



<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
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<b>Approved by</b>	David Lord
<b>To be reviewed by</b>	<b>Curriculum, Standards &amp; ECM Committee</b>
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# 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 representative
- 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 session.

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.

### **Administration:**

- 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 school employs two Casework Managers who work proactively to manage, support and improve attendance across the school community, this will include setting high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to staff, pupils and parents, systematically analyse data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts and to work effectively with the Local Authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance.

### **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 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 will be met by staff and directly enter the building. They should arrive at school by taxi for 8.55am. Once a pupil has entered the building and registered, they should proceed straight to their first lesson and 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 and decisions that have been made regarding pupil attendance e.g., 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 **AIT**. 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 **Attendance Improvement Team**.
- 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 Casework Manager. If attendance becomes prolonged or is erratic, then the Attendance Improvement Team 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 casework file by the Personal Tutor.
- At the end of each day, 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 casework 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/ Teacher Tutor will speak with pupils and parents/carers 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 **96%**. There is therefore an expectation that all forms of absence combined will not exceed **4% (or seven 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 **Attendance Improvement Team** in cases where we are concerned about a pupil's absence. They will also be involved if a pupil's attendance falls below **90%** as this is then classified as 'Persistent Absence' below 50% is also classified as a 'Severely Persistent Absence' and further action including the possibility of legal action will be taken.

Attendance is a key target set for each pupil in the PAMS meetings. PAMS meetings are held 3 times a year. The target for each pupil is an attendance of at least 96%. However, as a minimum there is a target of at least 5% improvement on the previous year.

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## **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 holiday that exceeds seven actual school days** that has not been authorised will result in a fixed penalty notice.

## **REWARDS & INCENTIVES**

Attendance in school and at lessons is 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. Each week, the pupil with the highest overall point score receives a prize and the information is shared on our Twitter page. Attendance at lessons also contributes to the overall positive behaviour score for a pupil over the period of a term. A high overall behaviour score at the end of the term trigger a range of rewards.

Half termly and termly class and individual rewards will be given for most improved and maintained attendance, rewards will be discussed with pupils so they have some ownership of their rewards.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

A member of the CLT is responsible for oversight of the day to day monitoring of attendance on all three sites. 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.