

At Elmhurst Primary School, the attendance team comprises the following members: Attendance and Family Welfare Officer Miss Ayesha Sahebodin, the Office Manager Ms Farida Mayat, the Headteacher Ms Sukwinder Samra and the leadership team.

Attendance Policy 2023-2024

Aims:

The school aims to ensure that all pupils have 100% attendance and excellent punctuality by adopting a proactive approach and acting quickly to address patterns of absence, thereby reducing persistent absence. We passionately believe that every pupil has access to an excellent standard of full-time education to which they are entitled to every day. Since we serve in an area of high deprivation (i.e. overcrowded substandard accommodation and low household wages), we feel that through attending school we can significantly improve the life chances of our children.

We ensure that Elmhurst is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn, therefore this policy involves close interaction with the following areas: curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium.

We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. It is a schools' responsibility to record attendance and follow up on absence. The school does have the right to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' code of conduct; these were reinstated and are being enforced.

The government has outlined its view that it is vital for all children to have good attendance - there is a direct link between attainment and attendance. It is our view that attending school safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents. We do view children with a high level of unauthorised absence as vulnerable.

This policy aims to give clear guidance to all staff about the management of attendance of all children, including those with SEND.

We have robust arrangements for identifying and following up with children missing education

Legislation and guidance

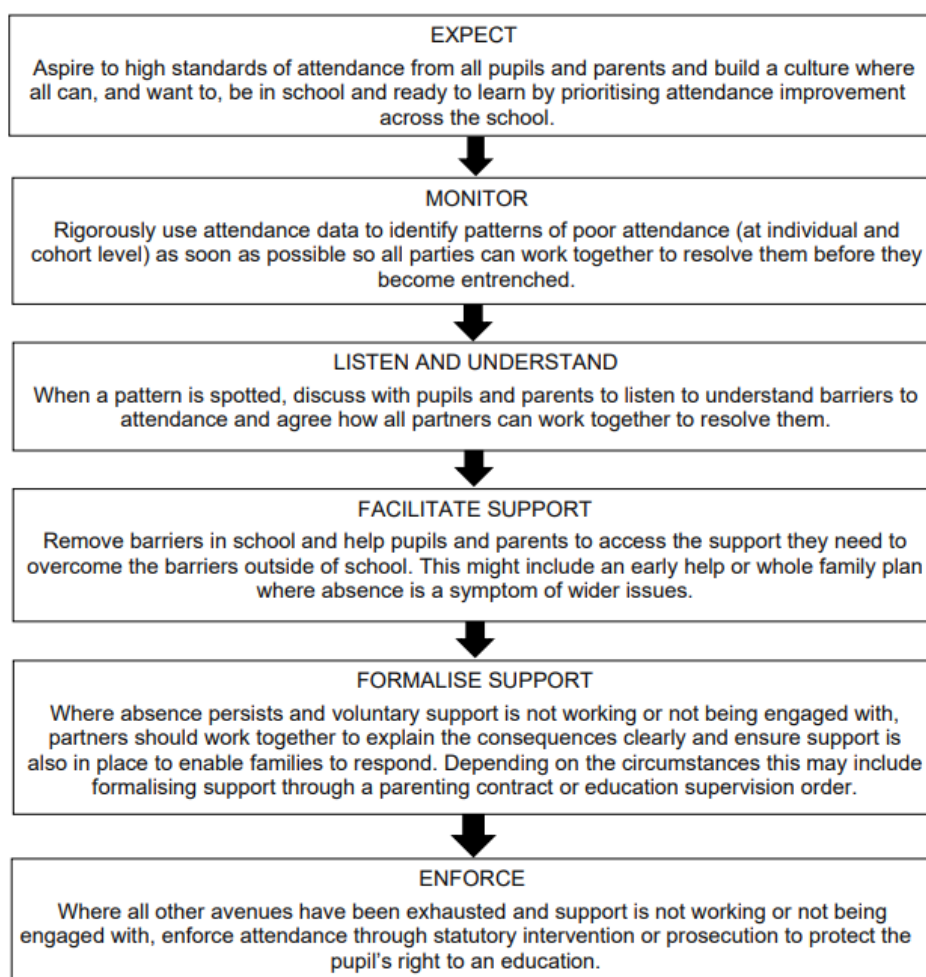
This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance documents from the Department for Education (DfE):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

The school will closely follow these steps below to improve attendance by treating the root cause of absences and removing barriers through good partnership working. Enforcement is the last stage.

Working together to improve attendance

13. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



Registration and punctuality procedures

The register is a legal document and needs to be accurate and applied consistently across the school.

The attendance register will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Registers are taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day at 8.50 a.m, and once at the beginning of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after 8.50 a.m. but before the end of the Registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close)

Punctuality is monitored closely along with attendance; the attendance officer may conduct late gates periodically with a member of the leadership team and pass on concerns to the class teacher.

The attendance register for lateness will close 30 minutes after the school day commences to which pupils will be marked absent (U) or another suitable code for the morning register.

A child who is late 3 times in a term will trigger a poor punctuality letter.

The school office team will also pass on concerns where there are repeated incidences of late collection. Concerns with punctuality and late collection may lead to requests for a meeting between parents with the year head or member of the leadership team.

Absence procedures

First day absence procedure:

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reasons. If no reason is provided the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Parents can notify the school via Parent Mail before 8.50am on the day of absence or by calling the school office. Reasons for absence will be stored on the child's records. If there is no contact on the first day then the school will send a ParentMail message to parents/carers to find out the reason of absence. If no response is received, parents will be contacted by telephone.

Continued Absence Procedure:

If no contact is received from a parent by day 2, the Attendance Officer will make calls to all the contact numbers on the child's file. If this is unusual and there is no response after the third day then a member of school staff can make a home visit; this could be our attendance officer or a leadership team member. If there is no answer from all available avenues after the third day, this will be reported to the local police/MASH.

Frequent Absence Procedure:

In addition to daily monitoring of registers to determine reasons for absence, the school will identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA)

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The school will identify any concerns, and try to resolve the problem with parents/carers. Individual circumstances will be investigated, and the following escalation procedure will be carried out as appropriate:

- Parents/carers will receive a phone call from the attendance officer to discuss attendance concerns and explain reasons for poor attendance as well as identify ways in improving attendance. This will be recorded in writing for attendance monitoring purposes.

- Parents/carers of pupils with poor Attendance in a half term, for any reason, will be sent a letter informing them of this and explaining why it is a cause for concern.

- If absence continues consistently within a term with no medical proof of illness then a meeting or call will be organised between the family and Attendance officer and/or a member of the respective year group leadership team member.

Members of leadership arrange meetings with families to share concerns and to set attendance targets and to solve any emerging issues. There will need to be action plans established with families which are signed by school/home if absences are not linked to term time leave or pre-existing serious medical conditions/SEND.

- If the child is regularly absent due to illness, medical evidence will be requested to support the absence. This can be a copy of a prescription, doctor or pharmacist's certificate, or the label from prescribed medicine. If the pattern continues and the problem appears to be a medical one, the school may refer to the School Nurse. . We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

- Where there are patterns of very poor attendance, unrelated to long-term medical concerns then the Headteacher may conduct a New Vision Attendance Panel with the family and consider use of Fixed Penalty Notices for absence and other sanctions if support is not successful, or not engaged with. Headteacher will make the final decision on setting penalty notices before it goes to the borough team to issue.

Attendance Agreement Contracts:

For pupils who have regular poor attendance and this has not improved, attendance contracts are drawn up with the parent and a SLT year head to discuss the reasons for no improvement and set attendance targets and for further review of pupils' attendance to see if further actions will need to be taken.

COVID -19:

School attendance is mandatory, circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19) should be treated as an illness: - Pupils who have tested positive should be recorded with an I code. There is no longer the requirement for pupils with COVID to self-isolate as long as they are feeling well enough to be in school.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences with documents provided to the school as evidence of the appointment. However, we encourage parents 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. Parents can inform the school in advance by providing evidence of appointment either on Parent Mail or by telephone, or in person.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Headteacher Sukwinder Samra will meet all parents requesting term time leave. She will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Previous periods of leave, poor attendance below 95% and the year groups concerned are all considered carefully. A leave of

absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. 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

- * Factors which are centred around safety and well-being such as rehousing/ CP matters etc

Children Missing Education

"Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school." DfE

The procedures the school follows are part of Newham's CME procedures as outlined on Newham, Connect:

<http://www.newhamconnect.uk/Services/3074#:~:text=Following%20the%20school's%20consideration%20of.the%20child%20leaves%20the%20country.>

This Children Missing Education statutory guidance (September 2016), published by the Department for Education, addresses the statutory duty placed on LA' to identify children not receiving a suitable education and to identify children missing from education in their area. At Elmhurst we do everything we can to follow up on CME pupils and will never take pupils off roll without a forwarding destination. We make CME referrals via the online e-form – https://newham-self.achieveservice.com/service/School_Notification_of_CME2

If after ten days continuous absence the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil (either a starter who never attended or a child who left without a forwarding school contact) the school will refer the child's details to Newham LA for it to perform further checks. Continuous unauthorised absence can result in children being removed from the school roll once there is authorisation from the CME team.

Vulnerable pupils

Vulnerable Children Children who are Looked After ("LAC"), subject to a Child Protection Plan ("CP"), and/or Children in Need ("CIN") will be treated with the highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Team at Elmhurst Primary School. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home, a home visit or a call to The Newham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub ("MASH"), in order that a same-day visit can be made. Children with Special Educational Needs ("SEND") will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

Any absences for LAC are reported to the Welfare Call on the first day of absence.

References:

The Childrens Act 1989 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

The Education Act 1996 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101454/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf

Elective home education (EHE)

The school strongly discourages all parents choosing to home-school their children. Any requests need to be put in writing and the parents need to attend a meeting with the Headteacher or deputy Headteacher to explain their reasons for withdrawal.. If parents still insist on home schooling then they will be informed in writing about the Newham EHE Procedure Information for Parents document available on Newham Connect.

The school needs to send the referral form back to the LA EHE team with the parents' signed letter and the child stays on roll for a period of 10 school days to allow time for the EHE team to process the request and attempt to engage the family further to seek a resolution (if necessary) before removal from roll. After this time, if it is agreed that the pupil will become deregistered, then the school can backdate the attendance to the date specified by parents.

Strategies for promoting good attendance

The school rewards promotes and rewards good attendance through a range of strategies:

- *Weekly Class Certificates are given out to the classes in each key stage with the highest attendance during the certificate assemblies
- *100% attendance for the year is rewarded with a school trophy
- * Carrying out the return to school form with older pupils in years 5/6 after a period of absence and asking them to sign it
- * Regular newsletters and letters to parents highlighting the importance of good attendance

Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place

Attendance officer to analyse data weekly to identify any concerning trends.

Attendance Officer and Headteacher to meet every half term to analyse attendance data and to identify groups/ individuals who require closer monitoring/ follow up work including meetings/ fines etc. Benchmarking data from sources such as IDSR are to be used as well as referring to overall end of year targets for attendance and persistence absence. These minuted meetings are disseminated to members of the leadership team who then follow up on actions with their year group teachers.

The cycle of Expect-Monitor-Listen & understand- Facilitate support-Formalise support and enforce are to be closely followed by all members of the senior team.

Publication of Information

This policy can be found on the school's website and hard copies are available from the school office for parents to view.

Review and Amendments

This non-statutory policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher Ms Sukwinder Samra and ratified by the Governing Body.

Updated: September 2023