



**ELTHAM**

CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

SINCE 1814

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**



## Attendance

| Date        | Review Date | Attendance Lead | Headteacher   |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Autumn 2025 | Autumn 2026 | SUE DAY         | MATTHEW WILLS |

### 1. AIMS

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
  - Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
  - Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
  - Acting early to address patterns of absence
  - Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. 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](#)
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)
- [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.

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- > Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- > Improving Attendance at School (DfE)

### The Law Relating to Attendance

#### Legislation

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal and parental responsibility. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued (Section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) or Court action/prosecution (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

*Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that ‘the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable: -*

*a. To age, ability and aptitude*

*b. To any special educational needs, they may have either by regular attendance to school or otherwise.*

If you wish to find out more information about the legislation around attendance, please visit:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)

### **Penalty Notice Fines**

The school is required to notify the Local Authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly and whose unauthorised absences are approaching or meet the threshold of 10 school days in a rolling period.

The school and Local Authority may issue a penalty fine to parents if their child misses 10 sessions (5 days) due to unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for each child will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued (within three years) to the same parent for the same child will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child, however, if the national threshold is met for the third time within three years, parents can be prosecuted.

## **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Matthew Wills** and can be contacted via 0208 850 1528 or via email [sao1@elthamce.greenwich.sch.uk](mailto:sao1@elthamce.greenwich.sch.uk)

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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 headteacher
- Working with the Attendance Advisory Service at the Royal Borough of Greenwich to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Sue Day and can be contacted on 020 8850 1528 or via email [office@elthamce.greenwich.sch.uk](mailto:office@elthamce.greenwich.sch.uk)

### 3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

### 3.6 School Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 09.00am on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Collecting their children on time
- Taking part periodic surveys conducted by the school
- Not taking holidays in term time
- Informing the school of any changes to their contact details

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- being aware of the school attendance and truancy policy;

- >arriving at school on time;
- >knowing the value of good attendance;
- >returning to school after a period of illness;
- >support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- >liaise with the school council;
- >take part in questionnaires and surveys

## 4. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- 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

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 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9 am when the gates close, after this the child will be given a late mark and the number of minutes late will be recorded.

**Registers officially close at 9am and if pupils arrive after this time they are regarded as 'late after the close of registers'. A 'U' code is entered and parents must be aware that statistically, this is counted as an absence.**

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

**The school has a legal duty to share our attendance register on a daily basis with the Department for Education.**

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised once medical evidence has been provided. If the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will bring this to parents/carers attention.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

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.

#### 4.3 Attending a medical or dental appointment

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. Appointment cards will need to be shown. 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 pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

The attendance officer will monitor lateness and inform:

- >The Headteacher about any recurring incidents of lateness;
- >Write to parents/Carers informing them of the lateness
- >Parents/Carers of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed
- >Parents/Carers of incidents of lateness across the academic year within the annual school report

#### Every Minute Counts

As well as being absent a lot from school effecting your child's development, being late also has a big effect on their learning time, please look at the table below:

| <b>Lateness = Lost Learning</b><br>(figures below are calculated over the school year) |               |
|--|---------------|
| 5 mins late each day   | 3 days lost   |
| 10 mins late each day  | 6.5 days lost |
| 15 mins late each day  | 10 days lost  |
| 20 mins late each day  | 13 days lost  |
| 30 mins late each day  | 19 days lost  |

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- >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 try and contact any other family member to gain information.
- >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, on day 3 a visit would be made to home address. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

### 5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

## 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will 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 headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a religious observance or funeral of close family member.

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 for holiday will be unauthorized, all holidays should be taken should be taken out of school term. The headteacher and/or attendance officer may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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

### Leavers Form

You will be required to complete a Leavers Form, as we need to know your new address (if relevant) and the school your child is transferring to. If we do not receive this information and your child ceases to attend our school, they become a '**Child Missing in Education**'. \*The procedure will be followed as detailed above. Please contact your school office for a copy of the form.

## Elective Home Education (EHE)

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from school to 'Elect to Home Educate'. Parents must inform the school of their decision to home educate in writing. Once the school receives this notification, they will inform the Local Authority and await confirmation to remove the child from their roll. It is important that the decision to elect to home educate is discussed and carefully considered. Talk to the school about any difficulties you/your child may be having; once your child has been taken off roll, their place will be allocated and may not be available to your child should you change your mind at a later date.

## Child Missing Education (CME)

Any child who ceases to attend a school, without notification as to their new address and/or the school they are transferring to, becomes a '**Child Missing in Education**'. Any child in this category is reported to the Child Missing in Education Officer at the Local Authority, who will follow up the matter under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 and Safeguarding legislation, as necessary. This can involve the police. The school recognises that children going missing from education could be at risk of significant harm, and as such further information is provided in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The attendance procedures are crucial to ensuring the safety of all children. If a child has been absent from school for 20 consecutive days without good reason and their whereabouts are unknown, the school has a legal obligation to report the child as missing education to the relevant local authority. In accordance with DfE regulations the child may be removed from the school roll.

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure regular and punctual attendance of their child/ren of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

The Local Authority will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and improvements are not being made.

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child/ren from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a Penalty Notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Please note: If parents pay the Penalty Notice and the child continues to accrue further unauthorised absences, additional legal action may be taken.

## 6. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

We celebrate good attendance at the end of each term with certificates for those children with 100% attendance.

## 7. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

Attendance is monitored every two weeks by collecting the data from our system and then analysing it in accordance with the Local Authority. Each half term there is a threshold that the attendance has to be above (95%).

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data every two weeks, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not 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.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- The school will 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

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Headteacher and other school leaders, 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

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Letters will be sent to parents in the first instance to make parents aware that the child's attendance has dropped below 95%, further to this, parents may be called in for meeting and offered help/support or referred to Local Authority.

## **8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the school, and as a minimum reviewed yearly by the Headteacher. The policy will be approved by the Governors. The headteacher will report to the Governing Body every term the attendance figures and progress.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances, it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, we will always take into account the religious beliefs of families and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with the Education Welfare Service which provides support for pupils and their families in order to promote good pupil attendance and to reduce truancy.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

## 9. LOCAL AUTHORITY

The Local Authority may prosecute a parent under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for not ensuring their child attends school regularly and/or punctually or may issue or apply for:

- > Penalty Notice
- > Education Supervision Order
- > Parenting Order
- > School Attendance Order

The Local Authority should:

- >Provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes
- >analyse attendance patterns in order to improve pupil attendance especially those from vulnerable groups
- >make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve pupil attendance
- >try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools
- >share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good >practice in other Local Authorities

### Lateness

The office personnel monitor lateness and inform:

- >the Head of patterns of lateness;
- >parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed

### Raising awareness

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Handbook/Prospectus
- the Staff Handbook
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- school events
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
- reports such annual report to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body
- information displays in the main school entrance

### Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:
  - the importance of good attendance and punctuality
  - all aspects of this policy

- the use and understanding of attendance codes
  - authorised and unauthorised attendance
  - looking at trends and patterns
  - bullying
  - the needs of vulnerable groups
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
  - receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

### **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

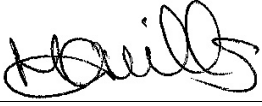
Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school

### **DFE and GOVERNOR MONITORING**

The school complies with the requirement to complete the DFE Attendance Monitoring form each term. This form is completed by the Headteachers. Attendance data is also sent to the RBG's Standards and Strategy team and Attendance Advisory Service.

Each term's Headteacher's update report to Governors contains an update of the attendance statistics within the school for that term.

|                        |   |              |             |
|------------------------|---|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Headteacher:</b>    |  | <b>Date:</b> | Autumn 2025 |
| <b>Governing Body:</b> |   | <b>Date:</b> |             |

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

| Code   | Definition  | Scenario   |
|--|---|--|
| /  | Present (am)  | Pupil is present at morning registration   |
| \  | Present (pm)  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration   |
| L  | Late arrival  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed  |
| <b>Attending a place other than the school</b> |   |  |
| K  | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority                       | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V  | Attending an educational visit or trip  | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school  |
| P  | Participating in a sporting activity  | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school  |
| W  | Attending work experience   | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement  |
| B  | Attending any other approved educational activity                                   | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience                     |
| D  | Dual registered   | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered   |
| <b>Absent – leave of absence</b>               |   |  |
| C1   | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school   |
| M  | Medical/dental appointment  | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment  |
| J1   | Interview   | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment   |
| S  | Study leave   | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination  |
| X  | Not required to be in school  | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| C2   | Part-time timetable   | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable   |
| C  | Exceptional circumstances   | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>       |   |  |
| T  | Parent travelling for occupational purposes   | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes                          |
| R  | Religious observance  | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance  |
| I  | Illness (not medical or dental appointment)   | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>E</b>   | Suspended or excluded                       | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made   |
| <b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b> |   |   |
| <b>Q</b>   | Lack of access arrangements                 | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school  |
| <b>Y1</b>  | Transport not available                     | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available  |
| <b>Y2</b>  | Widespread disruption to travel             | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency   |
| <b>Y3</b>  | Part of school premises closed              | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open   |
| <b>Y4</b>  | Whole school site unexpectedly closed       | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)   |
| <b>Y5</b>  | Criminal justice detention                  | Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul> |
| <b>Y6</b>  | Public health guidance or law               | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law   |
| <b>Y7</b>  | Any other unavoidable cause                 | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes   |
| <b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>                                 |   |   |
| <b>G</b>   | Holiday not granted by the school           | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school  |
| <b>N</b>   | Reason for absence not yet established      | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes  |
| <b>O</b>   | Absent in other or unknown circumstances    | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence   |
| <b>U</b>   | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session   |
| <b>Administrative codes</b>  |   |   |
| <b>Z</b>   | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered   |
| <b>#</b>   | Planned whole-school closure                | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays  |