Ellingham CE VC & Woodton Primary Federation

Whole School Attendance Policy

Date Reviewed:	Agreed by Governors:	Date for Next Review:
September 2026	October 2026	September 2027

Our vision is to love our neighbour, enabling everyone to flourish and to reach their full potential.

RESPECT | CHALLENGE | INSPIRE | RESILIENCE | NURTURE | ASPIRATION

Summary of changes – September 2026:

Section	Changes
1.0 Introduction	Strengthened attendance and safeguarding links, recognising attendance as a key safeguarding indicator and reinforcing the importance of understanding and addressing barriers to attendance.
2.0 Promoting Regular Attendance	Added emphasis on attendance as a safeguarding responsibility and strengthened wording regarding belonging, inclusion, wellbeing and positive attendance culture.
3.1 Persistent and Severe Absence	Expanded section to recognise persistent and severe absence as potential indicators of vulnerability, unmet need and safeguarding concerns. Added reference to understanding barriers and providing appropriate support.
3.3 Medical Appointments and Absence Due to Illness	Strengthened recognition of wider factors that may impact attendance, including mental health, SEND and individual vulnerabilities.
4.2 Expected Absence Procedures for Parents	Clarified safeguarding responsibilities, including informing a pupil's allocated social worker or youth justice worker of absences and recognising attendance concerns as part of wider safeguarding arrangements.
4.4 Support Systems	Enhanced support-first approach, with greater emphasis on identifying barriers to attendance, partnership working, safeguarding, wellbeing, SEND and coordinated support planning. Added new subsection on attendance, SEND and vulnerable pupils.
4.5 Attendance Recognition, Support and Intervention	Revised section to reflect a graduated response to attendance concerns, including early intervention, attendance support planning, multi-agency working and inclusive attendance recognition that celebrates both excellent and improved attendance.
4.6 Part-Time Timetables	Strengthened guidance to emphasise pupil welfare, safeguarding, educational progress and regular review of part-time timetable arrangements.
6. Deletions from the Register	Strengthened references to Children Missing Education and safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children whose whereabouts are unknown.
8. Statutory Framework	Updated references to all listed statutory guidance
Appendices	Updated links to NCC penalty notices regarding school absence- Guidance for parents 2026-27, Leave of absence request 2026-27 and Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents
Declaration	
Dawn Thomas **September 2026** 	

Whole School Attendance Policy

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body/Board of Trustees on at least an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body/Board of Trustees in October 2026. It is due for review in September 2027.

Signature  Headteacher Date: **September 2026**

Signature Chair of Governors Date: **October 2026**

Contents

Introduction	5
Promoting Regular Attendance	5
Roles and Responsibilities	8
Understanding types of absence	11
Persistent and Severe Absence	12
Leave of absence	13
Medical appointments and absence due to illness	13
Pupil absence for the purposes of Religious Observance	14
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils	15
Our Procedures	16
Register Keeping and Recording	16
Expected absence procedure for parents	16
Late arrival at school	17
Support Systems	18
Attendance, SEND and Vulnerable Pupils	18
Attendance Recognition, Support and Intervention	20
Part-time timetables	22
School Attendance and the Law	23
National Framework for penalty notices	23
Deletions from the Register	24
Related Policies	25
Statutory Framework	25
Appendices **Appendix 1: Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for parents** **Appendix 2: Example leave of absence request form** **Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents**	25

1. Introduction

At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation we recognise that positive behaviour and good school attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education.

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 to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means 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.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance including the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school.

We recognise that attendance and safeguarding are closely linked. Children who are absent from education, persistently absent, severely absent, or missing education may be at increased risk of harm, exploitation, neglect, poor educational outcomes and other safeguarding concerns. Attendance information is therefore considered alongside other safeguarding information to help identify children who may require early help, additional support or protection.

We are committed to working in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and relevant agencies to understand and address the barriers that may affect school attendance. We will always seek to understand the reasons for absence and work with families to secure the right support at the earliest opportunity, helping every child to access their right to a full-time education and achieve their full potential.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote children's welfare, attendance and safeguarding through an integrated whole-school approach.

- Ensure every pupil has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Our policy outlines the school's commitment to attendance. Our policy aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents & carers, pupils and governors/trustees about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

2.Promoting Regular Attendance

At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

We recognise that attendance is a key safeguarding indicator. Children who are persistently absent, severely absent or missing education may be more vulnerable to harm and may require additional support. Attendance information is therefore routinely considered alongside safeguarding, SEND, behaviour and wellbeing information to ensure concerns are identified and responded to at the earliest opportunity.

We strive to create a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment where all pupils feel safe, valued, respected and have a strong sense of belonging within the school community. We recognise that positive relationships, pupil wellbeing and a sense of belonging are important factors in promoting regular attendance and engagement with education.

The key roles and responsibilities for attendance are as follows:

Role	Name	Contact details
School Office (Woodton)	Karen Taylor	01508 482294 woodtonoffice@ellwoodfed.org
School Office (Ellingham)	Nicola Cave	01508 518250 ellinghamoffice@ellwoodfed.org
Senior Attendance Champion (both schools)	Dawn Thomas	01508 518250 01508 482294 head@ellwoodfed.org
Attendance Officer (both schools)	Vicky Wood	01508 518250 01508 482294 finance@ellwoodfed.org
Named Governor for Attendance	Diane Perry-Yates	01508 518250 01508 482294 chairofgov@ellingham.norfolk.sch.uk

Improving school attendance is everyone's business, it is a shared responsibility by governors, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Give parents/carers information about attendance in our newsletters.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Governing Board Board of Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and works effectively with the local authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker or youth justice worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensuring school leaders have effective systems in place to identify pupils whose absence may indicate safeguarding concerns and that attendance data is routinely considered as part of the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

The Senior Management Team (including senior attendance champion) at Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Ensure attendance concerns are considered as part of the school's safeguarding systems and that appropriate referrals are made where concerns indicate a child may be at risk of harm.

- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior attendance champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors/Trustees and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor/trustee for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff at Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.

- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Senior Attendance Champion, Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, and other relevant staff members.
- Liaising regularly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to review pupils whose attendance patterns indicate emerging welfare or safeguarding concerns.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/or the implementation of an attendance contract.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents.
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation requests that parents:

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.

- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

3. Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of other pupils. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session.' Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

"Absence" as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

"Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted such as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays taken during term-time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacherl, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

3.1 Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee' (PA)** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent' (SA)**. Pupils within this cohort 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.

The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are persistently absent (PA) or at risk of becoming persistently absent. Where emerging concerns are identified, we will implement appropriate and timely interventions as outlined within this policy.

We recognise that persistent absence and severe absence can be indicators of unmet need, vulnerability or safeguarding concerns. Where attendance concerns arise, we will seek to understand the barriers affecting attendance and consider whether additional support, early help, SEND intervention, mental health support or safeguarding action may be required.

Pupils who are severely absent will receive prioritised support due to the significant educational, wellbeing and safeguarding risks associated with prolonged absence from school. Referrals may also be made to external agencies to provide targeted support where appropriate.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

3.2 Leave of Absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will also result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

3.3 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an

appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must sign the pupil signing-out book at the school office. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will speak to parents/carers regarding our concerns and look at what support can be put in place to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend a school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.[1]

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and Norfolk County Council policies via the Medical Needs Service. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

The school recognises that attendance difficulties can arise from a range of factors, including physical health needs, mental health needs, anxiety, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), neurodiversity and other vulnerabilities. Where attendance is affected, we will work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand individual circumstances, identify barriers to attendance and consider what support may be required to help the pupil access their education successfully.

3.4 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

[1] This is in accordance with the NSCP Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited

3.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. We recognise that there are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. At our school, we have high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their background whilst recognising the lifestyle and cultural traditions of GRT communities. In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil who is a mobile child[2] and is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family has no fixed abode and are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation in the last 18 months. Parents are expected to register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

[2] A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

4. Our Procedures

At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation we use an Arbor – an online system to record pupil attendance twice a day, for the morning and afternoon sessions.

In the morning, the register is taken at 8:50 and closes at 9:00am. In the afternoon the register is taken at 1:15 and closes at 1:25pm

4.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- On the first day of absence, please inform the school office of any absence. The school office can be contacted by phone or by email:

Ellingham VC Primary	01508 518250	ellinghamoffice@ellwoodfed.org
Woodton Primary	01508 482294	woodtonoffice@ellwoodfed.org

  Please leave a message on the school answerphone if there is no answer.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9:00am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Dawn Thomas	01508 518250 (Ellingham) 01508 482294 (Woodton) head@ellwoodfed.org
School Secretary - who parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis	Nicola Cave (Ellingham) Karen Taylor (Woodton)	01508 518250 (Ellingham) ellinghamoffice@ellwoodfed.org 01508 482294 (Woodton) woodtonoffice@ellwoodfed.org
School Support Manager - who parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance	Vicky Wood	01508 518250 (Ellingham) finance@ellwoodfed.org 01508 482294 (Woodton) finance@ellwoodfed.org

If your child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9:00am and where no reason for absence is known. We will telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us.
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send emails/letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.

We will also inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are absences from school in line with statutory requirements. We will also inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if their name is to be deleted from the school register.

Attendance concerns will be considered alongside other safeguarding information to ensure that children who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity.

4.3 Late Arrival at School

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8:40am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will

be taken at 8:50. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before 9:00am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9:00am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the Headteacher, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

4.4 Support Systems

At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Attendance concerns may also be linked to a range of factors including physical health needs, mental health needs, anxiety, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), family circumstances, safeguarding concerns and other vulnerabilities that may affect a child's ability to attend school regularly.

Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We are committed to working in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand the reasons for absence, identify barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Where appropriate, attendance concerns will be considered alongside safeguarding, wellbeing and SEND information to ensure children receive coordinated support.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

4.4.1 Attendance, SEND and Vulnerable Pupils

The school recognises that some pupils may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers and may require additional support in order to access their education successfully.

This may include pupils with:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Mental health and wellbeing needs
- Long-term medical conditions
- Children with a social worker
- Youth justice involvement
- Experience of care
- Emerging safeguarding concerns

We recognise that attendance difficulties can be a sign that a pupil requires additional support and should not be viewed in isolation. Where attendance concerns arise, we will work with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand barriers to attendance and identify appropriate support.

We will consider whether reasonable adjustments, additional support, specialist advice or further assessment may be required. Where appropriate, attendance support arrangements will be planned alongside existing SEND, safeguarding, healthcare, alternative provision or Early Help plans to ensure a coordinated and child-centred approach.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- *Write to you if your child's attendance is causing a concern and/or where punctuality is a concern;*
- *Conduct regular wishes and feelings activities with your child to understand their lived experience and identify barriers to attendance;*
- *Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion;*
- *Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;*
- *Share any agreed action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, with parents/carers;*
- *Offer signposting and support from other agencies or services, where appropriate, or undertake an Early Help Assessment and Plan with you;*
- *Refer the matter to an external agency for multi-agency support, or consult with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the police where there are safeguarding concerns;*

- *Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate);*
- *Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.*

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

4.5 Attendance Recognition, Support and Intervention

At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation we will regularly monitor attendance and punctuality for all pupils. We recognise that good attendance is fundamental to educational achievement, wellbeing and safeguarding.

We aim to promote and celebrate good attendance through a positive whole-school culture which values attendance, belonging and engagement with learning. Our approach is based on identifying concerns early, understanding barriers to attendance and providing appropriate support before problems become entrenched.

Where attendance concerns emerge, intervention will be proportionate to the individual needs and circumstances of the child. We will work collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals to identify barriers, agree support strategies and review progress.

Attendance support will be child-centred and may include recognition of positive attendance, improved attendance, successful re-engagement with education, and compliance with agreed attendance support plans.

We will identify and support pupils at the earliest opportunity where attendance concerns emerge. We will investigate and offer support to any pupils who are at risk of becoming persistently absent and will not wait until attendance falls below 90%.

Attendance Stage	Typical Indicators	Possible School Actions
Universal Support	All pupils	• Warm welcome • Children with 100% are rewarded with a certificate on a termly basis. • Classes with the highest attendance are rewarded

		weekly in Celebration Assembly. • Monitor any unauthorised absences. • Monitor any absences dropping below 96%.
Emerging Concern	Attendance beginning to decline or emerging attendance patterns of concern	• Informal discussion with pupil and family, • Increased attendance monitoring, • Wishes and feelings activities, • Wellbeing check-ins, • Send initial letter of support to parents.
Additional Support	Attendance below school expectations or recurring attendance concerns	• Meeting with parents/carers, • Attendance support plan, • Attendance contract, • Pastoral support, SEND review, healthcare discussions, Early Help consideration or signposting to relevant services – as appropriate.
Targeted Support	Persistent absence or risk of persistent absence	• Attendance Support Panel, multi-agency involvement, regular reviews, home visits where appropriate, • Coordinated support arrangements and referrals to specialist services.
Intensive Support	Severe absence or significant attendance concerns	• Intensive multi-agency support, safeguarding review, social care liaison where appropriate, • Local Authority involvement, enhanced attendance planning and regular monitoring.
Formal Attendance Intervention	Where support has not secured improvement or where appropriate	• Consideration of attendance legal processes where support has not secured sufficient improvement, or where statutory intervention is considered appropriate.

		• Any legal action will be undertaken in accordance with DfE guidance, Norfolk County Council protocols and the National Framework.

Recognition of attendance should be inclusive and encourage all pupils to improve their attendance and engagement with school. Where attendance awards are used, the school will seek to celebrate excellent attendance, improved attendance, positive punctuality and successful re-engagement with education. The school will avoid approaches that may unintentionally disadvantage pupils with genuine health needs, disabilities or other legitimate barriers to attendance.

Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federations approach to supporting and promoting attendance:

- Our attendance target is 96%.
- All attendance data is monitored every 3 weeks by the headteacher and any children whose attendance is causing a concern will be identified and the following steps followed:
    - Initial letter of support sent
    - Monitoring for the following 3 weeks
    - If there is an improvement – continue to monitor
    - If there are further absences – second letter sent, inviting parent(s) in for a meeting to discuss support needed
- We report each classes attendance in our weekly newsletter.
- The winning class is awarded a class star and the class with the most stars at the end of the half term has a class reward of their choosing e.g. a movie afternoon or a visit to the park.
- Each term those pupils who have 100% are awarded a certificate.
- Each term those pupils who have 96% + are awarded a certificate.
- Each term those pupils whose attendance has improved significantly will be awarded a certificate.
- We promote attendance by:
    - sharing the policy with parents and making sure it is available on our Federation website.
    - Regular reminders in our school newsletter.

At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation we will investigate and offer support to any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

4.6 Part-time timetables

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a pupil's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full-time education and it would not be in their best interest to do so. We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a part-time timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil where it is safe to do so; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

Part-time timetables will only be used as a short-term intervention and will be subject to regular review. Any arrangement must support the child's educational progress, wellbeing and welfare and must not result in the child being left without appropriate education, supervision or safeguarding support during school hours.

In line with Norfolk County Council guidance, we will notify the Attendance Team of all part-time timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

5. School Attendance and the Law

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

5.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

For further information see the Norfolk Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalties regarding school attendance.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

We will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

6. Deletions from the Register

At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We follow Norfolk County Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

We recognise that children missing education are a particularly vulnerable group. The school will work proactively with Norfolk County Council and other relevant agencies to establish the whereabouts of children whose location is unknown and ensure that appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Norfolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation will follow Norfolk County Council's Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

7. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medical needs
- admissions
- exclusion
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and relationships, including anti-bullying

8. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE (July 2026)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Children missing education, DfE (September 2025)
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (July 2026)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (March 2026)

9. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: School Attendance and Penalty Notices: Guidance for Parents

School Attendance and Penalty Notices: Guidance for Parents

Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities

At Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation we work closely with parents and carers to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible education and achieve their full potential.

Good school attendance is essential for children's learning, wellbeing and future opportunities. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly when they are registered at a school.

The Government is clear that children should only miss school in exceptional circumstances, Schools and local authorities are expected to work with families to promote good attendance and reduce avoidable absence.

When could a Penalty Notice be issued?

Under the national framework for school attendance, a Penalty Notice may be considered when a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

What does this mean?

- A school day consists of two sessions – a morning session and an afternoon session
- 10 sessions is usually equivalent to 5 school days
- The unauthorised absences do not need to happen on consecutive days
- The 10-school-week period can span different terms or school years

Examples of unauthorised absence may include:

- Holidays taken during term time without authorisation
- Keeping a child away from school without an accepted reason
- Persistent late arrival after the close of registration

Can a Penalty Notice be issued before the threshold is reached?

Yes. In some circumstances, the Local Authority may decide to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is reached. For example, this could apply where there have been several unauthorised term-time holidays. The Local Authority may also consider alternative legal action where appropriate.

How many Penalty Notices can be issued?

A maximum of two Penalty Notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling three-year period. The three-year period begins on the date the first Penalty Notice is issued. If the national threshold is met for a third time within three years and two Penalty Notices have already been issued to the parent(s), the Local Authority may consider prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A successful prosecution could result in:

- A criminal conviction
- A fine of up to £2,500
- Any other penalties available to the court

Who can receive a Penalty Notice?

For the purposes of school attendance law, a parent includes:

- A child's natural parent
- Any person who has parental responsibility for the child
- Any person who has day-to-day care of the child

Penalty Notices will usually be issued to parent(s) responsible for the child's attendance or who allowed the absence to occur. This may apply regardless of which parent submitted a request for leave of absence.

How much is a Penalty Notice?

First Penalty Notice	Second Penalty Notice
The first Penalty Notice issued to a parent for a child will be: • **£160**, payable within 28 days; or • **£80**, if paid within 21 days.	If a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the first Penalty Notice: • The charge will be **£160** • Payment must be made within 28 days • No reduced payment option is available.
Important information about payment • Penalty Notices must be paid in full. • Part-payments are not accepted. • Payment plans are not available. • There is no right of appeal against a Penalty Notice. • Penalty Notices are issued **per parent, per child.** This means that where two parents are liable for a child's absence, each parent may receive a separate Penalty Notice and will be responsible for paying their own fine.	

Requests for leave of absence during term time

Government guidance states that schools should only grant leave of absence during term time in **exceptional circumstances**. Each request will be considered individually, taking account of the specific circumstances presented. Although we recognise the value of family time together, requests for family holidays during term time will not normally be authorised. Government guidance states that a need or desire for a holiday or other leisure activity is not considered an exceptional circumstance. If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time authorised.

How to request leave of absence

Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance of the planned absence. Making a request in advance allows the school to consider the circumstances before a decision is made. Where leave has not been requested in advance, the school may be unable to consider induvial circumstances, and the absence is likely to be recorded as unauthorised. The school reserves the right to request evidence in support of absences reported immediately before or after a holiday period.

Support with school attendance

We understand that children and families can sometimes face challenges that affect attendance. If you are experiencing difficulties or require support to help your child attend school regularly, please contact:

Mrs Thomas, via the school office.

We will work with you to understand any barriers to attendance and discuss the support available.

Appendix 2: Example leave of absence request form

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME					
Important information for parents – please read before completing this form Schools can only grant leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. Each request will be considered individually by the headteacher. Family holidays during term time will not normally be authorised. Requests for leave of absence must be made before any travel or other arrangements are booked and before the absence begins. Parents should allow enough time for the school to consider the request and provide a decision. A request for leave of absence does not guarantee approval. If arrangements are made before the school's decision is received, this is done at the parent's own risk. The school is not required to consider requests made after the absence has taken place. **If no request is made in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.** We want every child to attend school every day unless there is an exceptional or unavoidable reason for absence. If you need support with your child's attendance, please contact Mrs Thomas.					
I have read the above information and wish to apply for leave of absence from school for:					
Child's Full Name:		**Date of Birth:**		**Class:**	
Parent/Carer Details (please list all parents)					
First Name:		**Surname:**			
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**			
Address and postcode:					
Telephone number:					
First Name:		**Surname:**			
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**			
Address and postcode:					
Telephone number:					
Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings and the school that they attend					
Child's Full Name:		**Date of Birth:**		**School:**	
Details of the absence					
Date of First day of absence:		**Date of last day of absence:**			
Total Number of days absent:		**Expected date of return to school:**			

Please provide the reason for this request including supporting evidence:

Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand:
I am requesting leave of absence for my child(ren) during term time. I understand that schools can only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and that family holidays will not normally be authorised.
I understand that this request must be submitted before any absence takes place and that submitting a request does not guarantee approval. I understand that I should wait for the school's decision before making travel or other arrangements.
I understand that, if leave is not authorised and my child is absent from school during this period, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child, or other legal action being considered.

Signed:		**Full name:**		**Date:**	
Signed:		**Full name:**		**Date:**	

To be completed by the school:			
Date request received by the school:		**Total number of days requested:**	
Child's Name:		**Application Authorised or Declined?**	
Reason for school's decision:			
In the case of a term time holiday please confirm which parent took the holiday:			
Headteacher:			
Signed:		**Date:**	

Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Ellingham: Mrs Nicola Cave or Mrs Vicky Wood

01508 518250 or ellinghamoffice@ellwoodfed.org

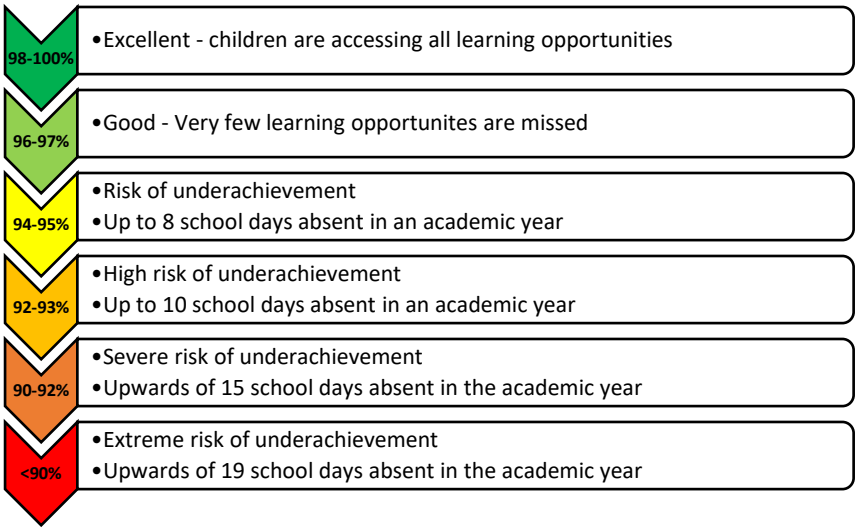
Woodton: Mrs Karen Taylor or Mrs Vicky Wood

01508 482294 or woodtonoffice@ellwoodfed.org

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year. You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by **8:40 am**.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



'On the day' absences: what should I do if my child is not 'fit' to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence using the office contact details (please see above) before 9:00am to let us know. In the message you must leave your child's full name, year and class and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via email (please see above). You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. Your child is late to school if they are not lined up on the playground by 8:40am.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact Mrs Vicky Wood or Mrs Dawn Thomas if you require any support with ensuring your child's regular school attendance.

Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Dawn Thomas	01508 518250 (Ellingham) 01508 482294 (Woodton) head@ellwoodfed.org
School Secretary - who parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis	Nicola Cave (Ellingham) Karen Taylor (Woodton)	01508 518250 (Ellingham) ellinghamoffice@ellwoodfed.org 01508 482294 (Woodton) woodtonoffice@ellwoodfed.org
School Support Manager - who parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance	Vicky Wood	01508 518250 (Ellingham) finance@ellwoodfed.org 01508 482294 (Woodton) finance@ellwoodfed.org