

Ely Schools Partnership - Attendance Matters

As an Ely School's partnership we continue to focus our attention on attendance. We are keen to ensure that we promote the highest attendance possible for all our young people as this is a fundamental life skill that will ensure young people's future success. Not only is it vital that our young people establish the very best habits and routines to ensure their success as future employees but there is also very clear national data that clearly shows the impact that poor attendance has on young people achieving the best possible outcomes and educational achievements. In short, if young people are not at school, we cannot teach them and this will affect their academic achievement at all levels.

As a result of this all the schools in the partnership continue to take a very firm and consistent view when parents seek permission for an absence from school for their child due to circumstances other than genuine illness. All parents can expect that all requests from parents seeking permission for leave of absence for their child will be refused and therefore unauthorised. As you will be aware permission may be sought where there are exceptional circumstances such as attending the funeral of a close family relative.

Ely Schools Partnership

Camila Coulson	Head teacher	Downham Feoffees Primary School
Richard Spencer	CMAT Principal	Ely College
Liz Bassett	Head teacher	Ely St John's Primary School
Rebecca Ireland-Curtis	DEMAT Principal	Ely St Mary's CoE Junior School
John Cattermole	Head teacher	Littleport Community Primary School
Deborah Hannaford	Principal	Millfield Primary School
Wayne Cooper	Head teacher	Spring Meadow Infant & Nursery School
Paul Baddeley	Head teacher	The Lantern Community Primary School
Bryony Surtees	Executive	Isle of Ely Primary School
	Head teacher	

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As a Special School Highfield has a separate policy developed to meet the special needs of the pupils and families of their school.

Simon Bainbridge	Head teacher	Highfield Ely & Littleport Special Schools
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The following policy has been compiled and agreed on by all the schools in the Ely Schools Partnership.

SPRING MEADOW INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This school is a member of the Ely Schools Partnership (ESP) and our school policies reflect the ESP vision of working in collaboration to facilitate participation and learning for all. Our aim is to provide a consistent approach to all aspects of learning whilst recognising the diversity of needs of the families within our community.

1. **Statement of Intent**

1.1 The school aims to work together with Parents/Carers to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both every day and punctually.

2. **Parents/Carers' Responsibilities**

2.1 Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age (the term after that in which they are five) attend on a regular and full-time basis.

2.2 Parents/Carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reasons such as sickness, they contact the school as soon as possible, but by 9.30am, on the first morning of absence.

2.3 Parents/Carers should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration (9.00am). If a child is late they should report directly to the school office with their parent. **Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised.**

2.4 We are keen to ensure that we promote the highest attendance possible for all our children as this is a fundamental life skill that will ensure their future success. Not only is it vital that our children establish the very best habits and routines to ensure their success as future employees but there is also very clear national data that clearly shows the impact that poor attendance has on young people achieving the best possible outcomes and educational achievements. In short, if children are not at school we cannot teach them and this will affect their academic achievement at all levels.

As a result of this we are taking a very firm and consistent view when parents seek permission for an absence from school for their child due to circumstances other than genuine illness. All parents can expect that all requests seeking permission for leave of absence for their child will be refused and therefore unauthorised. Permission may be granted where there are exceptional circumstances such as attending the funeral of a close family relative.

3. **School Responsibilities**

3.1 The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.

3.2 Registers will be called twice daily at 9am and 1.15pm Registers will close at 9.10am and at 1.25pm on Mondays to Friday. Any child arriving after the closing of the register will be recorded as 'late' for that session.

3.3 Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance contained in the register. Registers are reviewed with EWO, Education Welfare Office whose responsibility is attendance, at regular intervals.

- 3.4 Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality these will be brought to the Headteacher.
- 3.5 If a child is absent the office staff will enter the appropriate code in the register. If no explanation has been received by 9:30am from the child's Parents/Carers then, on safe guarding grounds, the school will endeavour to make contact with the parent after which an appropriate judgement regarding authorisation will be made.
- 3.6 The Headteacher will regularly collect attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the EWO.
- 3.7 The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:
- the Headteacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with Parents/Carers on attendance matters;
 - appropriate personal encouragement or congratulation will be offered to individual children and classes;
 - clear attendance information will be entered in the school brochure;
 - Local Authority Parents/Carers leaflets will be sent to all new Parents/Carers.

Definitions

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate, acceptable reason and the school, has received an appropriate notification from the parent/carer. For example, should a child be unwell and the parent/carer writes a note of explanation and/or telephones the school to explain the reason for absence.
- Only the Headteacher or a properly designated member of staff may authorise any absence. Parents do not have the authority to do so. Consequently, not all absence supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and the parent/carer or if the child is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent/carer (eg shopping or birthday).
- Holidays taken within the school term (except in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher) will be deemed as unauthorised absence. The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as they are likely to lead to the issuing of a penalty notice.
- Parents who take unauthorised term time holidays, or whose child has a pattern of unauthorised absence forming over any four week period, could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Fine.

Where there is a history of good attendance and no previous issues with term time holidays being taken in the previous three years, a monitoring period and a formal warning will be applied. Where there are existing or previous attendance issues and other unauthorised leave taken in previous terms/years, a Penalty Fine will apply.

The fine for a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. This rises to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren), which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months (per parent).

- Exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis but the following will not meet the criteria:
 - Cheaper holidays in England or abroad
 - Visiting family. friends who have different half term holiday dates
 - Family weddings for more than 2 days or visits to see family abroad
 - Relatives coming to visit

This attendance policy will be reviewed in November 2017.