSL and dedicated senior leaders.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Hold regular attendance and punctuality strategy meetings where actions from previous meetings are monitored, and any newly arising patterns or issues are identified to target for challenge or support.
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Pupil-level absence data will be collected published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Academy Council.

Section 5: Analysing attendance

The academy will analyse its attendance and absence data regularly to support identification of vulnerable pupils or groups of pupils that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.

It will also look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and use this information to develop strategies to address these patterns.

Section 6: Reducing persistent and severe absence

The Department for Education defines **Persistent absence** as when a pupil misses **10% or more** of school, and **Severe absence** as when a pupil misses **50% or more** of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. The Attendance Policy has a direct link to safeguarding policy; the behaviour policy; anti-bullying strategies and the Health and Safety Policy.

IN SITUATIONS WHERE ALL OTHER STRATEGIES HAVE FAILED TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, THE TRUST EWO WILL REFER THE PUPIL TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SERVICE UNDER SECTION 444(1) AND 444(1A) OF THE EDUCATION ACT 1996 AND THE CHILDREN ACT 1989, WHICH MAY RESULT IN A FINE UP TO £2,500; A PARENTING ORDER; A COMMUNITY ORDER; OR A CUSTODIAL SENTENCE. CONSIDERATION WILL ALSO BE GIVEN TO THE ISSUING OF A PENALTY NOTICE IN CASE OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE WHERE APPROPRIATE AND/OR A PARENTING CONTRACT OR EDUCATION SUPERVISION ORDER.

Reviewed on Feb 2025
Approved by_____
Review date Feb 26

Appendices

Appendix 1:Attendance Codes

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
P	Participating in a sporting activity
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience
Absent – Leave of absence	
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Absent – other authorised reasons	
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
R	Religious observance
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Appendix 2: Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

This policy follows the DfE's guidance on Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance, February 2023. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools

Guidance for parents on school attendance - Office of the Children's Commissioner: https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/

The Education Act 2002
The Education and Inspections Act 2006
The Education Regulations 2006
The Education Regulations 2013
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (September 2016)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold

Appendix 3: New national framework for unauthorised absence.

Under the new national framework, all schools will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Safe and well check for extended absence school's policy

- **Individual risk assessment:** For any continuing absence where the school has not had a reliable sighting of the child, a risk assessment must be undertaken to determine if a safe and well check is necessary.

The safe and well check process

If a child has a prolonged or unexplained absence, schools must follow a multi-stage process:

1. **Daily contact:** Parents/ carers must contact school by **9am** on the first day of absence to inform school of the reason and when the child is expected to return. There after the parents/carers must contact school every day of absence.

2. **Escalation and home visit:** If a parent is uncontactable or the school has not had a reliable sighting of the child, the attendance support officer or other school staff may conduct an unannounced home visit. The decision for a visit is based on an individual risk assessment.

Medical and mental health absences

For absences due to medical or mental health concerns, school should maintain regular safe and well checks with the pupil.

- **15+ day absence:** The local authority has a duty to provide alternative education for a child expected to be away from school for more than 15 consecutive or cumulative school days.

- **Sensitive support:** For pupils with mental health issues or disabilities, schools are expected to have sensitive conversations and work with families to provide tailored support.

ABSENT PUPILS RISK ASSESSMENT

When was the pupil last seen in school and reason for absence?

Description of action already taken by school: **Description of any known risks** Inc. information from staff/parents/others **Assess risk:** low / medium / high

Assessment of risk and action taken to minimise risk:

Signed by **Name** **Date**

Signature: W Plant
W Plant (Oct 16, 2025 15:49:59 GMT+1)

Email: whitneyplant@gmail.com

Attendance Policy 2025-26

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