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Company Registration Number: 10745840 (England and Wales)

Elements Academy

Attendance Policy for Pupils

September
2022

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|-----------|--|---|------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Summary | Elements Academy Attendance Policy for Pupils | | | |
| 2 | Responsible person | Jenna Gladwin | | | |
| 3 | Accountable ELT member | Victoria Woodrow | | | |
| 4 | Applies to | Elements Academy Pupils | | | |
| 5 | Trustees and/or individuals who have overseen development of this policy | N/A | | | |
| 6 | Headteachers/Service Heads who were consulted and have given approval (if applicable) | Rebecca Smith | | | |
| 7 | Equality impact analysis completed | Policy Screened | Y/N | Template completed | Y/N |
| 8 | Ratifying committee(s) and date of final approval | Elements Academy APRC | | | |
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| | | | | Academy Website | Y/N |
| | | | | Staff Portal | Y/N |
| 11 | Related documents (if applicable) | | | | |
| 12 | Disseminated to | Elements Academy staff, parents/carers and pupils | | | |
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| 15 | Consulted with Recognised Trade Unions | N/A | | | |
| 16 | Adopted by Ethos Academy Trust following consultation | N/A | | | |

| Date | Version | Action | Summary of changes |
|---------|---------|--------|--------------------|
| Sept 22 | 1.0 | | New Policy |

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1. School Attendance, Absence and the Law

At Elements Academy we understand how important school attendance is and how this relates to outcomes, not only academically but socially and emotionally as well. Pupils who attend school regularly benefit from fulfilling peer relationships, better academic outcomes and a vastly improved school experience, which promotes successful transition onto their next stage of education. Our pupils are valued and are missed when they are absent or late. Through the principles of nurture, positive staff/pupil relationships are developed and each individual is an important part of our school community.

The law requires parents to make sure their children receive full-time education suitable to their needs. As a last resort, schools and the Local Authority (LA) have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

This policy is written with due regard to the revised 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. (September 2022)

Any absence is detrimental for pupils and will impact on their school experience. Elements Academy will always work with pupils and parents/carers to look at all attendance issues, as we realise that there are often other factors to consider that may impact on a child's ability to attend school. Parents/carers are encouraged to speak with staff from the academy to ensure we are working together to address any issues. If we are concerned, we will work with the family and partner agencies to find a solution that secures improved attendance. In very rare cases we, may have to take the decision to pursue persistent absence through a legal route. We will take all appropriate steps to avoid this but it may be used as a last resort.

<https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/school-attendance-and-absence/>

Elements Academy will pay due regard to the Education Act of 1996 and its further amendments. Since **September 2015** persistent absence (PA) data includes all pupils whose attendance is 90% or less.

The DfE and Ofsted continue to have a sharp focus on persistent absence as there is a direct link between persistent absence from school, poor attainment and 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) status.

2. Attendance expectations and daily routines

All schools are required to record details of pupils' attendance and absence. They do so at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions:

- The school day starts at 9am and finishes at 14.30;
- Morning registration is between 9 - 9.20, registers will be closed at 9.30;
- Pupils are registered in their base groups by staff;
- Afternoon registration is between 12.45 - 13.00, registers will close at 13.00;
- Pupils are registered in their afternoon lesson by staff;

If a child arrives after registers close, they be marked with an L code.

If a child is absent, parents/carers should inform the academy of the reason for the absence. Elements Academy will record the absence under a particular category pre-set by the Department of Education (DfE). This data is then available to the attendance and pupil support service for each pupil. The DfE also receives annually the overall data for Elements Academy.

If a child is absent, parents/carers should contact the academy to provide a reason for absence. All calls and communications will be appropriately recorded by the academy. If the academy has not received contact, Family Support will attempt to make contact by 10.00. If contact cannot be made, a home visit will be carried out. See appendix A.

The following codes are used to record types of absence:

- B - Educated off-site
- T - Traveller absence
- O - Unauthorised absence
- / - Present
- N - No reason given
- H - Agreed family holiday
- G - Family holiday, not agreed
- C - Other authorised circumstances
- I - Illness
- E - Exclusion
- V - Educational trip
- Y - Enforced closure
- R - Religious observance
- # - School closed to pupils
- S - Study leave
- W - Work experience
- P - Sporting activity

It is the responsibility of the Assistant Head to ensure that registers are completed correctly. This responsibility may be delegated to the business support, with the monitoring and oversight from the Assistant Head.

3. Our Responsibilities as an Academy

Every member of staff within Elements Academy has a responsibility to promote and support attendance.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Continually monitor and implement policies and strategies that support consistent school attendance;
- Regularly produce data to analyse attendance information and ensure procedures are in place to address issues;
- Implement a robust line management system that ensures all concerns are identified and addressed in a timely manner;
- Report to pupils and parents/carers regularly;
- Implement reward systems that motivate pupils to attend well;
- Support colleagues with systems that are accessible and ensure positive outcomes;
- Plan a balanced and engaging curriculum that meets individual need and enables change, where necessary, through a strong focus on relationships and personal motivation;
- Embed positive working relationships with partner agencies and ensure that communication is timely and effective;
- Plan a programme of celebration events where pupils' achievements are recognised and parents/carers and wider stakeholders are included;
- Report regularly to the CEO and Trust board.

All staff will:

- Work to provide an environment that is welcoming and promotes good attendance;
- Ensure relationships with pupils are positive and individual needs are identified and addressed;
- Work with parents/carers to build positive, transparent relationships;
- Contact parents/carers regularly, in the case of any absence, and recognise sustained and improved attendance;
- Ensure attendance is recorded including reasons behind any absences;
- Work with the data to address any reoccurring issues or patterns (such as the same day absence every week);
- Liaise with colleagues and be aware of any related issues;
- Promote a culture of mutual respect and ensure pupils are valued every day;
- Work closely with colleagues to communicate any issues that may impact attendance;
- Meet regularly with parents/carers and related professionals to address any issues affecting attendance;
- Ensure support plans are in place that make clear the roles and responsibilities of

parents/carers and other professionals;

- Reward good and improved attendance in a fair and equitable way ensuring parents/carers are informed.

4. Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- Inform school of any circumstances that may impact on attendance;
- Attend regular review meetings and meet with staff on request;
- Arrange holidays out of term time;
- Actively promote good attendance by encouraging and supporting your child to attend;
- Communicate regularly with school staff, informing them of any change in circumstance that may affect your child's attendance;
- Make medical or other appointments out of school time, unless unavoidable;
- Work with staff to implement agreed strategies and actively promote good attendance.

What we will do if a pupil does not attend

- In case of absence, we will contact parents/carers by phone and if this is not possible, a home visit will be arranged. Any concerns will be passed to the relevant services, ensuring safeguarding procedures are followed.
- Elements Academy staff will work with parents/carers from the first day of absence to ensure that any underlying issues are addressed in a timely manner with the relevant services. Working together with parents/carers is essential to ensure good attendance and only when this working relationship is effective can we manage any issues.
- If the absence continues, the pupil will be raised at the weekly attendance and safeguarding meeting. At this point, we would implement the Early Help Attendance Pathway and continue to monitor. The pupil's provision may also be reviewed at this time.

5. Persistent Absence (PA)

- The Government identifies persistent absence as any pupil who has attendance of less than 90%. Elements Academy recognises this figure and aspires to set this standard for all its pupils. Personalised attendance targets may be adjusted, dependent on the needs of the individual pupil. Elements Academy will put into place all reasonable measures to secure and sustain improved attendance.

6. The Importance of Good Attendance

At Elements Academy, we have high expectations for our pupils and as such the expected attendance standard is 95%. Anything less than this is a concern and we take all appropriate measures to ensure we are addressing any barriers to attendance. We will always work to find solutions and promote the benefits of good attendance, rather than implementing a punitive response.

8 days absence in a year = 96%. 19 days absence = 90%

- 90% attendance = ½ day missed every week
- Over one school year this is 4 weeks of learning lost
- Over the 5 years at school the pupil will have missed half a year
- What impact might this have on a child's future?
- 17 missed school days mean that secondary school pupils could drop a whole GCSE grade.

Pupils being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

We provide a healthy breakfast at our school and we know that this starts the day positively and pupils can then focus and learn. If a pupil is late, then an important part of the day is missed and this can then lead to an unsettled day. It is important that we work together to ensure pupils arrive on time and are ready to learn.

We aim to ensure that all pupils recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality for the next stage of their education or training, as it is a vital life skill.

7. Attendance Rewards

At Elements Academy we understand how important it is that pupils attend and are punctual every day. We work to ensure that our pupils understand this also and that they attend school because they are aware of the benefits to them.

Our reward system is in place to further motivate pupils and to demonstrate the benefits of school attendance. The rewards available include:

- Regular postcards and phone calls home to ensure parents/carers are kept informed;
- Half termly reward assemblies. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate success as a whole school;
- Promoting competition by comparing the attendance of the groups and rewarding the winning group;
- Termly reward trips that the pupils have identified as of value to them and will motivate them to keep attending;

- Considering personalised motivational strategies that will work for individuals.

8. Leave of absence requests

Requesting leave during term time will affect a child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking pupils out of school in term time. The current law does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take their child out of school during term time. Any application for leave must be in writing to the Head Teacher and only be made in exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Parent/carers can be fined for taking their child out of school during term time, without consent from the academy.

9. Children at risk of missing in education

All pupils at risk of CME are reported to the local authority in line with relevant guidance within agreed timescales.

10. Strategy for reducing severe or persistent absence

We implement a 5-stage programme to encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality. The programme supports parents/carers to improve their child's attendance.

Stage 1

Work with group staff to identify barriers that can be easily removed. If there are no improvements in attendance, this indicates that further interventions are required and therefore we move to stage 2.

Stage 2

Home visits by Family Support or the attendance officer are carried out to agree strategies to improve attendance. If there are no improvements in attendance, this indicates that further interventions are required and therefore we move to stage 3.

Stage 3

Meeting 1

This meeting will require parents/carers and the pupil to meet with a senior leader. An action plan will be put into place for an agreed period of time and outcomes will be measured and recorded. If there are no improvements in attendance, this indicates that further interventions are required and therefore we move to stage 4.

Stage 4 Meeting 2

This meeting will require parents/carers and the pupil to meet with the Head Teacher. A final action plan will be agreed for a period of time and outcomes will be measured and recorded. Processes for prosecution will be discussed

Stage 5

Processes required for prosecution will be implemented, including the involvement of appropriate agencies.

Prosecution will be authorised by the Head Teacher if appropriate evidence supports this

11. Pupils on Personalised Timetables

At Elements Academy all staff at the academy have responsibility for the care of pupils who are struggling to access learning. We recognise however, that at certain stages in a pupil's school life they may struggle to access the typical provision offered as a result of their Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Even when the curriculum is reasonably adapted in line with best teaching and learning practice and the pupil is appropriately supported within our usual systems, there are occasions when they will still struggle to access full time education. In these instances, the Senior Leadership Team may consider that a personalised timetable is an appropriate means of supporting the pupil up until the point when they are better able to access full time education.

Examples of when this is appropriate may include:

- At transition points – into or between settings
- When the pupil has repeated or prolonged episodes of crisis
- When a risk assessment shows that their behaviour poses a significant health and safety risk to themselves, other pupils or staff which cannot be reasonably managed within the usual academy day
- When their behaviour causes repeated and significant disruption to the education of other pupils.

If the Senior Leadership Team considers a personalised timetable is appropriate, a clear plan for this should be completed. This plan and the reasons for it, will be communicated to parents/carers along with the arrangements for its regular review. The aim of a personalised timetable will always be to support the pupil so that they can return to full time education as soon as possible. The duration will however, depend on the needs of the individual. When pupils attend the academy on a Personalised timetable, they shall be marked present (/) only for the sessions that they attend – i.e., morning or afternoon. If they are not required to attend a session, this will be marked with the C code.

Appendix A

Elements Academy Attendance Flow Chart

