Attendance Policy

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Written by:	ELAN executive team	
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1.0	15.01.19		Final Board approved
2.0	Nov'2019		Addition of point 8. Medical evidence
3.0	Sept'2020	Education Welfare Officer	COVID addendum added
4.0	Sept'2021	Education Welfare Officer	Updated COVID addendum in line with government guidance. Updated first day response for unexplained absences.
4.1	Feb'2022	Education Welfare Officer	Updated COVID addendum in line with government guidance.
4.2	May 2022	Education Welfare Officer	Updated COVID addendum in line with government guidance 'living with COVID'.
5.0	Sept'2022	Education Welfare Officer	Updated in line with DfE guidance working together to improve school attendance
6.0	Sept'2023	Attendance working party SE	Update to section 13 to clarify authorised absence of longer than two weeks. Inclusion of timeline in appendix. Updated in accordance with current DfE guidance and trust practice.
7.0	Sept'2024	Attendance working party SE	Updated in accordance with current DfE guidance: National framework/legislation for issuing penalty notices 2024; Parent contracts ; medical evidence requirements ; support for pupils with SEN/mental /physical health; senior attendance champion in each school. Addition of section 9. absence due to an approved educational activity. Addition of attendance codes to appendix.

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Extend Learning Academies Network (ELAN) Attendance Policy

1. Philosophy

ELAN is committed to providing high quality inclusive learning opportunities for all pupils, across all our schools. If pupils are to reach their full potential, then excellent attendance is crucial. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed swiftly. We believe having a consistent approach to pupil attendance across our schools is essential for us to be able to provide high quality and inclusive learning opportunities for all.

It is the policy of ELAN to celebrate achievement. Full attendance is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our pupils. Our schools will actively promote and encourage 100 % attendance for all our pupils.

Our schools will give a high priority to emphasising to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home to school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance recognising the intrinsic link between failure to attend school and safeguarding concerns.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and our Educational Welfare Officer to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupils Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016,2024 amendments)
- Keeping children safe in education - 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

3. Promoting and monitoring attendance

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils. We believe that improving school attendance is everybody's business. Schools have a responsibility to proactively manage and improve pupil's attendance across their school community. ELAN will carry out their responsibilities by:

3.1 Promoting attendance

In promoting attendance ELAN schools will:
- Ensure all staff are aware of the registration procedures. Teachers will complete, accurate registration processes at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within ten minutes of the start of the morning session and 5 minutes of the start of the afternoon session.
- Require parents/carers to contact the school office on the first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence to keep the school updated.

- Require the parent/carer to contact the school each day of the absence if the length of absence cannot be determined, due to the nature of the illness.
- Recognise and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.
- Inform parents/carers and pupils of attendance rates and related issues.
- Ensure that all pupils feel supported and valued. Send a clear message that if a pupils is absent they will be missed.
- Provide an extraordinary learning experience.

3.2 Monitoring attendance
In monitoring attendance ELAN schools will be persistently vigilant and will:

- Have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. They will continually review attendance data for individual pupils, specific cohorts, persistently absent pupils and the school as a whole.
- Put effective strategies in place to address school attendance concerns.
- Work with families to understand barriers to school attendance and put strategies in place to remove these barriers.
- Work collaboratively with other schools, the local authority and other partners to support improving school attendance.
- Follow up attendance with the trust approved letter templates provided on the ELAN portal.

The trust board and local governing bodies will:
- o Promote the importance of school attendance across the trust's policies and make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- o Monitor attendance figures and regularly review and challenge attendance data
- o Make sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- o Hold school leaders to account for the implementation of the attendance policy

4. First day response
The procedure for first day response will be most effective if it is applied to every absence and gives a clear message that absences are not allowed for reasons other than those determined by the law. The procedure and the need for it should be understood by all and the school will do this by regularly writing to parents/carers. (see attendance timeline Appendix 1)

It is the view of ELAN that first day contact works by:
- Raising awareness of the importance of full attendance

- Addressing problems before they become serious

- Improving home-school liaison

- Sending a clear message to parents/carers and pupils that if a child is absent they will be missed

- Alerting parents/carers who may be unaware that their child is truanting and therefore may be at risk

- Requiring and promoting a high level of communication within the school: staff working as a team

- Reducing the number of pupils who have short-term absence, thereby reducing the overall absence rate

- Assisting parents/carers and pupils to develop habits that reduce casual absence and encouraging early contact from parents/carers

For the school's policy of first day response to work efficiently:

- Parents/carers are required to contact the school on the first morning, within 30 minutes of the registers closing with reasons for the child's absence.
- If the parent has not contacted the school within 30 minutes of the registers closing, the school will contact parents/carers by text, email or phone call to establish a reason for the child's absence.
- If the school are unable to reach the parent, then contact will be made to the second emergency contact.
- If no contact can be made with the parent/carers or emergency contacts on the first day of absence, the school will carry out further investigations in order to ascertain the reason for non-attendance. This could include telephoning other emergency contacts listed on the pupil's record, a home visit, referral to the EWO and contact with external agencies.

See First Day Response Flowchart Appendix 2

5. Authorised absence

An authorised absence is an absence agreed by the Headteacher with clear evidence from the parents/carers that demonstrate it is an exceptional circumstance (refer to paragraph 12).

6. Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence is an absence not agreed by the Headteacher or an unexplained absence.

7. Medical absence

Absence due to medical reasons will usually be authorised although we may request doctors or consultants notes to inform provision and improve clarity of understanding of a child's condition particularly for those pupils with high levels of medical absence.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupils should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

8. Medical evidence

In some cases, we may request that a parent provide medical evidence, when a child has failed to attend school regularly. This can be a doctor's appointment card, a copy of the prescription or medicine prescribed. If this evidence is not provided, the absence will be recorded an unauthorised, unless after consultation with the parent, we believe the absence should be authorised.

9. Absence due to an approved educational activity

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

An approved educational activity is either:

(a) an activity which takes place outside the school premises and which is—
(i) approved by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school;
(ii) of an educational nature, including work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996(1) and a sporting activity; and

(iii) supervised by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor or the headteacher of the school; or

(b) attendance at another school at which the pupil is a registered pupil.

Sporting activities
If a pupil is attending a sporting activity that has been organised by the school local authority, then the pupil register will be coded as an approved education activity.

If a pupil is attending a sporting event organised by an external organisation i.e. rugby tournament, gymnastics competition, a request for absence should be made to the headteacher. It is for the headteacher to determine if the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Travel time to/from an external sporting event will not be authorised.

Attendance at another education provider
If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, the school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and the pupil register will be coded accordingly by the school.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, the pupil register will be coded as 'off-site educational activity'. Arrangements will be made for the alternative provider (AP) to notify the school of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure the school are made aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP

10. Lateness
Parents/carers are expected to ensure that pupils are present at registration. Registers remain open for 10 minutes. Pupils arriving within 10 minutes of the register opening are marked as present. Pupils arriving within 20 minutes of the register closing will be marked as late. Pupils arriving after 20 minutes of the register closing will be marked as 'U - late after registration closes' which is an unauthorised absence. There are four negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late:

- The loss of learning suffered by the pupils themselves which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time in school.

- The disruption to other pupils in their class as the teacher's attention is diverted from delivering pupils' learning.

- Lateness can raise levels of unauthorised absence

- Lateness can impact on routines at the start of the day which may have a detrimental impact on a pupil's well-being.

The strategies that our schools will use to tackle lateness will include:
- Recognising improvements in lateness.
- Providing support to overcome any barriers
- Invite the parent/carer to an attendance clinic.
- Education Welfare Officer home visits
- Police Truancy sweeps
- Use of penalty notices or prosecutions in cases of unauthorised absence

11. Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

All schools have a responsibility to reduce persistent absence, this will be achieved by:

- Using attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Holding Attendance Contract Meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Providing access to school support to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Providing access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Providing reasonable adjustment for pupils with complex needs including physical or mental illness.

12. Absence in term time

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 has been amended (as of 1 September 2013, 2024) to prohibit the proprietor (Headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as a matter of course as they are likely to be unauthorised and will lead to the issuing of a penalty notice or prosecution

13. Exceptional circumstances

Are defined as:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- **Exceptional significant** family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you.

The Headteacher will consider every above request individually but the **following will not meet the criteria:**

- Family birthdays
- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.

Authorised officers have the discretion to issue a penalty notice without warning where the parent has chosen to take the child on leave during term time without authorisation or evidence is subsequently found to suggest a child was away from school with the knowledge of the parent and does not meet the statutory defences mentioned below.

The only statutory defences to the offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 are:

- The child was absent for medical reasons
- The LA failed to provide transport when required to do so
- The absences were due to religious observance
- You had permission of the school or there was an unavoidable cause

If the school does not authorise an absence but the child is still absent, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Requests for approved absence must be submitted in advance.

14. Returning after a long-term absence
For any pupils returning to school after an authorised absence of longer than two weeks, the school will make provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system if necessary.

15. Penalty notices and prosecutions

- Penalty Notices and Prosecutions Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents/carers who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child. If an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.
- Penalty Notices and Prosecution Proceedings are issued to each parent/carer with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with unauthorised absence. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings have unauthorised absence, and there are two parents/carers with responsibility for the pupils, four Penalty Notices would be issued.
- Our schools will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice or Prosecution to the Local Authority for legal action, unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. This will include unauthorised absence due to term time holiday or other trips/visits, and other types of unauthorised absence. When referring for legal sanctions, the school will show that the parent/carer has been warned they are at risk of a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.
- A maximum of two Penalty Notices in any three year period, before prosecution will be considered

16. Policy monitoring arrangements
This policy will be reviewed annually or as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. The policy will be approved by the ELAN trust board.
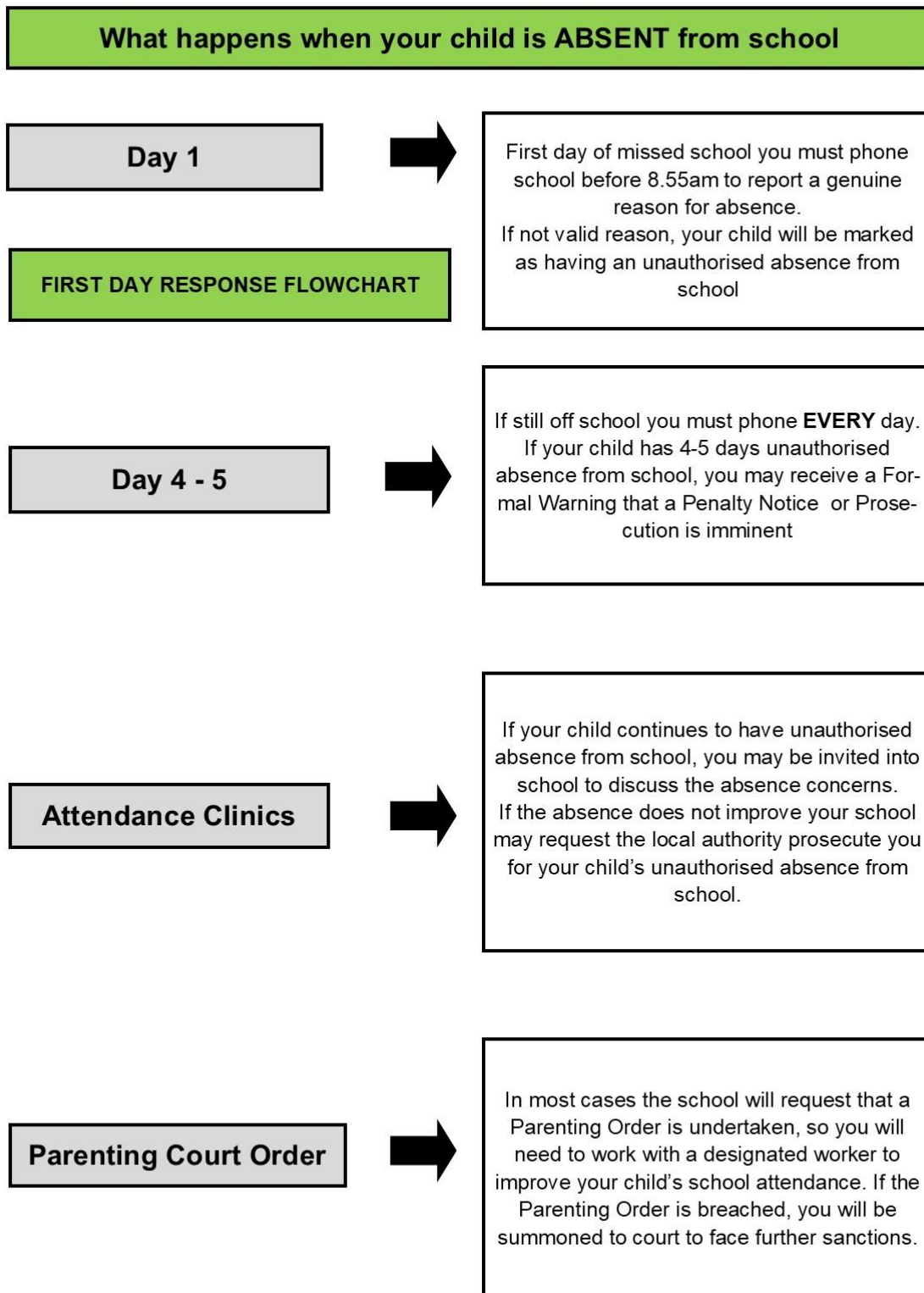
17. Links with other policies
This policy links with the following policies:
- ELAN Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- School's Behaviour Policy
- ELAN H&S Risk Assessment Policy
- School's Health and Safety Policy
- ELAN Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy - Children
- ELAN Remote Education Policy

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Appendix 1 – Attendance Timeline

ELAN Attendance Timeline

What happens when your child is ABSENT from school

Day 1

FIRST DAY RESPONSE FLOWCHART

➡️ First day of missed school you must phone school before 8.55am to report a genuine reason for absence.
If not valid reason, your child will be marked as having an unauthorised absence from school

Day 4 - 5

➡️ If still off school you must phone **EVERY** day. If your child has 4-5 days unauthorised absence from school, you may receive a Formal Warning that a Penalty Notice or Prosecution is imminent

Attendance Clinics

➡️ If your child continues to have unauthorised absence from school, you may be invited into school to discuss the absence concerns.
If the absence does not improve your school may request the local authority prosecute you for your child's unauthorised absence from school.

Parenting Court Order

➡️ In most cases the school will request that a Parenting Order is undertaken, so you will need to work with a designated worker to improve your child's school attendance. If the Parenting Order is breached, you will be summoned to court to face further sanctions.

Appendix 2 – First Day Response Flow Chart Timeline

ELAN First Day Response Flow Chart

Registration Closed

Child in School → **No action required**

Child NOT in school → **No contact from parent/carers**

By 10.00am → School to call, email or text the first contact
School to work from a prioritised list

By 11.00am → School to call the second contact

By 12.00am → SLT to decide on the next course of action

Complete a home visit (leave letter if no answer)
Contact EWO
Contact social care
Contact the police

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Appendix 3 – Late Whilst Register Open Guidance (L Code)

The following guidance defines:
- **Formal registration**
- **When the school should open and close its register**
- **When a school should use an L code**
- **Actions to take when a pupil is persistently late for registration**

Registration
- Formal registration begins at the point the school commences formal education, as recorded on the school timetable. The school register should open 10 minutes prior to the first lesson of the session. This time should be referred to as Registration on the school timetable.
  For example: If the first formal lesson of the day starts at 9am, registration will begin at 8:50am and cease at 9:00am.
  Timings of the school day and when the school grounds and classrooms are open to pupils are set by the school.
- The school register remains open for a period of 30 minutes
- A pupil is deemed late, and will receive an L Code, if they are "late for registration" and arrive at school between 10 and 30 minutes after the school register opens.
- A child is late, deemed absent, and will receive a U Code, if they arrive after the register closes - 30 minutes after registration opens
- Example: if the first formal lesson starts at 9am, registration opens at 8:50, pupils are late if they arrive after 9am and late deemed absent if they arrive after 9:20.
- L marks will be monitored by the school as part of the attendance process.
  1. In the first instance any concerns should be raised informally with a pupil's parent/carer
  2. Should there be no improvement the school should issue **Late Letter Template 1** to the pupil's parent/carer
  3. Should this have no impact a formal meeting with parents/carers should be called

A Late U code is deemed an unauthorised absence and falls under the unauthorised absence section of the Attendance Policy.

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Appendix 4 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
****	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
C1	Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
K	Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not counted in possible attendance
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Not counted in possible attendance
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Absent authorised
U	Late after registers closed	Absent unauthorised
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Attending work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not counted in possible attendance
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not counted in possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not counted in possible attendance
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted in possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible

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		attendance
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted in possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendance
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendance
#	Planned whole school closure	Not counted in possible attendance

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