



# Elm Tree Community Primary School

## Attendance Policy 2019-2020

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## **1. MISSION STATEMENT**

At Elm Tree Community Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy received the full agreement of the Governing Body and was agreed at their meeting in the March 2014.

## **3. AIMS**

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

## **4. EXPECTATIONS**

Primary schools generally have more day-to-day contact with parents than secondary schools. This can mean that many parents are easily contactable which may help to resolve problems and concerns quickly. Conversely, it may make it more difficult for teachers to question parents about absences or to refer to other agencies when the parent is well known to the school. Good practice should include inviting parents to meetings about attendance discreetly, perhaps by telephone call or letter and discussing with them the reasons why a referral is being made on to the Education Welfare Service or another agency and the expectation that this is to support and assist the family. If there are Child Protection concerns then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures should be followed immediately.

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the student or their parent).
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- A quality education

## 5. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- Recording of good attendance on individual Records of Achievement.
- A certificate for 95% and 100% attendance for any one half-term/term. (Attendance is 100% if there has been no absence).
- An 'improved attendance' certificate for any pupil achieving a greater than 10% improvement in attendance in any one half-term/term.
- A trophy to be presented to the class with the most improved attendance each month/half term and awards for any group with 100% attendance in any month/half term.
- All awards to be awarded by the Head Teacher and/or a school Governor as appropriate.
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3. This should include the sharing of relevant information with the destination school.
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- Sending parents termly/weekly absence reports, together with targets for improvement as appropriate
- The efficient use of computerised registration systems can provide valuable, year group, class and pupil level attendance data which enables speedy analysis and timely responses by the school.

## 6. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively:

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone or by letter if parents are not on the telephone.
- Where there is no response, a second letter will be sent after three days of unexplained absence, or there may be a visit from a member of the school staff or the Early Intervention Team where the Service is already involved.
- Where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with the Early Intervention Team for the school and further action planned.

- After 10 days, unless other action is planned, the parents will be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, EIT, parent and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with the Early Intervention Team with a view to a formal referral being made to the Education Welfare Service, if one has not already been made at an earlier stage. If a referral had already been made then the case will be reviewed and further action planned.

#### Reintegration:

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DFE, Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99)
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required. The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary. Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the staff notices/daily briefings.

## 7. SCHOOL ORGANISATION

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education. In addition there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

#### Head Teacher:

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence
- To liaise with the PAST Operations Manager
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report to the Head Teacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with PAST.

#### Class Teacher:

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner.

#### Governors:

- Governor(s) may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Governors can play a valuable role through representation at school attendance panels, parents evenings etc.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

Parents:

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Provide signed and dated absence notes for all absences.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

Office Staff:

School administrative staff can play a vital role in supporting the school's attendance and absence management strategies.

- Produce updates from weekly registers, error sheets, absence code sheets, weekly % information, OMR sheets.
- Telephone absence slips to be put in registers.

## **8. LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the EWS. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The EWS may be able to help schools establish multi-agency meetings or may be able to advise on how schools can become involved in existing local arrangements.

Other Agencies to be used where appropriate in individual cases:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police

Data Protection Act:

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.