



Elemore Hall School

Policy Title	Attendance
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This version	September 2019
Approved by	
To be reviewed by	Curriculum, Standards & ECM Committee
Review Due	September 2022

ATTENDANCE

INTRODUCTION

Elemore Hall School recognises the importance of good school attendance. As a consequence it is essential that any absenteeism be responded to quickly and in a consistent and measured manner. It is vital that the message to pupils and parents conveys the importance of attendance to the school, and the future of individual pupils.

In order to monitor absenteeism among pupils and manage effectively unauthorised absence it is important that the response to absenteeism is a whole school one.

DfEE circular 10/99 and the Durham LA common scheme for recording attendance inform this policy.

DEFINITION

Absence is when a pupil does not arrive at school for a session (half day), or when s/he arrives more than 30 minutes after registration (unless this is due to a transport issue).

Authorised absences from school are those attributable to:

- Sickness
- Treatment at a hospital, dentist, optician etc.
- Bona fide religious observance
- The failure of school transport or local authority transport arrangements
- Attendance at an approved public performance
- Bereavement within the family
- Attendance on a school visit (this is considered to be in attendance at school)
- Work experience (this is considered to be in attendance at school)
- Exclusion
- Attendance at a court, or at a legal representatives
- Bona fide lateness after registration closes
- Other approved circumstances.

Unauthorised absences are those other than authorised ones, attendance but beyond 30 minutes after registration without satisfactory explanation, and absence due to truancy before registration closes in either school sessions.

Absenting is when a pupil is not where they should be but remains on the school site. Absconding is when a pupil leaves the school site, or the company of staff when on educational visits, without staff permission. These behaviours and the school response are explained in detail in the school policy document "Pupils who are improperly absent".

SCOPE

This policy applies to all pupils on roll at the school, and covers issues related to attendance including absence and unauthorised absence and absconding.

RATIONALE

The regular attendance of pupils at school is vital to all pupils but particularly to pupils who have had a history of interrupted schooling, changes of school, or who are under functioning. Continuity and progression are prerequisites of successful learning.

Parents/Carers have a crucial role in securing good attendance. At Elemore Parents/Carers are valued as partners. Effective liaison with Parents/Carers in respect of pupil absence serves to:

- Make Parents/Carers aware that first absences are worthy of attention
- Establish the legitimacy or otherwise of absences
- Establish contact at a personal level between school and home
- Offer Parents/Carers appropriate support
- Discourage the development of prolonged absence
- Assist in the accurate recording and reporting of attendance figures

Pupils abscond from school for all sorts of reasons. Much pupil absconding is illogical. However, there remains a need to report absconding because of the potential risk to pupils, members of the public and their property, and the need to maintain effective communication with Parents/Carers and the community.

REQUIREMENTS

The school is required to provide information in respect of number of pupils in year groups, % of pupils having one or more sessions unauthorised absence, the number of sessions of unauthorised absence, and the % of sessions missed because of unauthorised absence to the DfE or its agent in its compilation of school and local education authority performance tables.

Administraton:

- ❑ Attendance for the previous year is reported at Annual Reviews.
- ❑ Absent pupils should be reported to the Duty Coordinator and the Casework Manager. A Major Incident Report should be completed when appropriate.

The person responsible for attendance is required to:

- ❑ Maintain year group registers of pupil attendance, using the agreed marking and recording system
- ❑ File notes of telephone calls, copies of letters to parents, and the education welfare service in respect of pupil absence.
- ❑ Provide data to teachers on pupil attendance in respect of annual reports to parents.

The Head teacher is required to:

- ❑ Decide on the type of communication necessary to inform parents of absence
- ❑ Liaise with the casework manager and/or school secretary in respect of written communication with parents
- ❑ Decide if and when the educational welfare service or social worker (if applicable) should be involved
- ❑ Liaise with the person responsible for attendance in respect of the cause of authorised absence.

If a pupil has arrived at school but does not present themselves for lessons, the Duty Coordinator, or their delegates, are required to follow the school procedures outlined in the document “Pupils who are improperly absent”, including reporting pupils who are missing after thirty (30) minutes to:

- ❑ Parents or carers
- ❑ Durham Police Constabulary by telephone if there is a concern and then, where appropriate, by fax then follow up phone call
- ❑ Social workers, where appropriate by telephone and note their reports in the Absconding Log.

If Duty Coordinators are unable to contact parents or carers by telephone they must make try to make other arrangements to do so, this may include contacting a relative or making a ‘cold call’.

The Head teacher will complete data on attendance in respect of:

- ❑ The schools obligation in respect of comparative data
- ❑ Reporting termly to Governors

IMPLEMENTATION

- On arrival at school, pupils are required to enter by the main door and register. They should arrive at school by taxi between 8.40am and 8.55am. Once a pupil has entered the building and registered, they should remain within the building or fenced area until the end of the school day unless instructed otherwise by a member of staff.
- Duty Coordinators conduct a follow-up register during the first lesson to confirm the attendance list provided by reception. Teachers should report ANY missing pupil to the Duty coordinator immediately so that it can be checked whether they are missing from school on that day or if they are just missing from that lesson. The Duty Coordinator maintains an active record of school and lesson attendance throughout the day. Pupil presence should be noted with a slash and absence initially left blank unless there is a known reason for the absence, e.g. work experience or illness, in which case the appropriate code should be used.
- Late arrivals up to 9.30 a.m. should be recorded as full attenders. Pupils who arrive after 9.30 a.m. will effectively have their lateness initially recorded as an absence but modified to show late attendance.
- Once the attendance register has been taken, the person responsible for attendance should use this to identify absent pupils and then try to determine reasons for absence where a reason is not already known. This will include checking for any messages that

have been left with school staff, taxi drivers and escorts or by letter, decisions that have been made regarding pupil attendance eg., exclusion, work experience, illness.

- Where a pupil is absent and an explanation has not been given, a Teachers2Parents message will be sent to their parent/carer to ask them to contact the school to provide a reason. If an absence remains unexplained, then it should be followed up by the casework manager. In some cases it may be more appropriate to contact EWS. The course of action to be taken will be determined by a member of the Core Leadership in consultation with the casework manager and, where appropriate, the EWO.
- Once a reason for absence is established, this should be marked on the register using the agreed marking system. This task should be completed by the end of second lesson.
- If unauthorised or unexplained absence continues beyond the first day, then the school will report the absence to the Educational Welfare Service to enlist their support. If attendance becomes prolonged or is erratic then the EWO along with the Headteacher (or his delegate) will determine what action should be taken to attempt to resolve a situation. Decisions in this respect should be made on an individual pupil basis but aimed at gaining improved continuity of attendance. This may include meetings in school or at another location, warning letters, fixed penalty notices and referral to the magistrate's court.
- All contact with parents and other agencies (written and verbal) regarding attendance should be kept in the Attendance section of a pupil's main file by the person responsible for attendance. This will necessitate details of telephone messages and calls in respect of attendance being forwarded to him/her.
- At the end of each week, pupil attendance is transferred from the paper register to an electronic register accessed through the SIMS system.
- Regular printouts of pupil attendance are produced so that interested parties in school can use the information for reports, etc. these are kept in the attendance section of pupil main files.
- At the end of every lesson the teacher records lesson attendance, this allows the school to identify where pupils are missing school/lessons, if there is a pattern, etc, and supports the school in working with pupil and parents to improve attendance.
- For other attendance issues, e.g., occasional missed days through unauthorised absence, medical or family reasons, the Personal Tutor will speak with parents to remind them how important good school attendance is.

Examples of the Common Scheme for Recording Attendance and proforma letters are contained in the Appendix.

EXPECTED ATTENDANCE

The national guideline is that a pupil's school attendance will be at least 95%. There is therefore an expectation that all forms of absence combined will not exceed 5% (or nine and a half days) per year. Absence includes illness, bereavement, appointments, term-time holiday, exclusions and unauthorised absence.

Many pupils have legitimate reasons for being absent from school from time to time and in such circumstances they can be recorded as an authorised absence – this would include genuine illness, post operative recovery and medical appointments. However other

absences such as refusing to attend school or where a reason has not been given are recorded as unauthorised. The school will involve our casework manager and also the EWO in cases where we are concerned about a pupil's absence they will also be involved if a pupil's attendance falls below 85% as this is then classified as 'Persistent Absence' and further action including the possibility of legal action will be taken.

HOLIDAYS

If a parent wants to take their child on holiday during term time then they should write to the Headteacher at the school explaining when the proposed holiday will be taken and why it is being taken during term time. In exceptional circumstances the Headteacher may agree to the holiday being recorded as an authorised absence, however unfortunately most term-time holidays will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Parents should be aware that a two week term-time holiday that has not been authorised will result in a fixed penalty notice.

REWARDS & INCENTIVES

The school keeps an accurate record of attendance and uses this to make awards to pupils at the end of weeks/terms/years if they have achieved a high level of attendance over a period of time. Certificates from both the school and from the EWS are awarded as are vouchers that can be used either at the school reward shop or at town centre shops.

Weekly attendance in school and at lessons is also encouraged and rewarded. If a pupil has 100% school/lesson attendance for a week they automatically get a credit in the school Tuck Shop and five house points. Attendance at lessons also contributes to the overall Behaviour score for a pupil over the period of a term. Different scores at the end of the term trigger a range of rewards.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Deputy Head is responsible for oversight of the day to day monitoring of attendance. S/he will liaise with the Headteacher in reviewing the success of the policy and procedures. There is a nominated Link Governor in the area of attendance.

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body on the attendance policy and levels of attendance. This will be done on a termly basis.

September 2019