



Elton Primary School & Nursery

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Headteacher – Mr Kevin Manning

Our ref: PARL 1060

3rd November 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we now enter the second half-term of the year it is time to share with you our updated news on attendance in school.

As you know, OFSTED set us the target of improving attendance when they last visited. Attendance comes under two categories in an OFSTED visit: behaviour and safeguarding. Ofsted's "Good" definition for attendance is: "Pupils have high attendance, within the context of the pandemic. They come to school on time and are punctual to lessons. When this is not the case, the school takes appropriate, swift and effective action."

Beginning this week, our registers are now accessed by the government on a daily basis – as is the case with the majority of schools in England now. This gives us a chance to compare our data with schools nationally.

How Does our Data Compare this Year?

Unfortunately our attendance levels are below national levels again so far this year. The national average for schools is currently 95% whereas our school is much lower and is currently only at 91.3%.

On a positive note, we had 21% of the school, that's 37 children, attend every session last term and so they each had an amazing 100% attendance!

Our Year 5 class are leading the table in our weekly attendance award – they have won the trophy 3 times so far, with Year 3 in second place with 2 wins, and Year 6 and Year 2 joint third with 1 win each.

Currently we have 53 children who would be classed as persistently absent – that means they are below 90%. At this point of the year that equates to 4 days being missed. At this point it would only take a week or two of full attendance and most of those children will be back above 90%. So hopefully this number will reduce very quickly.

What is the Impact of Low Attendance on a Child's Education?

Obviously all children – and adults – get sick at some time. Illnesses can spread very quickly through a year group, which is why we have 48 hour rules for illnesses that cause sickness and diarrhoea. If a child misses a few days through illness they should be able to quickly catch-up on any missed learning. However if the absences are too frequent then the gaps get



bigger and become extremely difficult to recover from. In primary schools we teach the key building blocks in reading, writing and maths. From an early age any large gaps in these skills become major barriers to a child's progress. These barriers can impact a child's future progress throughout their whole school life.

Below is an example of how much time is missed over a year for children whose attendance is below the national level of 95%.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	1.4 Weeks	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	3.4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	5.4 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	36 Days	72 Sessions	7.1 Weeks	180 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	9.3 Weeks	240 Lessons

What Can School Do to Help Attendance and How Will Parents Be Informed About Attendance?

Oftsed said that our school needed to, *“review and renew the approaches to tackling absence and persistent absence, to ensure that attendance is at least in line with national averages.”*

It is common practice across Cheshire for schools to inform parents/guardians when attendance drops below a certain level. As we enter into November, we will start to write to any family who has an absence that takes them below the 90% attendance level. This letter will be to highlight to the parents/guardians that attendance is currently low and to offer any support that may be needed.

If attendance remains low then school will invite parents/guardians into school so we can work together to create an action plan for improving attendance. This could involve the support of Mrs Deakin – our learning mentor – who is trained in emotionally based school absence. It could also involve offering a “Team Around the Family” which could include other outside agencies in supporting the family.

Ultimately if the attendance doesn't improve then the process for issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice will be started – although hopefully school and the family would have been able to work well enough together to avoid this situation.

What About Lates?

School starts at 8:45a.m. If children turn up later than 30 minutes then they are classed as absent for the whole morning. If they come within the 30 minutes then it is classed as late. All our lessons start at 8:45 so if a child is late then they will be missing the crucial teacher input to the lesson and will find it difficult to make full progress with the lesson's skills and objectives.

Since we moved the start of the day to 8:45 we have noticed a lot more lates in the morning. So please remember – gates are locked at 8:45 each morning.



What next?

Miss Jackson and I have been busy finalising our new attendance policy to bring it in line with the new national and Local Authority expectations. This will be published on the school website from November 2nd.

Miss Jackson and I are meeting our Local Authority Education Welfare Officer today when he will complete one of his regular register checks to identify any potential attendance issues.

As I mentioned above, we will begin to send out more regular letters now once a child's attendance is below 90% to inform parents and to see if we can identify any quick early fixes.

As ever, if you have any questions about attendance then please contact either Miss Jackson, Mrs Deakin or me by catching us on the playground at the start or end of the day; or by emailing admin@elton.cheshire.sch.uk or phoning 01244667750.

The school's attendance policy is available for viewing on the school website https://www.elton.cheshire.sch.uk/serve_file/9095976

Yours Truly,

K Manning

Mr. Manning

Head teacher

