



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

Eldon Grove Academy recognises the importance of full attendance and aims to ensure that all pupils take full advantage of the educational provision made available to them.

Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and therefore is a priority for the school. Eldon Grove Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils.

As a school, we aim to develop pupils to their full potential; parents/carers have a responsibility to aid the education process by ensuring that pupils attend the school regularly, on time, and in a suitable disposition to learn.

We expect our parents/carers to value school and their child's education and to support our school's procedures.

2. School Attendance – The Statutory Framework

The Education Act 1944 establishes the duty of parents/carers to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended) gives school discretionary powers to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term-time.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1997 (amended) provides the new registration categories of Approved Educational Activity. (Amended Regulation 3(2), (3), (5) of the Education Regulations 1995).

The Education Act 1996 places a legal obligation on the Local Authority to provide education suitable to a child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have. In addition, Section 444 states that "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law".

The Education Act 2002 (Section 53) enables an overall absence target to be set, covering authorised and unauthorised absence, supporting school improvement and raising community awareness of the issue (September 2003).

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 made provision for Fixed Penalty Notices (section 23(1)) to be issued in certain cases of unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices will be issued to parents where the child is in irregular attendance at school (prior to the holiday), since further time away from school will be significantly detrimental to the child's education. Irregular attendance is considered to be anything below 90% in the 39 weeks prior to the holiday. The penalty notices issues are £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. This penalty notice charge will double if paid between 22 and 28 days after the penalty notice is issued. (Please refer to our school's Holidays in Term-Time & Leave of Absence Policy.

3. Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education (Pupils Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

In accordance with current legislation, each class teacher will ensure the electronic register (SIMS) is completed by 8:55am mornings and by 1:15pm pm for KS1 and by 1:30pm for KS2. Absence monitoring procedures will be completed by a member of the social inclusion team as part of first response procedures.

It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place. Main doors open at 8:45am and close at 8:53am. Close of registration is at 9:15am where school will record an unauthorised absence for any pupils arriving after 9:15am.

We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality. Children will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place.

Our registration procedure is included as Appendix 1. Our procedure for improving punctuality is included as Appendix 2 & 2b.

4. Absence

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. We would like to receive notification as soon as the child is absent from school.

It is a fact that parentally condoned unjustified absence is a serious problem in some schools. This can be every bit as damaging as the more traditional forms of truancy. Although it is not a particularly big problem at Eldon Grove Academy, all staff must remain vigilant and report to the Head of School or Social Inclusion Team any suspected cases of parentally condoned absence.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents/carers. The fact that a parent/carer has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, in itself, oblige the school to accept it if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or where no explanation is forthcoming at all, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, we will refer to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer where necessary or if further attendance monitoring is required.

An excessive amount of unauthorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that no offence is committed where a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness. If we are satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence will be treated as authorised.

Where we have reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested by the school from the child's parents/carers. If the school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Where there is doubt about the authenticity attributed to illness, the school or the School Attendance Officer can refer the matter to a doctor working in the School Health Service to arrange a special medical, or to make contact with the pupil's GP. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or the school notices a pattern emerging, early contact will be made with the School Attendance Officer and/or the School Health Service.

Leave for medical or dental appointments will be given (i.e. the absence will be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parent/carer (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or on production of an appointment card.

5. Reporting of Absence Procedure

Parents/carers are expected to telephone school, see the class teacher or send a note on the first day of their child's absence. This will allow the Social Inclusion Team to interpret the category of absence. If information is not received, school will try to telephone to discover the cause of the absence. If the family is not contactable by telephone, the letter at Appendix 3 may be sent. A supply of these letters is to be kept by the school's Social Inclusion Team.

The Social Inclusion Team will keep all notes, notes of telephone messages and a note of any verbal explanations, dated, in the first response/absence file.

Parents/carers should complete a Holiday Form (Appendix 6), which they may obtain from the Reception, if they intend to remove their child from school for this purpose. It should be completed and returned to the class teacher before the holiday takes place. The school will check the amount of holiday leave already taken that school year as well as school attendance for the 39 weeks prior to the holiday being taken. If the request for holiday leave meets the criteria, a letter of agreement will be sent out to the parents/carers, which also reminds them that it is school that authorise the absence not parents/carers. (Please refer to the school's Holiday in Term Time & Leave of Absence Policy).

Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, school need take no action beyond recording the fact that (for the purpose of emergency evacuation) the pupil, although registered, is not physically present. Similarly, the school must note the presence of a pupil (again for purposes of emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment. The class teacher will make a note in the relevant day's column in the register as to the times the child came or left so that there is information on the child's whereabouts in the event of emergency evacuation.

6. Categorising Absence

Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary on occasion to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences. However, the following key points must be remembered: -

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school;
- Whilst it is right that schools should recognise that individual pupils and families may have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance;
- Lateness should be actively discouraged;
- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation, an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason), the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register completed accordingly;
- We are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered;
- Explanations such as birthdays, looking after other children, or shopping trips within school hours will not normally be acceptable reasons for absence;
- Parents/carers should not expect, or be led to expect, that, as of right, schools will agree to family holidays during term time. Each application will need to be considered on its merits in accordance with school policy;
- Even where absence is authorised, we should be alerted to emerging patterns of absence, which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning;
- In promoting regular attendance, we will work in partnership with appropriate Local Authority and external agency personnel.

7. Lateness

It is our policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period. For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line will be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will still need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the Reception, and the child's name and class will be entered in the relevant late book. Our registers open from 8:53am to 9:15am. Anyone arriving after 9:15am will receive a 'U' in the register which is classified as an unauthorised absence.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason need to inform Social Inclusion Team and the Head of School whom will seek an early meeting with parents. If the parents do not have any valid reason for the child's persistent lateness the school's Social Inclusion Officer consults with the Head of School referring any persistent late comers to the Local Authority's School's Attendance Officer.

8. Role of Social Inclusion Manager and Social Inclusion Assistant (Social Inclusion Team)

The role of the Social Inclusion Manager and Social Inclusion Assistant is to:

- liaise where appropriate, between home and the school;
- investigate irregular attendance or lateness which may give rise to concerns that a child may be at risk;
- complete a daily register check; giving advice to pupils, parents and carers on improving attendance;
- work with children who are experiencing problems with attendance and/or punctuality and preparing to transfer to secondary school.

Role of School Attendance Officer

The role of the designated School Attendance Officer is to:

- liaise, where appropriate, between home and the school;
- investigate irregular attendance or lateness which may give rise to concerns that a child may be at risk;
- complete a regular register check in collaboration with Social Inclusion Team; giving feedback and advice on improving attendance;
- work with children who are experiencing problems with attendance and/or punctuality and preparing to transfer to secondary school;
- enforce the Law in relation to school attendance;
- advise and or assist school in setting attendance targets.

Referral to the School Attendance Officer will be made in the following circumstances:

- absence is regular and/or repeated and therefore affecting the child's education; where absence falls below 90% this will be monitored by both school and the Local Authority's School Attendance Officer;
- when a pupil has been absent for two consecutive weeks and the absence is unauthorised;
- the intervention by school has failed to secure a pupil's regular attendance.

Referrals can only be made through the Social Inclusion Team or Head of School. A referral form will be completed for each pupil and forwarded to the School Attendance Officer. Progress reports on referrals will be given to the school at regular intervals by the School Attendance Officer (as agreed between School and the School Attendance Officer).

Details of the procedure followed by the School Attendance Officer can be found in the Local Authority Attendance Handbook.

When making a referral to the School Attendance Officer, it is important that the following information is included:

- action taken to date by school to resolve any identified problems;
- parents/pupils attitudes towards school;
- parental reasons for non-attendance;
- information regarding any special educational needs the pupil may have, academic attainments and support being provided by the school;
- any known risk factors around home visits and/or parental communication needs.

9. Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

As well as taking appropriate action against parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their children, we will take steps to reward good attendance and punctuality at Eldon Grove Academy. This will take the form of certificates and other rewards. The Local Authority will issue a certificate of attendance signed by the Director of Children's Services for those pupils who achieve 100% attendance each year.

September 2018

Audrey Brahim

Head of School

For review September 2019

Eldon Grove Academy– Attendance Monitoring Procedure & Responsibilities

Social Inclusion Team Responsibilities Parent/Carer Responsibilities	Attendance Monitoring - 1 st Response/Punctuality Monitoring	Rewards Systems
<p>School Responsibilities</p> <p>Letter sent to all parents and carers detailing the school and parent/carer responsibilities in respect of their child's attendance.</p> <p>Parent/Carer Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the school to provide a reason for their child's absence, on the first day of the absence. • Provide proof of medical appointments in advance when possible. 	<p>Social Inclusion Team</p> <p>Contact parents/carers of any pupil whose absence has not been reported as part of 1st day response procedures.</p>	<p>Assemblies to develop the importance of attendance and punctuality.</p> <p>Weekly attendance reward assemblies. Rewards to support 100% Attendance half term and full term awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class of the Week highest attendance overall. • 100% half term awards (individual awards). • 100% full term awards (individual awards). • 100% whole year attendance. • Individual punctuality awards. • Overall attendance improvement awards.
<p>Tracking of Attendance & Punctuality – School</p> <p>Formal tracking of every child's attendance commences in September at the beginning of the academic year.</p> <p>Eldon Grove Academy will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor pupils with 95% or lower attendance on a weekly basis. • Follow up unauthorised or unreported absence every week. • Follow up pupils with 5 or more late marks from start of academic year to each half-term. • Late gate procedure to meet and greet late comers. • Half-termly register checks carried out by local authority's attendance officer. • Referrals made to local authorities attendance officer where attendance falls below 90%. 	<p>Social Inclusion Team</p> <p>Analysing attendance data highlighting pupils whose attendance has fallen below 95%. Contact parents by sending attendance/ punctuality concern letters.</p> <p>Class Teacher</p> <p>Ensuring electronic registers are taken accurately and timely.</p> <p>Social Inclusion Manager/Head of School</p> <p>Scheduled meetings and attendance case conferences with parent or carer/ Head of School to discuss concerns.</p>	
<p>Half-termly Report taken from SIMS (Information Management System) to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent absence (90% or below). • Continued failure to provide explanations for absence. • Holidays in term time. • Other unauthorised absences. 	<p>Social Inclusion Team</p> <p>Analyse attendance data. Send appropriate letter to parents/carers.</p> <p>Head of School / Social Inclusion Team</p> <p>Attend arranged meetings where necessary to discuss parents/ carers.</p>	

APPENDIX 1

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

1. Registers will be completed as quickly as is convenient, preceding both daily sessions.
2. Children present will be so marked by a diagonal line / (am) \ (pm).
3. Children not present will be so marked by an O.
4. Children arriving at the school after registration in the mornings must report to the school office. The school's Social Inclusion Team will adjust the entry in the class register to a L. This will be interpreted in the class register as a child present at school having arrived after the close of registration. If a child arrives after 9:15am they will be asked to be signed in by the adult who has brought them to school and the school's Social Inclusion Team will adjust the entry in the class register to a U. An explanation note may authorise this absence, e.g. visit to doctor/dentist. Otherwise, it will be treated as unauthorised. However, if a child should arrive part way through a session, a note must be made in the register to show that child is present for safety, fire evacuations, etc. purposes.
5. Once school receives a valid reason for an absence, we may authorise that absence by inserting a letter inside the circle. Reporting by telephone, verbally to a member of staff or a note are acceptable. A message pad will be kept in the office to note any explanations for absence. These will be passed promptly to the Social Inclusion Team. A list of symbols used for demarcating AUTHORISED absence is included in Appendix 7 in this document. Only school can authorise absence. If an absence does not fit one of the categories listed, it is likely to be UNAUTHORISED e.g. shopping, birthday, minding the house.
6. Parents/carers removing their child from school during a session will be required to explain to their child's teacher or the school's Social Inclusion Team the reason for this removal.
7. If the child returns to school with no notification of the reason for absence, a standard letter will be sent home or telephone contact made.
8. If no response is forthcoming within 3 days of the letter being sent, the attendance must be recorded as UNAUTHORISED.
9. Any regular authorised/unauthorised absences or any notes or occurrences which give cause for concern should be brought to the attention of the Head of School or Social Inclusion Manager who may decide to pursue it further or refer the concerns to the Local Authority's Schools Attendance Officer.

APPENDIX 2

IMPROVING PUNCTUALITY

1. When children are regularly late for school or a pattern is emerging over a period of time, the Social Inclusion Team will send a letter home requesting an appointment to discuss the matter with the parents/carers, Head of School and Social Inclusion Manager.
2. Regular newsletters are sent home to emphasise the need for regular and punctual attendance at school and to also remind parents/carers of the importance of not taking holidays in term time.
3. Lateness 'blitzes' are completed by the Social Inclusion Team and/or School Attendance Officer on a regular basis. This consists of greeting latecomers to school and keeping a tally of lateness during a specified week. The parents/carers of persistent latecomers are then contacted by letter to explain the importance of punctuality, or are invited into school for a meeting to discuss.

APPENDIX 2b (Late Letter)

Dear [parent/carer]

During a register check at Eldon Grove Academy (week beginning [date]) it was noted that your child [name] was late on [number of lates] occasions during the period of [date from and to].

It is extremely important that your child arrives at school on time. If they are late, they are missing the start of the school day and important learning time. Arriving late can not only be detrimental to your child, but disruptive to other children and the class teacher.

Can I remind you that doors open at 8:45 am and close at 8:53 am. All classes start learning at 8:55am.

If there are any special circumstances, which have, or are likely to affect your child's punctuality, it is important to contact school and we will seek to support you. Working in partnership to resolve these issues will allow your child to achieve their full potential.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Brahim
Head of School

APPENDIX 3

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer

Name: _____ Class: _____

Dear Parents/Carers

Your child was absent from school on the following days

Please can you let us know the reason for the absence so that this can be noted as an authorised absence. If we do not receive the information then the absences will be marked as unauthorised.

As I am sure you appreciate, your child's regular school attendance and punctuality is of paramount importance in order for them to achieve the best education possible.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Brahimi
Head of School

APPENDIX 4

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer

I am aware that _____ (child's name) has had a number of unexplained absences and this will be having an effect upon his/her learning.

I would therefore like to invite you to meet with me in the school on _____ at _____ am/pm. I hope this meeting will give us the opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have and to work together to improve _____'s attendance.

If this time is not convenient, please do not hesitate to contact me and we can arrange a more suitable time.

Looking forward to seeing you then.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Brahim
Head of School

APPENDIX 5

Dear Parent/Carer,

During a register check at Eldon Grove Academy (week commencing _____) it was noted that your child has been late to arrive to school on (number) occasions since (Date).

It is extremely important that your child arrives at school on time. If they are late, they miss the start of the school day when literacy/numeracy sessions are taking place. Arriving late can not only be detrimental to your children, but disruptive to other children and the class teacher.

It is important to note that school starts at 8:55am. Doors close at 8:53am and the registration closes at 9:15am.

Arrival after the close of registration will result in your child receiving an unauthorised absence mark. School is only allowed to authorise late arrival up to 9.15 am, after which time it becomes an unauthorised absence and could be referred to the School Attendance Officer.

If there are any special circumstances, which have, or are likely to affect your child's punctuality, it is important to contact school and we will seek to support you in ensuring their future prompt arrival. It is important to resolve these issues to give them the best start in life and help them to achieve their full academic potential.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs A Brahim
Head of School

APPENDIX 6 (Holiday Request Form)

Parents/Carers are discouraged from taking their children out of school for holidays during term-time. Holiday applications will be considered on an individual basis and where proof can be verified of exceptional circumstances. Please refer to the holidays in term-time and leave of absence policy.

PARENTS SECTION (to be completed first)

(Please complete one form per family)

Name of Child(ren)		DOB	Class
Surname of Parent/Guardian		First Name	
Address of Child(ren)			
Postcode		Telephone number	

<p>Reason for requesting a holiday in term-time stating the exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>(Please refer to the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Policy).</p>	<p>Please choose:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional Circumstances (Please State)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state)</p> <hr/> <hr/>
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Has evidence been provided of exceptional circumstances/other circumstances		Yes / No	
Would your child (ren) miss any national tests or examinations?		Yes / No	
Is your child (ren)'s attendance already below 90% or previously had an individual agreed target?		Yes / No	
Would your child (ren) be absent for more than ten school days?		Yes / No	
Has your child (ren) already had leave during term-time this school year? (if so please also give dates and number of school days leave)		Yes /No	
Do you feel your child(ren)'s attainment would be affected by missing time in school		Yes / No	
Length of Absence (Number of school days)	_____ days	From: (date - 1 st day absent)	To: (date returning to school)
Parent's/Guardian's Signature			

Previous holidays in Term-Time	Approved _____ school days	Not Approved _____ school days
Number of previous applications granted		
Current & previous years % Attendance		
Class Teacher's comments: (regarding attainment level and impact this time absent if approved will have upon the child's education, lessons which will be missed)		
<u>Head Teacher's Approval</u> Yes/ No Additional Comments:		

Parents Informed Yes/No (Please tick) <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Call <input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting in School
If unauthorised: Attendance in 39 weeks prior to holiday (taken from last day in school before leave of absence starts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Above 90%. School to monitor attendance <input type="checkbox"/> Under 90%. Refer to School Attendance Officer for Penalty Notice to be issued.

About the Request for your Child (ren)'s Holiday within Term-Time

SCHOOL SECTION

(to be completed by school staff)

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Details of Child/Children (Please complete one form per family)

Name:	Class:

Leave of Absence Dates

First Day:	Last Day:
Date Returning to School:	Number of Days Requested:

The reason for requesting a leave of absence:

Parent/Carer Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

For Office Use Only:

Date Received:	Checked:
Authorised:	Notified:

APPENDIX 7

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances