

Dame Ellen Pinsent School Attendance Policy



Where children are happy;

developing independence and confidence, so that they can be their very best

Next Review:	June 2025	D.Fountain	Policy Type:	LA
Last Review:	June 2023	D.Fountain	Adopted from:	
Date Ratified:			Governing Body:	FGB
Pages: 7			Review Period:	2 Years

Introduction

Dame Ellen Pinsent School:

1. Values good attendance from all pupils. Each pupil is important and valued by the school. The school has a commitment to provide the best possible education for each pupil. This cannot be achieved if attendance is poor.
2. Promises to actively encourage pupil's attendance by working to provide a safe, happy and secure place where children are successful and achievements are recognised and celebrated.
3. Recognises that good attendance is based on a working partnership between pupil, parent and school. All involved have a relationship where open communication is encouraged.

Aims

Dame Ellen Pinsent School has set clear procedures in order to maximise attendance to provide success for all.

We aim to:

- Ensure that all the legal requirements with regard to attendance are met.
- Ensure that the school works in partnership with relevant organisations to offer support to children and families.
- Challenge poor attendance.
- Praise improvement to attendance.
- Encourage children to have high expectations of themselves by raising their self-esteem.
- Ensure that every child experiences pleasure in learning and pride in success.
- Work to make sure that there is good behaviour, respect and consideration from everyone to everyone.
- Regard every member of school or visitor as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of his/her creed, culture, class, race, gender, (including gender reassignment), disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital/civil partnership status or age.
- Have due regard for the COVID-19 Pandemic and the limitations and expectations this places on both school and families

Working Together to Improve School Attendance

We are using the following guidance from DfE (May 2020) to support our attendance procedures

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

School

The Head Teacher/Senior Leadership should:

- Ensure that there is criteria that distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absences for pupils of compulsory school age (see appendix 1).
- Have an effective system to contact parents / carers about unexplained absences if information hasn't been received via the above methods (see appendix 2).
- Include any information on rate of absence for annual reports to parents
- Make clear the times for beginning and end of the school day, dates for school holidays and training days.
- Follow Birmingham Guidance: Term Time Leave (Pupils) (Updated) Guidance for Head Teachers of Schools and Academies; Birmingham City Council; September 2021
- Use FAST-track to Attendance as the legal process to tackle ongoing unauthorised absence
- Follow PHE guidance in relation to infection control in schools.
- Report attendance termly to Governors

Teachers should:

- Keep attendance and admission registers via SIMs (morning and afternoon), following codes for absence below.
- Welcome children back to school.
- Encourage good behaviour and mutual respect for each other.

Office staff should:

- Make first day of absence contact and ask parents for a reason and / or explanation for any absence, by a telephone call, note or message via the escort
- Inform parents of any change to their child's transport arrangements that may result in the vehicle arriving at a different time.

The Pastoral Manager should:

- Work in partnership with relevant organisations if families need support regarding absence or lateness.
- Work with parents to find joint solutions and especially listening sensitively to any concerns.
- Praise and record good attendance by giving certificates for pupils with good and 100% attendance.

Parents

The Education Act has placed a duty on any parent of children aged 5 to 16 that they receive full time education.

Parents should:

- Provide accurate and up-to-date contact details
- Make sure that their child attends school regularly and stays at school.
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, by them being ready when school transport arrives, if not then they need to get their child to school themselves. Or ensuring they are ready for school transport.
- Ensure that their child is properly dressed and in a condition to learn.
- Inform the school the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible preferably on the first day, either by telephone or a message via the escort.
- Know that they can only explain absences, they cannot authorise them. It is the school decision whether it is authorised or unauthorised (list of criteria for authorised and unauthorised absences can be found in appendix).
- Plan appointments where possible after school or at weekends.
- Inform school if an absence from school is known in advance. All leave of absence is unauthorised as per the amendment in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, especially with regard to holidays. Only exceptional circumstances will be considered for leave of absence for the pupil. School has an answer machine where a message can be left at any time.
- If they are worried regarding their child, contact school and arrange a discussion with a member of staff. It is important that problems are sorted out in the beginning.
- Help their child's attendance by giving positive messages about school, taking an interest in their child's work, praising effort and achievement, using the home/school book regularly to inform school of any difficulties and giving their child a regular routine.

Pupils

Pupils should:

- Be aware that it is important to come to school.
- Feel comfortable and safe to share any worries or concerns they have about attending school with the staff at school and / or their parents.
- Have time to speak to an adult in quiet time and in confidence.

Attendance Expectations

- 9.10am – the start of the school day
- 9.30am – registers close (any children arriving after this time, where it isn't a school transport issue, will be marked as late)
- 1.00pm – afternoon register is taken

Attendance Procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system

In case of PA (Persistent Absence = below 90%) parents will be informed and the school will take one of the following options, depending on the reason for absences:

- Monitor for further ½ term
- Invite parents to an attendance meeting with the Pastoral Manager
- Use the SARM process

If a child is absent from school for 5 consecutive days that the teacher will log this on CPOMS. A Safe and Well check will then be carried out by a DSL.

Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Health Issues

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

Appendix 1

Codes for Absence Reports

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent.

Appendix 2

Same Day Contact

Apart from the obvious health and safety issues involved, contacting families on the first day of a child's absence can be a useful tool in improving attendance. Whilst not impacting on hard core, persistent non-attenders, it does influence casual or sporadic non-attenders back into school.

It is quite a time consuming process but there are three areas which need to be set up to make it work more efficiently:

- A. The administration role
 - B. The content of the call
 - C. Monitoring and evaluation
-
- A.1 The registers will need to be read every day so organising for this to happen before 10.00am is essential.
 - A.2 Ensure that the school has an effective late system in operation – it is counterproductive to ring parents to tell them their child is away when they are in lesson but have not registered (it is also a breach of fire regulations).
 - A.3 All guides report reasons for absence to the member of Leadership who checks in the school buses. The Senior Office Manager will chase up unexplained absences.
-
- B.1 Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the call.
 - B.2 Explain that you are checking the whereabouts of all children marked absent for that session. It is important for parents to understand that everyone is being treated in exactly the same way.
 - B.3 Ascertain the reason for absence and make a judgement, if possible, about its legitimacy.
 - a) If legitimate, then establish a return date.
 - b) If not, explain how important regular attendance is for the success for their child and that this success stems from parents and school working in partnership.
 - B.4 If no direct contact is possible then choose whether to leave an answer machine message (if available), send a letter or arrange a visit to the home.
-
- C.1 Repeat this process for each day during the same day contact to analyse its impact.
 - C.2 Monitor pupil absence half termly. Letters are sent to all parents outlining the attendance percentage for their child and each child's termly attendance is sent home to parents. All pupils with less than 90% are analysed, an action plan is put in place.
 - C.3. Depending on the level of absence there is an escalation of information to parents
 - 1. Letter 1 – reminder of school expectations regarding attendance and what there child's current attendance is
 - 2. Letter 2 – outlining more serious concerns and that monitoring will be put in place
 - 3. Invite to meeting with pastoral manager
 - 4. Follow FAST-track/SARM process