

Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Schools

**Our vision is to enable all children to reach their full potential in an ever changing world.**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	<b>Agreed by Governors:</b>	<b>Date for Next Review:</b>
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*Inspire Challenge Nurture*

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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole schools community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.
- 1.3 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the committee know of the policy and have access to it.

### 2. School’s roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader  
A member of each Admin Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the schools. This person will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.3 Registration
  - i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).
  - ii) The register will be called from **8.45am** and **1.15pm** by the class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
  - iii) The registers will close at **9am** and **1.25pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school’s policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 4.6 on page 7).

## REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## 2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked with a red circle as unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.
- ii) Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools recognise the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
  - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
    - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
    - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
    - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance.
  - (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
  - (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand);
  - (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
  - (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;

- (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
  - (g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
  - (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- no explanation has been given by the parent;
  - the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
  - the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
  - the pupil is shopping during school hours;
  - the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
  - the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
  - the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

### 2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

### 2.6 Class registers

In order to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after registration and to ensure the safety of pupils, class teachers will inform the office to check on pupils missing from school. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the school office and measures taken to locate the pupil.

### 2.7 Staff Training

The Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

## 3. **Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Admin Team will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report will include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfES within the stipulated time frame.

#### **4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class groups.

4.2 Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools will contact parents where the reason for absences are not known or when the reason is unacceptable.

#### 4.3 First-day calling

Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools have in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil / student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils / students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

#### 4.4 School Strategies to Tackle Absence

The Admin Team are responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools in non attendance at an early stage. Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit, usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools will organize Attendance / Governor Panels to intervene in levels of non attendance when parents will be invited to discuss the issues of the attendance.

#### 4.5 Referral to the Educational Welfare Officers

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil / student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorized) for 10 school day or more. Schools and Academies must also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorized absence without amassing 10 continuous absence.

#### 4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3.(iii) on page 4) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other student with an emerging pattern of absence. (See para. 4.4). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

- 4.7 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes should be brought to the School Office where parents sign the Late Book and the Admin team will sign them in.
- 4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the School Office to be signed in. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**
- 4.9 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day complete the Signing In And Out Book.
- 4.10 Post-registration truancy  
Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools take this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

## 5. Term-time Holidays

- 5.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.
- 5.2 Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **at least a week before** the intended holiday. When parents are separated, the application must come from the parent the child resides with.
- 5.3 Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools will consider authorising holidays for up to 10 days for:
- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
  - when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- 5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:
- cheaper cost of holiday;
  - availability of the desired accommodation;
  - poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
  - overlap with beginning or end of term.
- 5.5 Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools will respond to all requests for a leave of absence on the form provided. Should more clarification of the decision be required a letter will also be sent home.



5.6 Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools will **NOT** authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATS.

When considering a request for leave of absence the following will be taken into account:

- the amount of time requested
- age of the pupil
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record
- length of the proposed leave
- pupil's ability to catch up the work
- pupil's educational needs
- general welfare of the pupil
- circumstances of the request
- purpose of the leave
- frequency of the activity, and
- when the request was made

## 6. Extended leave of absence

6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;
- where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

## 7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools

7.2 Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools expect parents / carers to:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- **not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.**

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Telephoned or verbal explanations given will be followed with a written explanation on the pupil's return to school.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Ellingham VC Primary and Woodton Primary Schools will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## **8. Pupils' / students' responsibilities**

**8.1** All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, **please speak to their class teacher.**

8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

8.3 A Guide for Pupils is attached.

## **9. Governors' responsibilities**

9.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

## **10. Conclusion**

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly
- Regular attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy
- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

### **Reviewing the policy**

The school will review this policy each year with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.

## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### 1. **When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The children will be able to come in at **8.40am** in the morning and the register will be called from **8.45am** and the afternoon register at **1.15pm**.

### 2. **What happens if my child is late?**

Registration finishes at **9am** in the morning and **1.25pm** in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between **8.45am** and **9am** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **9am** and **1.25pm** he/she will be marked **absent**.

Pupils who arrive after **8.45am** should be brought to the **school office**, and parents sign the Late Book. If a pupil is regularly late a meeting will be arranged with a member of staff to discuss reasons / difficulties for lateness.

### 3. **Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. However, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

### 4. **What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- Illness
- Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Visiting a new school

Except in the case of illness, or bereavement, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. A Leave of Absence Form is available from the School Office. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

### 5. **What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

### 6. **Will the School contact me if my child is absent?**

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

### 7. **I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?**

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact your child's class teacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Headteacher then approves the visit, the school will set a work for your child to complete while away. As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

**8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home a school contact book each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it each week.

**9. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

## ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY

### A GUIDE FOR PUPILS

#### 1. Attending regularly and on time

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities at school. It will help you:

- keep up with your school work and get the best results you can;
- get a job – employers like people who are reliable.

Remember, your attendance at school is shown in your Record of Achievement.

#### 2. Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- illness
- emergency dental / medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement

Looking after your brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

You will also need a note from your parents to explain ALL absences from school. You will also need to be signed in at the School office if you arrive at school after 8.45am in the morning. If you arrive after 9am without an unsatisfactory explanation, the absence will count as unauthorised and will be shown on your end of year report.

#### 3. Need help?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. **TALK TO SOMEONE** – your class teacher, another member of staff, your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

Signed

Date