



Whole School Attendance Policy

This policy was adopted by Governors at the meeting held on :	7 th June 2018
Signed (Chair of Governors):	Eileen Duncan
Governing Body minute ref:	12
Date of Review:	May 2020

DfE 2014 (School Attendance) - "Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons."

Ellingham C of E Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. School attendance is subject to various Education Laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both National and Northumberland attendance targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

Absence from school undoubtedly has a detrimental effect on a pupil's progress and attainment. Therefore the school needs to monitor and support pupils to maintain regular school attendance.

'The school is legally required to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register must show whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the Headteacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness (arriving after the register has closed), must be treated as unauthorised. Absences can only be authorised by the Head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf.'

[see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 2006/1751) - reg 7(1)].

The school has drawn up the following protocols:

First Day Absence

Parents are expected to contact the school. If the parent fails in this duty the school will telephone the parent to establish the reason for absence by 9.30am. The Headteacher is responsible for making sure that this procedure is followed. Information received will be entered into the register (the Headteacher must be informed where a decision will be made - authorised/unauthorised). Parents and carers will be informed if the absence is unauthorised.

Third Day Absence

If a child is still absent and the parents have not contacted school further, then a follow up telephone call to the parents is made. If contact cannot be established then a standard letter is sent out to the parents. Parents will be asked to contact the school.

Continuing Absence

Any pupil who is absent, without a suitable explanation, will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team (EWO). This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of, and to bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents through a face to face meeting. This will set out the legal position

and requirements of the school as well as informing the parents of the procedures and conviction which will result from continued non-attendance, i.e. offence under s444 or s444 (1A). Parents/carers will be informed if a child's absence falls below 95% and then 90%, when the EWO will be contacted.

If the meeting is unsuccessful in resolving the pattern of absence the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's Educational Welfare Officer.

Illness

Pupils are not expected to attend to school when they are not well enough to do so whether as a result of short term, long term or recurring illnesses. But they should not be kept away from school when they are well enough to go to lessons or when they have minor ailments which do not prevent them from taking part in their education. A useful rule of thumb is whether the ailment would keep parents and teachers away from work.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Holidays in term time

Holidays during term time will not be authorised, unless under exceptional circumstances. Parents will be reminded of the effects that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement and must provide a letter of explanation following an absence granted under exceptional circumstances, or one that is unauthorised.

PE and Educational Visits

If a parent or carer wishes to remove a pupil from a PE activity for medical reasons, they need to inform the school by telephone or in writing prior to the lesson. The school has to provide an alternative educational learning opportunity within the PE activity session. The child cannot be removed from the school or swimming pool, as this would deem that the child is a non - attendee on a regular basis.

Parental permission is sought to take children on educational visits, parents and carers reserve the right to remove their child from participation in an educational experience off-site. Where possible, the child must attend school as

normal as an alternative will normally be made available, or an appropriate activity will be given to complete at home.

The Law

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any Special Educational Needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school, alternative provision, or by education other than at school (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home.)

Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the start of the Reception year regardless of where their birthday lies.

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (inserted by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) requires all local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. This duty came into force on 27 February 2007 and guidance is available at <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/childrenmissingeducation>

If it appears to the Local Authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order.

There are two offences relating to parental responsibility for ensuring regular attendance at school or alternative provision (education otherwise than at school): if a registered pupil is absent without authorisation from school or alternative provision then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996; if the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996.

Fast -Track to attendance is a time-focused approach to case management for absence. The aim of 'Fast-Track' is to promote early intervention by the school and, when necessary, by the local authority. Local Authorities are strongly encouraged to apply the 'Fast-Track' principles either by the use of the model given or applying an equally rigorous case management system.
Ensuring Children's Right to Education DCSF (2007)

'The accuracy of the register is of paramount importance both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It is an offence not to maintain accurate registers. Head teachers may be called to Court as witnesses and explain their registration processes and in particular the marking of a register in question'

The Pupil Registration Regulations, Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Regulations) and *Guidance on the use of the Attendance and Absence Codes*

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes. Entries in paper registers must be in ink. All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid).