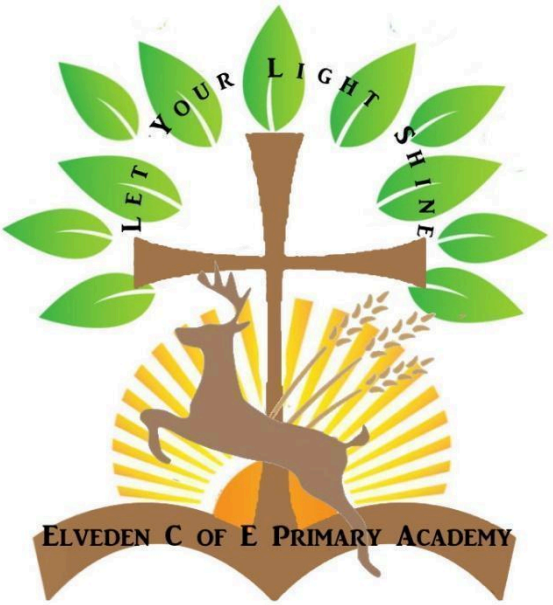

Attendance Policy

Date completed: June 2026

Completed by; Zoe Maguire

Review Date: June 2027

Elveden C of E Primary Academy
Attendance Policy
June 2026- June 2027

The aim of Elveden Academy is to provide an environment, which encourages all our children to attend school every day that school is open and punctual. This is vital if we are to ensure they succeed in school and in their future lives.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations (See Appendix 1). The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

We encourage all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***"parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly".***

Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to non-statutory school age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance daily and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

School Responsibilities

All the staff at our school will place a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:-

- ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;
- differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence);
- responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;
- contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences, and recording the contact;
- consulting with the EWO if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern;
- promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents every day of absence to follow up on reasons for absence and for the welfare of the child);
- acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils and classes.

A GUIDE FOR STAFF

REGISTRATION

Call on the registers:

- Classroom teachers are responsible for attendance registers, however admin staff record codes for absence.
- The class teacher will call the register promptly at 8.35am for morning registration and **close the register at 8:45am.**
- The registers for the afternoon sessions will close 10 minutes after the start of the afternoon school session (1pm).
- Pupils, who arrive late, but before the close of registration, must report to the office where they must be signed in by their parent/carer. This will be marked as late (L).
- If a pupil fails to arrive before the register closes but then arrives on site, they will be marked as unauthorised (U). This could lead to a penalty notice.
- If a pupil fails to arrive before the register closes, he/she/they will be marked absent.

Who will amend the register?

❖ All amendments to the registers will be made by office staff and reasons for absence must be specific and clear on Arbor.

Parents Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school every day and punctually section 444 of the Act says: -
"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend every day at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence"'.

(**NB** Where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she" or "they").

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's absence. **This must be by telephone on the first day and then every day of absence.** If this is not received the absence will automatically be marked as unauthorised. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

Parents also have a responsibility for following school procedures if their child arrives late and must report to the school office. If they arrive after registers close, this will be marked as unauthorised. Persistent lateness and/or when attendance falls below 95% will result in an attendance monitoring letter being sent to parents so that any issues can be addressed with the school to work towards a solution.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

Punctuality
It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school on time.
The morning register will be called promptly at **8.35 am.** Any child arriving after this must be signed in at the office by a parent/carer and will be marked as late (L). Any child arriving after the registers have closed at 8.45am will be marked as unauthorised absence (U). This could lead to a fixed penalty notice and a referral to the EWO.

The afternoon register will be called promptly at **1.00 pm.** Any child arriving after 1pm but before 1.10pm will be marked as late. They must be signed in at the office by a parent/carer. Any child arriving after the registers have closed at 1.10pm will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:
- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 8:30am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office only. Emailing is no longer accepted as a means of communication with the school to notify a pupil's absence.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer. Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted on the first day of absence and every day after for an update.

Illness/Medical absences
In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may authorize further absences and refer to the EWO for further advice. **This may be even if the illness is genuine as it may be that support is needed.**

Pupil Leave of Absence Requests
Parents **do not** have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. The school may grant authorised absences in exceptional circumstances only at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

If you wish to take your child out of school during term time you must complete a leave of absence request form which can be obtained from the school office and must be completed at least one month in advance. You will be notified if the leave will be authorised or unauthorised 10 working days by email.

There is no absolute right for parents to remove their child from school for an absence and expect the Headteacher to authorise that absence.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:
- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

If parents/carers decide to take a leave of absence without the Head's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Please see Appendix 1 for details on Penalty notices and when these will be issued.

There is no limit for the amount of fixed term penalty notices issued to each parent per academic year.

Unexplained Absence
1. When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

2. Regular monitoring is carried out by the EWO. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the EWO and may be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

The legal basis for penalty notices
The law says that parents and carers whose children of compulsory school age are absent from school without good reason are committing an offence, and those parents may be prosecuted in the Magistrate's Court. Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced additional powers under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 authorising local authorities to issue penalty notices in cases of **unauthorised absence** from school.

Even if your child has attendance above 95%, this will not prevent a fixed penalty notice being issued if unauthorised absences have reached 10 sessions in a 10 week period.

How do I pay and what happens if I don't pay the penalty notice?
Details of payment arrangements will be included on the penalty notice which you will receive from Suffolk County Council. The penalty must be paid in full to them. The penalty is **£80** per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to **£160** per parent per child if paid after 21 days.

Role of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.

- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.

- To investigate any unexplained/unauthorised absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.

- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.

- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and EWO.

Children Missing in Education

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the EWO will be notified and a home visit may be carried out.

Persistent Latecomers

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8.35am will be brought to the attention of the EWO.

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after the register has closed are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices will be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.

Support for pupils who have difficulties attending school

Where pupils are absent with good reason (for example because of suspension or long term illness) a member of staff will coordinate meaningful work to be sent home and will ensure it is marked on a regular basis. Parents are responsible for ensuring work is completed and that lines of communication are kept open with the school to fully explain reasons for absence.

We do not offer flexi schooling at Elveden C of Primary Academy and expect all children in KS1 and KS2 to be in school full time, unless a part time timetable is needed for reintegration purposes.

Pupils responsibilities
All pupils should be aware of the importance of attending school every day. If they are having difficulties, which might prevent them from attending school every day, they should speak to their class teacher. Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn.

Support from school to improve attendance and monitoring letters

The school will offer support to you and your family to try and help improve your child's attendance, including:

1. Telephone calls. The school will contact you when your child is absent to understand why your child is absent and to offer support with any issues your child may be having.

2. An Attendance Overview Letter. The school will write to you if your child's attendance drops (Letter 1 and Letter 2), letting you know about your child's attendance, the impact of their continued absence, and inviting you to contact the school to discuss the situation further.

3. An Attendance Support Meeting Invite. The school will invite you to a meeting to discuss your child's unauthorised absences (This may include the Education Welfare Officer) and to offer support to ensure that their attendance improves. You will be notified of the consequences should your child continue to have unauthorised absence and if you do not effectively engage with the support offered.

4. A school Attendance Notice to improve will be issued stating that you now have thirty school days (6 weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any unauthorised absences from school during this period. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, a penalty notice may be issued.

The above steps do not apply for an unauthorised holiday and a penalty notice will be issued for 10 sessions or more.

Appendix 1

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are changing from 19th August 2024

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes will come into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Please note: The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Per Parent*, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent*, for each child that was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

*Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.