

Ellwood Community Primary School

Believe, Achieve, Belong



Pupil Absence & Attendance Policy

Date reviewed: February 2024

Next renew date: Interim review February 2026

Approved by Governors : February 2024

At Ellwood Community Primary School we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time to avoid disruption to their learning and the learning of others
- Call the school to report their child's absence before as soon as possible on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances
- Book medical appointments around the school day whenever possible

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- (Secondary schools) Attend every timetabled session on time
- The governing body are expected to:
- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The head teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation and management of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data weekly and half termly and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Ensuring parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full time education and to act as early as possible to address patterns of absence
- Initiating the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated Attendance leads are responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school has a team of staff who are responsible for attendance:

Mrs Milford (Head Teacher)

Mrs Edwards (Business Manager)

Mrs Charles (Family Support Worker)

They can be contacted on 01594 833232 or admin@ellwood.gloucs.sch.uk

The team is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 head teacher

The class teacher/form tutor is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office as soon as possible after the register is completed

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an attendance register on the school MIS (SIMS) and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Absent

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

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

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

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

/ Present in the morning

\ Present in the afternoon

B Educated offsite

C Other authorised circumstances

D dual registration

E Excluded

G Family holiday (not agreed)

H Family holiday (agreed)

I Illness

J Interview

L late before registers closed

M Medical/dental appointment

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised absence

P Approved sporting activity

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T traveler absence

U Late after registers closed

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

X Non-compulsory school age absence

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45 am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken by 9.00 am.

The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12.55 pm

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on 01594 833232 or by email to admin@ellwood.gloucs.sch.uk. They will be expected to provide an explanation of the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last.

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 doctor's note, prescription, appointment card 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.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register at 9:15am to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

Where a pupil is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter or email with an explanation for the absence(s).

In the case of Persistent Absence [PA] or where a child is at risk of becoming PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to one of the Attendance Leads. The school will inform the LA, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Attendance Leads will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

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 either by calling the school or by email.

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 head teacher can only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the head teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible from the school office. The head teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments

Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes - this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

The school is not likely to grant a leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday and will request that the Local Authority issue a fixed penalty notice, should the duration be 10 sessions (5 days) or more. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods.
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason.

Please note: this is not an exclusive or exhaustive list.

Procedures following unexplained absence

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may insert your measures e.g. following missing protocols - contact police etc.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code 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. If absence continues, the school will insert your process here.

Strategies for promoting attendance

The school celebrate good attendance in assemblies, school meetings with parents, displays etc.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels through reports
- Monitor attendance and absence data (define for your school - weekly and half-termly, termly across the school and at an individual pupil level)
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and 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 school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to insert members of staff e.g. class teachers, tutors and other school leaders (school can name these if appropriate e.g. pastoral lead, SENCo), 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

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school across the year for any reason, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school has a strategy for dealing with low attendance.

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. An AIM (attendance improvement meeting) will be held.
- Support of an Inclusion Support Officer
- We follow the graduated pathway to identify and target support.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

- If still no improvement and attendance still remains low, formalised support or use of legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract (appendix 1), engagement with Children's Services through a MARF (Multi Agency Referral Form), Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

Legal sanctions

- The school can request Gloucestershire County Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct Attendance - Schoolsnet (gloucestershire.gov.uk) NB if schools use this link they will not have to update the document when it is changed on GCC's website
- If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £120 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice - note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.
- In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:
 - All natural parents, whether they are married or not
 - Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
 - Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

- Child Protection & safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Flexi-schooling Policy
- This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

• This policy was written : February 2024

• Signed: D.Milford

• Approved by Governors :

• Next Review date :February 2026

Appendix 1**Parenting contract for attendance – An agreement between the school and parents**

Parenting Contract for Attendance**Date**

Child's name:		Child's DOB:	
School/NCY:			
Parents' name(s):		Parents' DOB:	
Address(es):			
Tel:			

Senior staff member with overall responsibility:
Member of staff responsible day-to-day:
Contact number for the school to inform if the child is too unwell to attend:
Linked Inclusion Officer:

It is important that we work together to improve your child's school attendance to give them the opportunity to attain and progress. We are going to work together to ensure the above-named child improves their attendance at school with immediate effect.

Your child's current attendance is**This means they have missed sessions/days so far this year.****So far of these absences have been authorised by us.****So far of these absences have been unauthorised by us.**

Your child has been late to school on occasions.

This equates to them missing minutes of their learning.

The reasons you have given for these absences have been:

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We have listened to your child and discussed with them the reasons for their absence. They have shared with us that:

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The specific targets of our plan. What we aim to do by (date):

These could be outlined in a My Plan and attached to document

To achieve these targets we will:

These could be included explicitly in a My Plan and attached to the document

Parents agree to:

School agrees to:

Child agrees to:

Reviews

This contract will be reviewed regularly.

If the contract is being adhered, to the school will ensure the child receives recognition of the improvement and will continue to monitor and support.

If the contract is not being adhered to, the school will notify the Local Authority, where next steps will be considered, including progression to attendance legal processes.

Agreeing to the contract:

Consent by parent(s):

I/we have agreed to this Parenting Contract and will:

(a) work with the school (and council) as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance, and

(b) carry out what we have promised to do.

(c)

I/we also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us.

I/we understand that if my child has any further unauthorised absences from school, a Penalty Notice or prosecution may follow without further warning. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.

Signed (Parent/s):

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Signed by the Child (age appropriate)

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Signed (on behalf of the school/governing body/local authority)

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Head Teacher:	D.Milford
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Date: 11.9.23
