



Elizabeth Woodville
Primary School

Attendance Policy

Status:	Statutory
Designated Committee:	Full Governing Body
Date Approved:	November 2024

Striving for Excellence ~~~

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1. Introduction

Elizabeth Woodville Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines to all staff, governors and parents. This policy is written in accordance with the government guidance Working Together to Improve School attendance and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

2. Attendance Core Statement

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents and local community can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention of a problem if identified. All staff will encourage good attendance and liaise with home and other agencies when this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal rights for all.

3. Aims

To continue to foster our positive school culture in which high attendance is the norm by:

- Demonstrating to pupils, parents and staff that the school values high attendance.
- Recognising that high attendance is an achievement and something to be proud of.
- Ensuring implementation is rigorous and consistent, both in terms of rewards and sanctions.
- To value the individual and support our families when needed.
- To continue to ensure whole school attendance is above 97.5%
- To support parents and work with families to understand reasons for absence including any barriers to attendance.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Senior Attendance Champion is the identified person responsible for monitoring attendance. Attendance levels are reported to the Headteacher and at Full Governors' meetings on a termly basis to ensure the school is on track to achieve our ambitious targets. The attendance of each individual is tracked with procedures taken if absence is below 95%. In the case of children in Foundation Stage (FS) who may not have reached statutory school age, parents of children with poor attendance will still be contacted in order to establish future patterns of good attendance. The headteacher will take appropriate action in the case of unacceptable absences including legal action if necessary. This includes referring cases to the Local Authority for legal action if necessary.

The School Office will monitor attendance on a daily basis and ensure an immediate follow up by 9.30am if a child is absent from school without contact by the parent.

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If there is concern about a child's absence or if it is unexplained, they will contact the School Office immediately.

5. Targets

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and events.

6. Absence Definitions

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note, emails or telephones the school office to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

7. Absence Procedures

It is expected that parents or carers will provide an explanation if the child is absent on the first day the absence occurs. This can be done by email, letter, telephone, in person at the school or by appointment. If contact is not made by the parents, then the school will attempt to contact the parents on the first day of absence and then on subsequent days, if contact has not been made.

School will attempt to contact parents by phone or if contact has not been achieved via a visit from the Attendance Officer. This may then be followed by letters or if deemed necessary, Education Welfare Officer (EWO) intervention. If absence due to sickness is causing concern and the absence pattern is unexplained or made up of several isolated days, a child may be referred to the school nurse. The Headteacher may decide that they only authorise the absence on receipt of suitable medical evidence. This could include a prescription form, appointment card or conversation with health personnel.

The Headteacher will regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and punctuality through the school newsletter. Children with 100% attendance each term and for the whole school year are rewarded with a certificate.

The parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 8.55am by email or phone. The school has an answer phone available with an absence line to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call.

If a child is absent the school will:

- Telephone parents on the first day of absence if it has not been reported as soon as possible after registration and by 9.30am;
- The headteacher will meet with parents to discuss attendance if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to our in-school Senior Attendance Champion if attendance moves below 90%, without authorised reasons.
- The attendance of all pupils below 95% is monitored by the school.

8. Completing Registers

The twice daily requirements to register pupils should be perceived as an opportunity to welcome the children individually and formally. Registers are taken every morning and afternoon that school is open to pupils. Totals are noted for fire and emergency purposes. Each absence is recorded with the correct code using the symbols advised by Leicestershire County Council Education Service.

The School Office monitors the registers after registration every morning and contacts the parents of the first day absentees who have not notified the school. The absence information is all recorded on the school system to ensure the Headteacher and class teacher can also monitor the attendance.

Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents that may be required in a court of law.

9. Lateness

School sessions begin at 8.45am, the registration period closes at 8.55am. Pupils are late from 8.55am. All pupils are expected to be in school for registration by this time. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. All lateness from 8.55am will be treated as unauthorised absence and the same procedures for absence will be followed.

10. Persistent Absence

The school will monitor for persistent absence, defined as attendance of 90% or less. Parents will be invited to meet the Senior Attendance Champion or Headteacher to talk about the reason for their child's absences and will be given strategies to support an increase in attendance.

11. Absence During Term-time

Following Government policy, the Headteacher will not authorise absence during term-time, except in very exceptional circumstances. If parents/carers feel they have an exceptional circumstance then a letter or email to the Headteacher must be submitted to school. Additional evidence may be required by the school to support this request. This will be followed by a letter from school, where parents will be told of the decision in their case.

We ask that ALL routine medical appointments are made after school and in holiday times where possible. Medical absences may need to be supported by appropriate evidence, for example, appointment cards, prescription forms, or a letter from a consultant/doctor.

Any unexplained absences may be referred to the Local Authority.

12. Penalty Notices

Any leave taken without prior agreement of the school or in excess of that agreed will be coded as unauthorised and the school will notify Leicestershire County Council who may issue a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child at £160 each (discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days) if no payment is received, the Local Authority will refer the case directly to the Magistrates Court for the purposes of a criminal prosecution.

From 19th August 2024, any second absence leave taken without prior agreement of the school or in excess of that agreed will be coded as unauthorised and the school will notify Leicestershire County Council who may issue a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child at £160 each when paid within 28 days. There will be no option to pay a discounted level. If no payment is received, the Local Authority will refer the case directly to the Magistrates Court for the purposes of a criminal prosecution.

Should a third offence and any further offence be committed for term time Leave or irregular attendance within 3 years a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates court. Magistrates fines can be up to £2,500 per parent per child.

13. Children Missing in Education

Concerns may arise where children do not attend school because they have been withdrawn (unless parents have elected to home educate) or have not been registered.

All groups are potentially at risk. Where children are absent from school the 'First Day Contact' ensures that schools are immediately in touch with parents/carers to advise on a child missing education and schools are expected to assist parents or carers in reporting the child missing to the Police should this prove necessary. If there is any cause for concern about a child's safety, an immediate referral is made to social care and the police.

The school will notify the Children Missing Education Officer in accordance with LA procedures, who will carry out further checks with Heath, Department for Work and Pensions and S2S to try to ascertain the child's whereabouts.

Full guidance is given in the respective Local Authority 'Children Missing Education' protocols. There is a statutory requirement on Local Authorities to identify children not in receipt of education which applies to any children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, or who have left a school with destination unknown and who are not receiving suitable education other than being at school (for example: at home, independent /private school or in alternative provision). This is critical from a safeguarding as well as educational perspective.