Attendance Policy

Document Control

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Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Values

1. Put children first

    a. We trust and value your professionalism
    b. We share the responsibility for the learning and welfare of all of our children
    c. Our purpose is to improve the lives of children

2. Be safe

    a. Don't assume that someone else will do it
    b. Look after yourself, your colleagues and all children
    c. We are all responsible for each other's safety and well being
    d. Discuss any concerns with an appropriate member of staff

3. Be kind & respect all

    a. People are allowed to be different as are you
    b. Kindness creates the positive environment we all need to flourish
    c. This kindness should extend to ourselves as well as to others

4. Be open

    a. If you can see a better way, suggest it
    b. If someone else suggests a better way to you, consider it
    c. We exist to nurture innovators and support those who take informed risks in the interests of children

5. Forgive

    a. We all make mistakes
    b. Admit them, learn from them and move on

6. Make a difference

    a. Making the world a better place starts with you
    b. Model the behaviour that you would like to see from others

Related Policies and Documents

[TEFAT Safeguarding Policy](#) and local safeguarding arrangements
[TEFAT Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy](#)
[School attendance parental responsibility measures](#)
The Education Act 1996
The Education Act 2002
The Education and Inspections Act 2006
[DfE Working together to improve school attendance Sept 2022](#)
[DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance Sept 2022](#)
[DfE Children Missing Education (CME) guidance Sept 2016](#)
Local Attendance Policies (see individual school websites for more details)

1. Introduction

Improving attendance is everyone's business; it requires constant focus, and effective whole school approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge.

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with school approaches on curriculum, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff or organisation; it must be a concerted effort across all school staff, wider Trust, Local Authority and other partners.

2. The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

2.1. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer with parental

responsibility to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at school.

2.2.   Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means that their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

2.3.   Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil.

2.4.   In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

2.5.   A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents.

2.6.   In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

3.   Expectations of the Trust Board

Improving school attendance begins at Trust Board level; taking an active role in attendance improvement, supporting schools within the Trust to prioritise attendance and working together with school leaders to set whole school attendance cultures.

3.1.   Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Trust's ethos and policies

- Set high expectations for all leaders, staff, pupils and parents.

- Recognise that attendance improvement does not happen in isolation and therefore ensures it is prioritised in wider Trust improvement strategies, such as raising

attainment, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.

- Ensure the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.

- Ensure high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils. This includes those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.

- Repeatedly evaluate the effectiveness of schools' processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve.

3.2.   Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Have a locally owned Attendance Policy which meets the requirements of the DfE guidance, which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents and staff.

- Record attendance accurately in the register and share the required information with the Trust, DfE and Local Authorities.

- Work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance that go beyond the school gates, including building strong links with local services and the community.

- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools in the Trust.

3.3.   Regularly review attendance data to help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the cohorts who need it most

- Regularly review attendance data at board meetings, paying particular attention to attendance of pupil cohorts within their school(s) that have historically had poor attendance or that face entrenched barriers to attendance.

- Work with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and provide support and challenge around delivery against those focus areas.

- Identify and monitor attendance patterns across schools to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice across schools.

3.4. Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance

- Training on attendance should be included in a school's continued professional development offer for all staff and this should include:

  - the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
  - the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers,
  - the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
  - and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

- Dedicated attendance training should be provided to any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. In addition, this should include:

  - the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,
  - and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

4. Expectations of schools

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community.

To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

5.   Persistent and severe absence

5.1.   Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and Local Authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, schools should sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

5.2.   Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them.

5.3.   If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, Local Authorities and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance and the Trust wide Safeguarding Policy.