



Attendance Policy

July 2026

Document control and record of amendments

Version	Reason for amendment	Sections amended	Amended by/ date	Reviewed by/ date	Approved by/ date
1.0	New document	All	PR Jan 2023	Jan 2023	FGB 13/2/23
1.1	New guidance	All	PR and VT July 2024		
1.2	Annual update	Sections: 4, 6, 7, 8, Appendix 4	June 2025 PR and VT	July 2025	FGB 14.07.25
1.3	Annual update	Section 4, Appendix 5, Appendix 8	June 2026 VT	July 2026	FGB 14.7.26

Review date: July 2027

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1.Introduction

- 1.1. Regular attendance at school is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.
- 1.2. Elmbridge Primary School expects all pupils to attend regularly, which means every day the school is open.
- 1.3. Elmbridge Primary School expects all pupils to be punctual, which means on site at or before 8:45am.
- 1.4. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is important as a protective factor and the best opportunity for the school to identify needs and provide support.
- 1.5. Good attendance of pupils is everyone's business. All staff at the school have a responsibility to promote good attendance and instigate support when attendance is not good.

2. Promoting good attendance and punctuality

2.1. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The expectation for all our pupils is they:

- Attend regularly
- Be punctual
- Be ready to learn

2.2. In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

2.3. Each day comprises 2 sessions, am and pm.

2.4. To help parents understand their child's attendance, the school will routinely report the number of sessions missed to parents 3 times per year via the school progress report.

2.5. The school will provide more regular absence reports to parents whose attendance is a concern.

2.6. It is the duty of all staff to promote punctuality and good attendance of pupils. Staff should never encourage pupils to have time off school.

2.7. The importance of good attendance will regularly be promoted via the general newsletter, attendance matters letters, at school events, assemblies and parent meetings (including meetings for new reception children's parents as well as transition meetings between Y2 and Y3).

2.8. The school celebrates the attendance of pupils by

- Talking about good attendance and punctuality in assemblies.
- Conversations between senior teachers and pupils when attendance has improved or is a concern.
- Promoting good attendance in parent newsletters.
- Sharing attendance data during parent consultations.

3. Statutory responsibilities

- 3.1. The school will keep an accurate attendance and admission register and comply with DFE requirements to share this information by secure means.
- 3.2. The school will inform the Local Authority when a pupil of compulsory age has been absent from school, where the absence has not been authorised, for a period of 10 or more consecutive days or other special circumstances as set out by the LA.
- 3.3. The school will inform the Local Authority about any pupil who is deregistered as part of a move to Elective Home Education, including the completion of the deregistration documents. Advice will usually be sought from the LA Inclusion Team in such a situation.
- 3.4. The school will inform the Local Authority about any pupil who has a temporary part-time timetable in place.
- 3.5. Staff must ensure that all pupils are registered accurately each morning and each afternoon. This means they record whether the pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity or absent.
- 3.6. The attendance officer will ensure that all pupil absence is accounted for everyday and efforts are made to contact parents of pupils who have not informed the school. If the first contact cannot be reached, then the next will be tried, and so on. The attendance officer will also ensure that the correct codes for absences are used.
- 3.7. The school has a Senior Attendance Champion with overall responsibility for championing and supporting regular attendance and minimising absence (see appendix 1 for roles and responsibilities). The Senior Attendance Champion at Elmbridge Primary School is Victoria Toppin.
- 3.8. The Senior Attendance Champion will monitor and analyse data and support staff and families to raise attendance for pupils.
- 3.9. The school will work with other local schools, the local authority and other professionals to improve attendance.

4. Day to Day processes

- 4.1. All pupils should arrive from 8:35, and no later than 8:45. Gates on site close at 9:00 – after this time, late pupils must report to the school reception.
- 4.2. Morning registers open at 8:50 and will be taken before 9:00. Any pupil who arrives after 9:00 will be deemed late and have an L in the register. A pupil who arrives after 9:20 will have an unauthorised absence recorded in the register, unless the school is satisfied that the reason for lateness is an authorised absence.
- 4.3. Afternoon registers are taken after the lunchtime break. Depending on the year group, registration time will vary (Reception lunch finishes at 12:30pm, Y1-5 lunch finishes at 1:05pm and Y6 lunch finishes at 1:10pm). Any pupil who arrives after the register has been taken will be deemed as late and will have an L code. A pupil who arrives more than 20 minutes late will be marked in the register as unauthorised unless there is a reason that the school deems appropriate.
- 4.4. **A pupil not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter.** Parents must inform the school on the first day of any unexpected absence due to illness or other reason and all subsequent days. This must be done before 9:15 (parents can leave a message on the designated answer phone service or use Edulink to send a message).
- 4.5. The school will follow up any unexplained absence. This will involve calling the parent contacts until the absence is explained. On the second day of an unexplained absence, a home visit may be made.
- 4.6. Any planned absence must be authorised by the Head Teacher in advance (see section 5). Parents are asked to reduce these absences as much as possible, by making medical appointments outside of school hours and not requesting family holidays in term time.
- 4.7. If a leave of absence is taken without prior permission, or without completion of the 'Absence in exceptional circumstances' form, then the school will not authorise the absence. A penalty notice may be issued (see 5.7).
- 4.8. The school are required to inform the Local Authority if a child has 15 or more days absent due to illness. Our systems in school allow this to happen automatically.
- 4.9. If a child leaves school early, this will be noted on our electronic register as a note.
- 4.10. Details for absence will be noted on our electronic register as a note. For example, football tournament, illness – headache, secondary school transition day.

5. Absence and lateness

- 5.1. All pupils are expected to attend school regularly; this means every day the school is open. All pupils are also expected to be punctual, which means arrive on site at or before 8:45am.
- 5.2. A pupil should be present and punctual unless there is an exceptional reason. These may include:
- Genuine illness
 - Non-routine medical/dental appointments
 - Religious observance
 - Authorised educational events being held elsewhere
 - Unavoidable traffic delays
- 5.3. When the school has accepted the explanation for the absence, then an authorised absence code will be entered in the register.
- 5.4. When the school has not received a reason for the absence, or has not authorised the absence, then an unauthorised absence code will be entered in the register.
- 5.5. Parents are required to complete the 'Absence in exceptional circumstances' form well in advance of any planned absence, for the Head Teacher to consider (see appendix 4). Parents who make informal contact (e.g. via email) will be directed to complete the 'Absence in exceptional circumstances' form. Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013; the Education (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. The definition of exceptional circumstances are those that are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.
- 5.6. The school will ask the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice to parents/carers of pupils who record 10 G code absences (unauthorised holiday), in any 10-week period, in line with the Local Authority's 'Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices' policy.
- 5.7. The school will ask the Local Authority to issue Notice to Improve to parents/carers of pupils who record 10 unauthorised absences, in any 10-school week period, in line with the Local Authority's 'Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices' policy.
- 5.8. Penalty Notices and Notice to Improve statements can be issued to all parents/carers who live at the same address as the absent child.

- 5.9. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, a flat rate will be charged without any reduction for early payment.
- 5.10. Only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period. If the threshold for a third penalty notice is met, the school will consider alternative action, for example prosecution. The school will seek advice from the Local Authority.
- 5.11. If a parent informs school of an absence but school later find out the reason was not accurate, school will question the reason for absence. If we believe that the original reason is inaccurate, we have a duty to report the correct reason in our registers.
- 5.12. Parents of pupils with a talent for sport can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national, international events and competitions.
- 5.13. Permission to regularly arrive late, or leave late to attend coaching and training sessions are at the discretion of the Head Teacher, and are not likely to be authorised unless the sports club or association are providing an education plan as part of their coaching.
- 5.14. Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Head Teacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence .

6. Tackling persistent absence and lateness

- 6.1. If a pupil misses 10% or more of schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as being persistently absent. This level of absence will have a negative impact on the attainment, well-being and wider life chances of any pupil. It equates to approximately 19 days absence per academic year.
- 6.2. The school has a duty to identify, then put in place support for pupils who are persistently absent, or who are likely to become persistently absent or late if support is not provided. See appendix 3 for intervention flow chart.
- 6.3. It is important to recognise that support does not mean immediately reaching for punitive measures. Elmbridge Primary School prides itself on the relationships it forms with parents; these relationships are key to helping remove barriers to pupils attending school regularly.
- 6.4. Attendance contracts: Parents will be invited to a meeting to write an attendance contract when their child's attendance drops below 90%.
- 6.5. If attendance does not improve (for example, remains below 90%), then parents will be invited to a formal Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM). The structure of this meeting is outlined below:
- Parents meet with SLT member, class teacher, FW (or SENDCO if child has EHCP)
 - Attendance Improvement Plan is completed, outlining support that has been put in place already and what can be done in the future; this may include 'Early Help' referral. Targets for future attendance are agreed as is the date for AIM plan review.
- 6.6. If the targets of the AIM plan are not met, then the school will contact the Local Authority Inclusion Team for advice and support with escalating the concern. Actions could include making a social care referral, instigating an Education Supervision Order, or pursuing legal action against the parents.
- 6.7. Pupils who are regularly late miss out on learning time and disrupt the start of the day for both themselves, their peers and the teachers. All pupils should aim to be onsite at or before 8:45.
- When children are persistently late, class teacher, SLT or Senior Attendance Champion will meet with parents to discuss support.
- 6.8. A pupil whose attendance falls below 50% are severely absent. They are the most vulnerable and this level of absence is a safeguarding concern. The school will determine the best course of action in the circumstances, including;
- Taking advice from LA inclusion team.
 - Making a referral to social care.

7. Pupils with additional needs

- 7.1. The school understands that some pupils may find attending school regularly is difficult due to long-term medical conditions.
- 7.1 The school aims to work together with families and medical professionals to support pupils with medical conditions access school as much as possible, and to keep in touch with pupils who may be being educated away from school due to the nature of the medical condition. This is normally the responsibility of the SENDCo. More information can be found in the 'Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school' policy.
- 7.2 The school will work to make reasonable adjustments to help ensure pupils with medical conditions, including physical or mental ill health can attend school regularly.
- 7.3 Some children may attend alternative provision sites, for some of their education, linked to their needs. The school will have contact with the provision site and satisfy themselves that the provision is of an appropriate nature.

8. Using data

- 8.1. All staff who are responsible for taking a register are expected to make sure this is completed accurately.
- 8.2. Attendance data will be analysed weekly by the School Attendance Champion and Family Worker, to identify any pupils who are at risk of becoming persistently absent. This will involve looking for patterns of regular absence, or identify absence not consistent with genuine illness.
- 8.3. Attendance data will be shared with class teachers, so they can understand the attendance of pupils in their classes. They are then able to both celebrate success and have discussions with pupils and parents where absence is a concern.
- 8.4. Attendance data will universally be shared with parents during parent consultations and via the end of year report.
- 8.5. See Intervention Flow Chart for when support will be offered.
- 8.6. More detailed attendance data will be shared during attendance support meetings and formal 'Attendance Improvement Meetings' with parents, where attendance is a cause for concern.
- 8.7. Attendance of SEND pupils will be shared with the SEND team, who will be responsible for monitoring attendance of pupils with EHCP.
- 8.8. Attendance of Pupil Premium (PP) pupils will be shared with the PP team, who will be responsible for monitoring attendance of these pupils.
- 8.9. Attendance and absence will be reported at every Full Governing Body meeting, where the school expects to be challenged on how it is supporting regular attendance at school.
- 8.10. There is a named Governor with oversight for attendance who will have at least 3 meetings per year with the School Attendance Champion to look at attendance in more detail.

Appendix 1: Roles and Responsibilities

Name	Role	Responsibilities
Lynne Skingsley/Office Staff	Attendance officer	- Monitoring attendance daily and co-ordinating the proactive contact of parents of pupils absent without reason. - Managing the school role, including keeping a waiting list for places. - Monitoring the daily completion of the electronic register. - Collation of absence requests for consideration by the Head Teacher. - Complete required paperwork in the event of a request for home education. - Provide attendance and absence data for school reports. - Liaising with Local Authority Inclusion Team as necessary. - Attend attendance network meetings as and when organised by the LA.
Di Howard	Family Worker	- Keep class teachers updated with information about absent children in their class. - Proactively contact families of those pupils whose absences are beginning to cause concern to offer school support. - Keep School Attendance Champion updated with any potential longer-term absences or those absences that are causing concern. - Join with SLT (attendance) to meet families of pupils whose absence is a cause for concern.
Victoria Toppin	School Attendance Champion	- Ensure attendance policy is written in accordance with DFE guidelines. - Ensure attendance policy is understood by all. - Ensure procedures set out in attendance policy are followed correctly. - Ensure attendance registers are accurate and up to date. - Weekly monitoring of attendance data, to identify pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. - Co-ordinate the engagement of parents and carers of those pupils whose attendance is a cause of concern. - Chair meetings with parents and carers with the aim of improving attendance of pupils, including formal Attendance Improvement Meetings as necessary. - Provide information about attendance to class teachers, SMT, SLT and Governors. - Consider absence requests as directed by Head Teacher. - Attend attendance network meetings as and when organised by the LA. - Proactively promote good attendance and punctuality through assemblies, newsletters, staff meetings, new parent talks and other events.

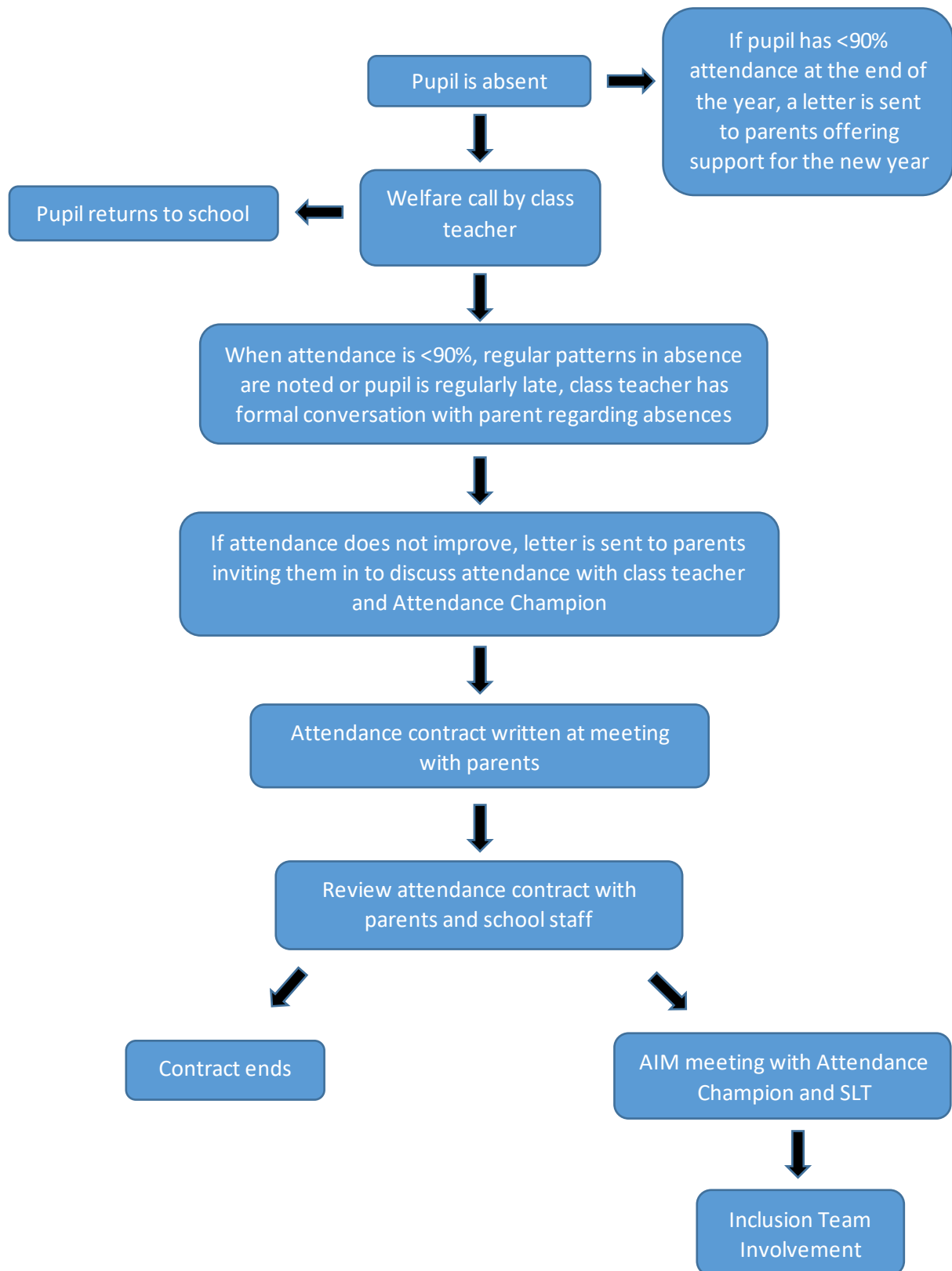
		• Meet at least 3 times a year with the named attendance governor. • Work with other local schools, the local authority and other professionals in order to raise attendance.
Matt Bevis	Attendance Governor	• Meet at least 3 times a year with the school attendance champion to review attendance data • Use data to understand patterns of attendance, including comparisons with local schools • Provide challenge and support to the school on attendance matters

Appendix 2: Levels of Attendance

	Attendance	Number of missed days	Description
Excellent	Attendance is 99% or higher	Up to 7 days	Very few learning opportunities are missed
Good	Attendance is above 96%	Up to 13 days	Some learning is missed, but pupil should be able to catch up
Room for Improvement	Attendance is below 96%	Up to 19 days	Absence will begin to have a negative effect on pupils learning and well-being
Cause for Concern	Attendance is below 90%	More than 19 days	Absence will have a significant negative effect on pupils learning and well being

This information will be shared with parents 3 times per year on the school report form.

Appendix 3: Intervention Flowchart



Request for Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

Parents do not have the right to take children out of school during term time, and so requests will not usually be authorised (the law requires pupil attendance at school, every day the school is open). There are 13 weeks of the year during which the school is closed, when it would be more suitable for time to be taken.

If a pupil is absent without permission the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in the Local Authority issuing a penalty notice for the absence.

- The Local Authority can only issue two penalty notices to the same parent in respect to the same child within a 3 year rolling period. The second penalty notice will always be charged at the higher rate.
- 10 unauthorised absences in a 10-school week window will lead to a Notice to Improve from the Local Authority.
- All parents/carers that live at the same address as the absent child can be issued with a penalty notice.

I have read and understood the above information. However, I am requesting a leave of absence from school for:

Child's Name:		Class number:
From:	To:	Total number of school days:

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I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent/carer for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days which increases to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.

Name(s) of Parent / Carer (s)

Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms

Forename: Surname:

Address:

.....

Signed

Date.....

Name(s) of Parent / Carer (s)

Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms

Forename: Surname:

Address:

.....

Signed

Date.....

Please confirm that ALL persons with parental responsibility (PR) are aware of this absence request. This is particularly important if parents do not co-habit, and when there are shared care arrangements in place, including those advised by a court.

☐

Yes: All persons with PR are aware of this absence request

☐

No: All persons with PR are not aware of this absence request. Please give brief details below

Please return to the school office no less than 10 days before the commencement of the leave of absence

For school use:

Authorised

☐

Not Authorised

☐

Request PN

Yes

☐

No

☐

Signed *(Head Teacher / Senior Attendance Champion)*

Appendix 5: Letter Samples

Date: _____

Dear Parent / Carer of _____

Re: Invitation to discuss _____'s school attendance

Attendance is an issue which we as a school take very seriously. Our records show _____'s attendance is currently ____%.

Whilst we appreciate that non-attendance may be due to unavoidable illness or exceptional circumstances that you have informed school about, our policy states that we will inform you when your child's attendance drops to 96%.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

(DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance, August 2024)

It is really important for children to be in school and attend regularly. Missing out on lessons can leave children vulnerable to falling behind. Low attendance at school can have a negative impact on pupil progress, their self-esteem and how a pupil interacts and engages with their work on a day to day basis.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

We would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss _____'s attendance with the class teacher and Senior Attendance Champion on _____ at _____. If this time is not convenient, please contact the school to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,

Mr G Tharia and Mrs A Holliday

Co-Headteachers

Date: _____

Dear Parent / Carer of _____

Re: End of Year Attendance

As we reflect on the past school year, I want to take a moment to thank you for your continued support and involvement in your child's education. Working together helps create the foundation for every student's success.

We are confident that with a shared commitment, _____ can start the new academic year with a positive attendance record. We appreciate your support in ensuring that your child receives the full benefit of their education.

As you may be aware, a pupil is identified as a persistent absentee when their attendance falls below 90%. Unfortunately, _____'s current attendance stands at _____. This level of absence is concerning, as regular attendance is essential for academic progress, social development, and emotional wellbeing.

We acknowledge that some absences may have been unavoidable. However, the cumulative impact of missed school days can be significant. Research shows that regular attendance is a critical component of both academic success and emotional wellbeing.

We want to work together with you to support improved attendance in the next academic year. If there are any challenges affecting _____'s ability to attend regularly, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or Mrs Toppin so that we can explore any resources or solutions that may help.

Thank you again for your partnership in your child's education. Together, we can help ensure a successful and rewarding school year ahead.

Kind regards,

Mr G Tharia and Mrs A Holliday

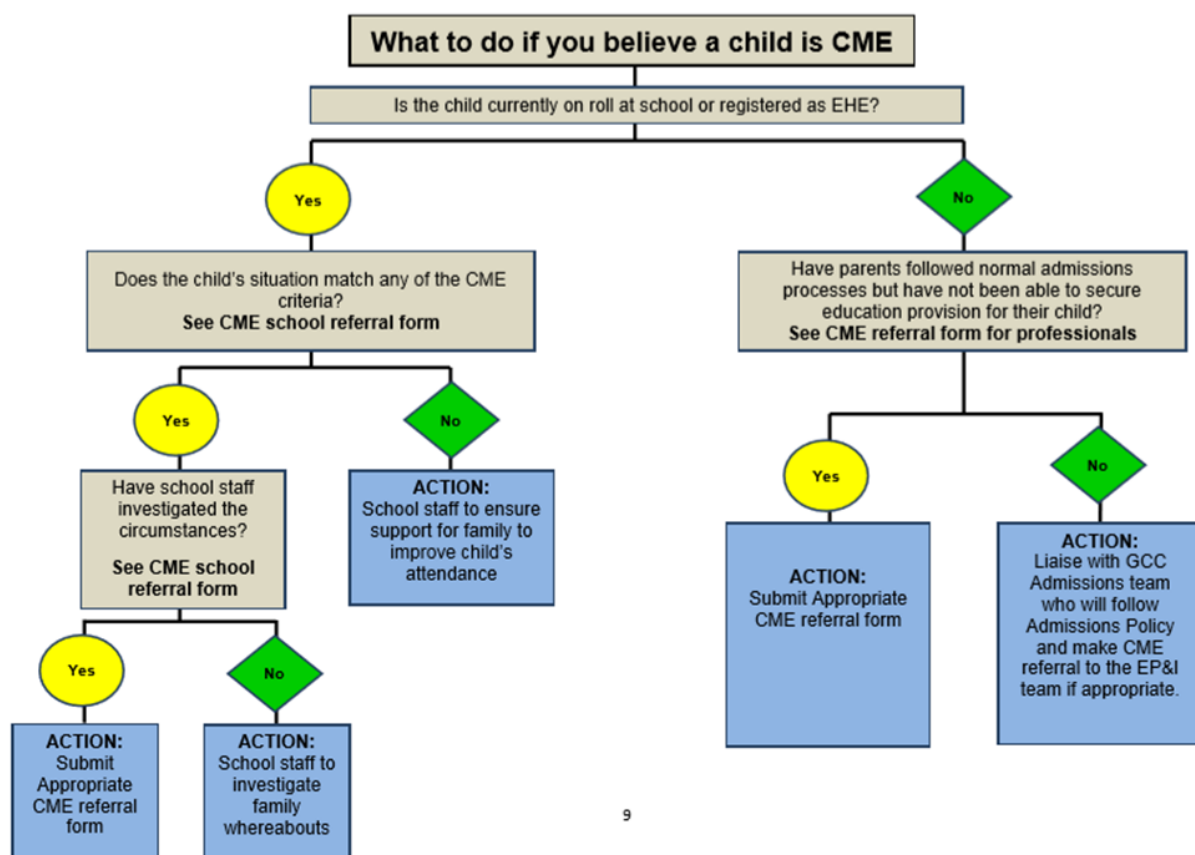
Co-Headteachers

Appendix 6: Register Codes

Code	Reason	Status	Notes
/ \	Present	Attending	
L	Late arrival before 9:20am	Attending	
K	Attending educational provision organised by LA	Approved educational activity	
V	Attending educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity	Supervised by a member of school staff
P	Participating in sporting activity	Approved educational activity	Can seek advice from sporting national bodies to check suitability. Activity must be supervised by a person considered by school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge (including safeguarding) Must check that the pupil has attended
W	Attending work experience	Approved educational activity	
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Approved educational activity	Must be educational provision Activity must be supervised by a person considered by school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge (including safeguarding) Must check that the pupil has attended E.g. Taster days
D	Dual registered at another school	Not possible attendance	Code used when scheduled to attend the other school
C1	Leave of absence for performances or employment abroad	Authorised	Employment during school hours Pupil must have license
M	Medical or dental	Authorised	
J1	Attending interview for employment or educational institution	Authorised	Includes interviews for other educational settings
S	Study leave	Authorised	
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not possible attendance	When pupil is not compulsory school age (term after 5 th birthday) and on a part time timetable
C2	Part timetable		Best interests Temporary measure – must have an end date

C	Exceptional circumstances	Authorised	School's discretion
T	Parents travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised	When parents are travelling for business Expected pupils will attend a local school and be dual registered
R	Religious observance	Authorised	Day that is set apart of religious observance Times that the parents would not be expected to attend work by the religious body
I	Illness	Authorised	
E	Excluded/suspended, no provision made	Authorised	When no alternative provision has been made
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	Not possible attendance	When LA have failed to make access arrangements
Y1	Transport usually provided not available	Not possible attendance	School not within walking distance (<8yrs, 2 miles, >8yrs, 3 miles) and transport is not mally provided isn't available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Not possible attendance	Caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school closed	Not possible attendance	
Y4	Whole school site closed unexpectedly	Not possible attendance	
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention	Not possible attendance	
Y6	Unable to attend due to public health guidance/law	Not possible attendance	
Y7	Unable to attend for any other unavoidable cause	Not possible attendance	An emergency that is unavoidable and effects the pupil not the parent
G	Holiday not granted	Unauthorised	If didn't apply in advance, holiday should not be authorised
N	No reason established	Unauthorised	School have 5 days to establish a reason
O	Absence for other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised	No reason for absence is established
U	Arrived after register closed	Unauthorised	
Z	Not on register		Allows schools to create registers in advance of pupils joining
#	Planned whole school closure		

Appendix 7: Flow chart for child missing in education



Appendix 8: Attendance Policy - Blueprint

- The expectation for ALL our pupils is that they:
 - Attend regularly**
 - Be punctual**
 - Be ready to learn**
- The definition of '**regularly**' is every time the school is open.
- Children should attend school unless they are **genuinely too ill to attend**, or have the absence authorised by the head teacher.
- Parents and carers should only ask for a leave of absence from school in **exceptional circumstances**; these are defined as those that are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. This should be no less than 10 days before commencement of leave
- The school will inform parents of their children's absence throughout the academic year and **provide support** to help remove barriers to regular attendance.
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% are **persistently absent**; this equates to missing 19 or more days per academic year. This level of absence will affect both their learning and well-being. Support will be put in place for pupils at risk of being persistently absent.
- Pupils who are regularly late miss learning time and **disrupt the start of the day** for both themselves, their peers and the teachers. All pupils should aim to be onsite at or before 8:45am.

The table below shows the levels of attendance, and this means for the pupil.

	Attendance	Number of missed days	Description
Excellent	Attendance is 99% or higher	Up to 7 days	Very few learning opportunities are missed
Good	Attendance is above 96%	Up to 13 days	Some learning is missed, but pupil should be able to catch up
Room for Improvement	Attendance is below 96%	Up to 19 days	Absence will begin to have a negative effect on pupils learning and well-being
Cause for Concern	Attendance is below 90%	More than 19 days	Absence will have a significant negative effect on pupils learning and well being