



Inspiring and Nurturing Lifelong Learners

Elmgrove Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

June 2021

Next review June 2023

Rights Respecting Article 28

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Introduction

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. All children are entitled to attend school for 190 full days each year. Elmgrove would wish to support all families to achieve this with their children.

Why is attendance so important?

- Government legislation requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the School Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on their child's learning.
- Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement.

Aims

- To safeguard the welfare of the children attending Elmgrove Primary School and Nursery.
- To ensure that all children access the maximum amount of learning time available to them.
- To ensure that all parents are aware of the importance of regular timely attendance and their legal responsibilities.
- To support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To achieve an unauthorised absence rate of nil.
- To ensure that parents and school staff are aware of the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence and the reasons for which authorisation may be given.
- To ensure attendance meets our long term target of 97%.



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Equal Opportunities

Elmgrove will take account of the different circumstances which families are experiencing, in so far as we can be aware of these, and how this may affect their children's pattern of attendance and lateness.

Monitoring

This policy is monitored by the Governing Body, Headteacher and administrative staff. Figures are given to the Governing Body through termly reports by the Headteacher and reported to parents as necessary. Regular returns are made to the Local Authority and the DfE (Department for Education).

Responsibilities

Elmgrove School aims to work with parents to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and on time. Helping to promote a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

School responsibilities

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence contact.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the Harrow Attendance Team and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- To report to the Government on attendance three times a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To promote good attendance.

Parent responsibilities

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.50 a.m.
- To inform school on **the first** day of any absence.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible in writing.
- To work with the school and Harrow Attendance Team to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

Child's responsibilities

- To attend school every day.
- To attend school punctually.
- To attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- To discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems



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that may affect their school attendance.

Governors' responsibilities

It is the Governors' legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

The Process of Monitoring Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is both the legal requirement and essential for a child to maximise the opportunities available to them.

Full attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of a child being away from school it is essential that the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

Any child who is reluctant to attend school is supported by the school and parents/carers to address the reasons and to aid a swift return to school. Elmgrove undertakes to ensure pupils feel supported and ready to attend school.

If parents are worried about their child's attendance at school they should talk to their child's class teacher in the first instance. Alternatively, they should talk to the Attendance Officer (Mrs Campbell) or the Deputy Headteacher.

Absence from School

Every half day absence has to be classified by the **school** as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised Absence: this is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.

For example:

- genuine illness of the pupil;
- hospital appointment for the pupil; (proof of appointment needs to be given)
- major religious observances as agreed by SACRE – parents should check with the school
- visits to prospective new schools
- external exams or educational assessments.

Unauthorised Absence: this is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request. Parent should be made aware that when they telephone the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. A child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.



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For example:

- a shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park
- a birthday treat
- oversleeping due to a late night
- looking after other children / other family member
- holidays
- appointments for other family members

If a child is not in school and we do not have a reason for the absence, the school will contact the family to find out the reason.

Sickness

- School should be notified on the first day of absence.
- A doctor's/consultant's letter may be requested regarding recurring and frequent illness.

Children authorised to be absent from school or recovering from illness/minor operation

We provide guidance on activities to complete at home for the families of these children to ensure minimum disruption to their education.

Leave of absence during term time

Guidance from the Department of Education means that Headteachers **may not** grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are '**exceptional** circumstances.'

Parents are asked to respect these regulations under which we must now work, and if parents do need to take their child/ren out of school during term time, they need to make it very clear in their request how the circumstances are **exceptional**. If this is not clear then under the legislation, the Headteacher will not be allowed to grant leave.

- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in writing in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides. Please note, documentary evidence (for example travel documents) will be required.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. The parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation will be recorded as unauthorised. There is the possibility that if persistent absence, poor punctuality or unauthorised leave of absence is recorded, the Local Authority may issue an Education Penalty Notice.

http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200086/school_and_college/1951/education_penalty_notices/3

Sanctions could be imposed including:

- Children could lose their school place.

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- Parents could face a penalty fine (this is issued per parent per child)
- Parents could be subject to legal action by the authority that could result in a fine of up to £2,500.

Children Missing from Education

‘Children missing from education’ refers to all children of statutory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision).

The school follows the systems and processes currently in place in Harrow to ensure that relevant children and young people are identified, supported to attend school and then have their attendance closely monitored.

Following up instances of absence and lateness

The Attendance Officer will discuss absence and lateness regularly with the Deputy Headteacher.

Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home.

Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, and school representative.

Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will liaise with the Local Authority for advice and support regarding the next steps and would make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues where necessary.

Should concerns persist the Harrow Attendance Team will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action.

For more details please see the relevant sections of the absence guidance.

Lateness to school

- Children need to be in their classrooms by 8.50 in the morning. The doors open at 8.45 a.m.
- Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.
- The school gates will be closed at 8.50 a.m. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book. This is then transferred into the registers as an L code.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.30 a.m, the pupil will receive a ‘U’ if the lateness is unauthorised. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- Any arrival after school start time could be considered an **unauthorised** absence.



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- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an **authorised** absence coded 'M'. Proof of the appointment should be provided either in advance or on arrival.

Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Persistent lateness by a child is treated as seriously as any other absence from school. Parents of children who seem to be developing patterns of lateness (more than 1 late per week or 5 late marks in a half term) will be reminded in writing of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer or the Deputy Headteacher and will be warned of the legal consequences of continued lateness. If the lateness continues, the school concerns will be referred to the Education Welfare Service for advice and support. A Penalty Notice may be issued by the Court Attendance Officer or Prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Late collection from School

Children should be collected on time at the end of the school day at 3.10 p.m. Teachers will remain at their exit point with the children until 3.20 p.m. At this time they will be brought to the small room near the school office/hall and registered as being late to be collected. We realise that occasionally children can be collected late for a variety of reasons. Parents are requested to let the school know in advance by telephone if they think they will be late to collect their child.

The first time each half term that a parent is late to collect from school they will be given a warning letter. The second and further times they are late each half term they will be charged £5 per child for each fifteen minutes they are late from 3.20 p.m. onwards.

Parents should pay the late charge when they collect the child or as soon as possible after. If the charge is not paid then the school maintains the right to withdraw the child's place at the clubs or other after school activities.

If a child has not been collected by 4.00 p.m. **and we have not heard from the family**, we will phone Children's Services to seek advice.

Rewarding good attendance

The administrator and class teachers, headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers endeavour to give children and parents positive feedback when they succeed in maintaining an acceptable and good level of attendance/punctuality.

A trophy is regularly given to the class in each year group which has had the best attendance.

The class(es) with the highest attendance for the week are noted in the newsletter and the school's attendance for the week is noted on the school website.

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We remind parents of the importance of regular and timely attendance on a half termly basis through e-mails and newsletters.