



Elton Primary School

Attendance Policy



Review date: January, 2017

Next review: January, 2018

Head teacher signed: *R. Pars*

Chair of Governors signed:

Elton Primary School

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at school is vital for all our children if they are to gain the most from the education we provide. There are clearly documented links between regular attendance and attainment. Punctuality is also very important to ensure children get the most out of school.

The school bell rings at 8:50am and children should be ready, in their classrooms, with the appropriate equipment ready by 8:55am.

Any pupil arriving after 9:00am is marked as late. The register closes at 9:30am, after this time the mark given will indicate that the pupil arrived after registration closed.

The school operates an effective 'Keeping in Touch' procedure to monitor absence and class teachers regularly check the attendance of their class, and will follow up a child's absence with appropriate personnel in school or with the child's parents.

Parents are expected to assist us in our work of raising and maintaining attendance levels throughout the school by:

- Ensuring the regular attendance of their child and that their child arrives at School ready to learn.
- Letting school know daily by 8.55am if their child is ill and what ails them unless the illness is a longer term one such as chickenpox etc. If school is unable to make contact, the police may be contacted to establish the whereabouts of the child in-line with our Child Protection Policy. For longer term absences a request may be made by the school for parents to produce a doctor's note.
- Attending any meetings about their child's attendance, which may be necessary.

Rights and Responsibility

All young people have a right to an education. A child is of statutory school age between 5 and 16. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. If a child does not attend school regularly parents/carers may be breaking the law.

The Role of the Head Teacher

The head teacher is the key person in our school who motivates and leads the staff by demonstrating a commitment to promoting good attendance by:

- Leading public celebrations of good attendance including school attendance incentives.
- Providing reports to the governing body of the school about attendance.
- Being available for parents who may wish to discuss specific problems or in-school difficulties which their child is experiencing.
- Providing information to governors, parents, Bury College Education Trust, the LA and DfE regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the school's attendance policy and the associated in-school practices.
- Monitoring weekly attendance levels, half termly pupil percentages and making contact with families whose children are getting close to a 15% absence rate.
 - Communicating with the Local Authority on attendance matters and seeking relevant advice.

The Role of the Governors

The Governing Body of the school is actively engaged in promoting good attendance at the school by supporting and encouraging children's and teachers in their work.

They achieve this by:

- Leading and taking part in public celebrations of good attendance.
- Supporting staff in the development of a whole school approach to promoting good attendance.
- Supporting staff in setting up appropriate attendance targets for the whole school.
- Working with the head teacher to monitor and evaluate attendance trends in the school.
 - Delegating authority (if necessary) to the head teacher to authorise 'absence' on their behalf.

The Role of the School's Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The school's Senior Leadership Team has responsibility for attendance matters:

- Leading and supporting the implementation of an attendance policy and framework for the school.
- Monitoring and evaluating the work of staff to ensure specific responsibilities described within the whole school framework are carried out consistently.
- Supporting staff in the development of clear guidelines for promoting good attendance
- Supporting staff in the development of clear guidelines for identifying children's who have begun to develop a pattern of absence.

The Role of the School Office

The school office provide a great deal of valuable support for teaching staff in promoting attendance by:

- Operating the 'Keeping in touch' system and recording information received from parents at the school office especially: the reason for absence, identifying whether the absence is approved or not and ensuring the correct code has been entered in the register.
- Liaising with class teachers about the foreseen and unforeseen absence of children
- Making routine phone calls to parents about their child's absences.
- Providing the head teacher with attendance statistics and other reports upon request, through the use of Information Management Systems (IMS).
- Preparing any termly attendance certificates.
- Preparing and publishing statistical data regarding attendance.

The Role of the Class Teacher

Class teachers are ideally placed because of their regular daily contact with children to assess whether the explanations received for a child's absence are reasonable, or the child is at an early stage in developing a pattern of absence. At Elton Primary School we recognise that building a good relationship with children is vital in promoting good attendance by:

- Publicly praising and celebrating regular attendance and punctuality.
- Identifying children who are beginning to develop, or have developed, a pattern of absence.
- Welcoming children back after they have been absent due to illness.
- Taking specific steps to assist children and their families who are returning to school when they have been absent due to illness.
- Consistently checking parents' explanations for their child's absence.
- Being a positive, active role model.
- Referring any concerns to the head teacher.

The role of Parents/Carers

We believe our children are able to work at their best when home and school work together.

- Parents take an active interest in their child's school work.
- Parents ensure that their child attends school regularly and avoid taking their children out of school during term time for unnecessary reasons or for unnecessary prolonged periods of time (which includes term-time holidays).
- Parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time – 8:50am for 8:55am start.
- Parents attend any necessary meetings and respond as quickly as possible to any letters and information about their child's attendance.
- Parents follow the 'Keeping in touch' procedures with regards to absences.
- Parents make sure that after their child has been absent, they check with the school office about any school letters that have been missed.

- Parents ensure wherever possible, if their child has to attend a necessary medical appointment, that their child is present for morning/afternoon registration. In this way children will not incur an absence mark.
- When children have to be taken out of school during the school day for appointments, parents follow the correct 'signing out/in' procedures.

The Role of Children

We believe that all children should attend school regularly if we are to encourage them to reach their full potential. We encourage children to appreciate the importance of attending school regularly and to have a positive working attitude.

Children should:

- Aim for 100% attendance, only being absent through genuine reasons.
- If he/she arrives late, they must report to the school office and sign in to say that they have arrived in school.
- Not leave the school premises during the school day without permission and only when accompanied by an adult.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

It is very unlikely that a holiday will be granted in term time unless there are extenuating circumstances (e.g. parents work in the forces, proof can be obtained from the parents' employer that this is the only time they can take for a family holiday, the child is involved in a special performance or work related activity, the family has suffered a bereavement or has a member of family with a terminal illness).

If parents should wish to apply for a holiday in term time then they will be required to complete a holiday request form in advance, giving the reason(s) for absence and, if the reason for absence is for a holiday during term-time, the following information:

- Departure and return dates and
- The specific reason for the holiday request.

The request form can be obtained from the school office.

Following a request for leave of absence, school will respond in writing, stating the reasons for the decision made. The letter approving the request will clearly state:

- The expected date of return
- That the parents should contact school if anything delays their child's expected return date
- The action that will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected without good reason.

Similarly, a letter refusing a request will also explain the reasons for the refusal and what actions will be taken if the decision is ignored (possible removal from the school roll – see below).

Reasons for refusing a request will consider:

- The stage of education the pupil is at
- The current level of attendance
- The proximity to major exams/assessments
- The amount of authorised holiday leave already granted and
- Any special mitigating circumstance.

A points calculation chart applied equitably to every request, will support any refusal made by the Governing Body after individual circumstances have been considered. Only in extremely exceptional circumstances will a pupil be granted leave of absence exceeding 10 days.

Such circumstances may include the following:

- Loss of passport
- Serious illness / accident to child or accompanying family member
- Death of a family member
- Missed or delayed flights
- War/civil unrest
- Severe weather conditions.

If a child fails to return to school within 10 school days of the agreed return date, without good reason, their child's name may be removed from the school roll, with no guarantee of re-admission.

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are categorised as unauthorised. Bury LA considers that regular attendance at school is important and Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs. It may well be one of the actions considered if a pupil does not return to school on the date specified in the request form.

If school has concerns regarding a child's attendance, in the first instance, the Head teacher will write on behalf of The Governing Body warning of impending unauthorised absence as the 20th authorised session approaches. In the same letter families will be warned that the Education Welfare Service will issue a written warning if a pupil has, or is likely to have a minimum of 5 school days lost to unauthorised absence.

The written warning would indicate the extent of the child's absences and would give 15 days in which to improve. If, after this 15 day period, there have been 2 or more sessions of unauthorised absence gained, a penalty notice may be issued.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Attendance Policy will be evaluated on an annual basis. Meetings will be held throughout the school year between the Head teacher and Pastoral Team Leader. Consultation with the whole school community will occur.

The results of this process including achievements for the current year and for the forthcoming academic year will be presented to the governing body on an annual basis.