



Ellwood Primary School Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

Good attendance is central to raising pupil standards and attainment. Pupils should attend regularly, 100% of the time and be at school on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Regular absence will seriously affect a child's learning.

Ensuring a child's attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Poor attendance disadvantages children. Whilst 100% attendance is the ideal situation for any school to aspire to, clearly there are many factors such as genuine illness which prevent this. 100% attendance, where it occurs, is "excellent". We would be concerned if attendance falls below 95%, where a child is known to be in reasonable health and there are no other extenuating circumstances.

2. Registers

The school day starts at **8.55 a.m.** The gates are opened at **8.45 a.m.** and pupils are expected to be ready to enter school at **8.55 a.m.** for registration at **9.00am.**

Teachers are required to complete the online register (eSchools) at the beginning of each session every day and they should be returned to the office, after morning registration (9.00am) and again in the afternoon after registration (1.00pm). Any child who arrives after 9.05 a.m. is late and should enter the school by the front door and report to the office and sign in. The time the child arrives is entered in the late book.

When there is an absence and the teacher knows the reasons for the absence, they should mark the appropriate code on the system. If they are unsure, then they will mark it as an N indicating the reason is not known. The office will endeavour to find out the circumstances for the absence.

Any notes received from parents should be sent to the office where they are held on file. A list of symbols used to explain absences is detailed in the DfE publication *School Attendance - Statutory Guidance* and departmental advice. The eSchools system also gives the codes and an explanation.

Where there is a definite pattern of non-attendance or where the explanation for absence is unsatisfactory then absence cannot be authorised even with a message from a parent.

The eSchools system will automatically update the schools SIMs and the Admin Assistant will look at the information to identify the children who have an N code, to find out their whereabouts or reason for the absence.

3. Procedures

Registers are kept up to date each day by the teachers. They also complete a hard copy Health and Safety sheet, which indicates number of pupils and absentees. This is sent to the office after each registration.

Absence letters are sent to the office on a daily basis and held on file.

- If a parent has not called the office to explain an absence by 9.30 a.m. the administrator will call home to find out the reason for the child's absence;
- Absence letters are checked against registers which are coded appropriately;
- The SIM system is updated daily;
- A late book is kept in the office and lateness must be recorded
- The Admin Assistant and Head Teacher checks absence reports termly (6) and responds appropriately to any concerns e.g. letter home/meetings.
- The Head Teacher, SENCO and FSW contacts parents by letter or face to face if they are concerned either by the pattern of absence, it is below 90 % half termly and 95% termly, or for frequent lateness;
- Attendance information is shared with parents termly
- Failure to improve on this position will result in the parents being requested to attend an AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting)
- Certificates are issued termly for 100% attendance and special awards will be given at the end of the year for excellent attendance throughout the year.
- Classes who have had over 97% average attendance that week, move up on the display in the hall and receive a raffle ticket for a termly draw
- If attendance is poor: the FSW and SENCO can offer support for families, a referral can be made to the school nurse or the Families First Plus Early Help Team.
- If a child is on a Child Protection Plan and has not been in school for more than 2 days without a reason, the Social Worker should be phoned.

If a child is classed as CME (Child Missing in Education) the Local Authority guidance will be followed: <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/15311/cme-guide-january-2017.pdf> and we will notify the LA if we have concerns.

A child classed as CME if they are:

- of compulsory school age and
- not on a school roll and
- not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately or in alternative provision.

This might be:

- A child who has left a custodial establishment or private schooling or has arrived into Gloucestershire and whose parent has been unable to secure a school place
- A child who is deemed not to be receiving a suitable education whilst EHE
CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown), and are usually children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision

This might be:

- A child who is not at their last known address **and either**
- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected,

or

- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation,

or

- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Parents

Parents have the responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. They should inform the school as soon as possible of any reason for their child's absence and provide a note on his/her return. Medical appointments ie Doctor, Dentist should be made out of school time where practical.

The Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances for example funeral/bereavement. Time off school for family holidays is **not a right**. Authorisation for holidays will not be given, only in 'exceptional circumstances', e.g. service families where one member has just returned from active service, family bereavement. Therefore holidays will not be granted. If holidays are taken you may be at risk of receiving a penalty notice(s) without further warning.

Examples of Authorised Absences:

- illness
- examination
- family bereavement
- religious observance/festival
- medical/dental appointment where the appointment cannot be arranged out of school hours

Examples of Unauthorised Absences:

- truancy
- any unexplained absence
- going shopping
- having hair cut
- staying at home to look after young children or sick relatives
- holidays

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt the continuity of their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for lessons upon their return. There is a consequent risk of under achievement which parents must seek to avoid.

Every school day counts!

- 365 days in a year
- 190 days in a school year

This leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping and appointments!

Our attendance target for this year is 97%+.

Phone the school on the first day of absence before 9.15 a.m. on 01594 833232

An answer machine is available to take messages early in the morning if necessary.

If your child fails to attend school regularly and punctually and the absence is recorded by the school as unauthorised, you are guilty of a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.

5. Class Teachers

Class teachers have initial responsibility for expecting good attendance and punctuality from the children in their class and for keeping registers accurately. Class teachers should complete the register every morning at the end of the registration period (9.00am) along with any absence letters supplied by parents and again after lunch (12.55pm).

6. Administrator

The Admin Assistant is responsible for the daily collection and safe-keeping of attendance information. Any absences that have not been notified to the school by 9.15 a.m. should be followed up with a phone call.

They are responsible for holding copies of absence letters on file. It is also the responsibility of the Admin Assistant to follow up absences and if needed, send absence letters to parents, where there are any absences that have not been explained to the school.

If there are any pupils whose attendance causes concern then the Head teacher should be informed immediately. Any noticeable patterns in absence should also be notified to the Head teacher.

7. Head teacher

The Head teacher will monitor attendance every term and analyse data of significant groups. The lateness book will also be monitored on a regular basis. If there any pupils who are causing concern their parents will be contacted. If there is not a noticeable improvement then the parents will be invited to attend an AIM with the Head teacher to discuss the problem. It may be possible that a child who is reluctant to come to school may have genuine reasons for not wanting to attend which would need to be investigated and acted upon.

The Head Teacher should report attendance figures to the Governing Body each term through the Head teacher's report. The Head teacher, in conjunction with the Administrator, will ensure that absence returns for the Local Education Authority are completed accurately and meet deadlines.

If attendance does not improve significantly the Head teacher will seek advice from the Education Entitlement and Inclusion (EPI) team at the LA.

8. Penalty Notice

A Penalty Notice is a fine. A penalty notice will be issued for absence during term-time in order to take a holiday, where school has not authorised the absence. A separate penalty notice will be issued for each child taken out of school to each parent.

The penalty notice allows you 21 days to pay a £60 fine. If you pay after the 21-day period but within 28 days, the fine increases to £120. If the fine remains unpaid at this stage, the Local Authority would initiate legal proceedings against you for your child's non-attendance.

If a child misses 10 or more sessions during term-time in order to take a holiday, within a 10 week period, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

There are other circumstances whereby a Penalty notice may be issued such as; Persistent lateness. The school refers to the LA for further guidance in relation to this.

Governing Body

The Governing Body monitors the attendance figures each term through the Head teacher's report.

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D.Milford