

Elsley Primary School



Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Full Governing Board	Date: June 2025
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Last reviewed on:	7 th October 2026
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Next review due by:	October 2028 [biennially (two yearly)]
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Introduction

‘Every Day Counts’

At Elsley Primary School, we aim to ensure that all pupils attend school every day and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. ‘Every Day Counts’ means that good attendance at school is not just beneficial but is essential in enabling pupils to reach their full potential. Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%. Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.

We are committed to this by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

Legal Requirements

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance in line with Department for Education (DfE) Statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), and school attendance parental responsibility measures (<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>).

The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments) [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

School census guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff responsible for monitoring attendance are:

- Raphael Moss (Head Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Leader)
- Kaniz Mulji (Deputy Headteacher Inclusion Lead and Attendance Team Member)
- Irene Mitchell (Attendance Officer)
- Susan Elsayy-Butt (Family Support Worker, Deputy Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Team Member)
- Jerome Clarke (Local Authority Attendance Officer/Brent Schools Attendance Service)

Responsibilities of classroom staff

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately and on time.
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils.
- Liaise with appropriate colleagues on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a pupil's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of pupils

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time and go straight to class
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk and receiving a late slip if they are late
- Take the late slip to class and give it to the class teacher so that they can be registered as late.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law and a safeguarding concern.

- Ensure your child attends school regularly and punctually. Absences should only occur when your child is genuinely unwell. There should be a clear symptom or medical reason — simply feeling 'unwell' is not sufficient.
- Report an absence by telephone or by email by 8.30am. This must be done on the first morning and each subsequent morning of absence unless the school attendance officer advises otherwise, informing school of the reason and detail for absence; see reporting an absence, below.
- Provide evidence of medical appointments and notify the school no less than 24 hours in advance. Whenever possible, make all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during the school holidays.
- You may be asked to provide medical evidence after the 2nd day of absence where the illness/absence is frequent or prolonged.
- Ensure we have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, childminders and emergency contact details. This is essential so that the school can check on a child's welfare if they are absent from school and no other message has been received.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Build a routine that promotes good punctuality and attendance.

Reporting an Absence

All absences must be reported to the school office by 8.30am on each morning of your child's absence. This can be done by email on absence@elsley.brent.sch.uk or by telephone: 02089028003

Working with the Local Authority

Elsley Primary School works with the Brent's School Attendance Service (formerly known as Education Welfare Service) to help improve the attendance of all our pupils. The school's Attendance Officer frequently liaises with Brent's Attendance Officer to monitor and review progress. Brent's Education Officer visits the school on a regular basis to advise the school on managing absences, to meet with parents and to make the appropriate referrals and where needed to issue penalty notices.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

As a school we will:

- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual class achievements and awarding class trophies
- Incentivise good or improved attendance through rewards, eg certificates and letters home

Recording Attendance and Punctuality

Legally the register must be taken twice a day. This is done at the start of the day at 8:55am and again in the afternoon when pupils return from lunch.

The school gates open at 8:45am for a soft start and close promptly at 8:55am. Any pupil arriving after 8:55am must enter the school via the main office.

In line with DfE regulations, the following attendance marks will apply:

- Pupils arriving after 8:55am but before 9:15am will receive an 'L' mark (late).
- Pupils arriving after 9:15am will receive a 'U' mark, which denotes unauthorised absence for the morning session. Unless an authorised reason has been given for pupil absence.

Persistent lateness is a concern and a member of the attendance team will contact parents/carers to arrange a meeting to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness continues resulting in unauthorised absences, a Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers.

Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised, based on the information provided about the reason for the absence. Parents/carers are expected to inform the school on the first and subsequent morning of their child's absence, clearly stating the reason. This allows us to record the absence accurately and ensure the wellbeing of our pupils. We understand it can be difficult to decide whether or not to keep a child off school when they're feeling unwell. The NHS has produced some clear and helpful guidance for parents to support decision-making in these situations. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

If you are unsure, please do not hesitate to contact the school office for advice.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like:

- Illness (not minor ailments)
- Medical (hospital appointments which unavoidably fall in school time)

The expectation is that any essential absence will be kept to a minimum, e.g half a day or one day. See 'Leave of absence' below.

Following up absence

The school will follow up on all pupil absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are taken, where necessary
- Determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised
- Assign the correct attendance code in line with DfE guidance

Where a child is marked absent and no reason has been provided, the school will:

- Check that the child has not arrived late.
 - Try to contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason.
 - If parent/ carer cannot be contacted, notify a school leader and safeguarding team.
 - Contact the named social worker if the child has already been referred to the local authority.
- As part of the school's safeguarding procedures, if a child has not attended, without any parental contact or any other satisfactory information for the absence, then by the third day of unexplained absence the school will collaborate with Brent Council's School Attendance Officer

to identify the pupil's whereabouts and triage where needed whether a safeguarding referral will need to be done. The pupil will remain on school roll during this process and parents will be contacted at their last known address to advise that their child's school place is at risk.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" will be given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (celebrating birthdays etc.)
- Absences which have not been adequately explained
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
 - Waiting for a delivery
 - Parent's illness (other than in an emergency)

These types of absence can lead to Brent Council using sanctions and/or legal proceedings against parents/carers.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

No pupil will be removed from the school roll except in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The school will liaise with the Local Authority as required. If no reason has been given for a pupil's absence after 3 days and the school have not been able to contact parents/carers, as mentioned above a referral will be made to Brent local authority Attendance team and if needed Social Services

Moving School

If a pupil is moving out of the area, to a new school or being home schooled, parents/carers must inform the school in advance, so the relevant documentation and paperwork can be completed.

When attendance becomes a concern, the school will:

- In the first instance, the school will send an initial monitoring attendance letter via email/post where a pupil's attendance falls below 95% or where there are emerging patterns of concern. Where attendance does not improve, we will invite parents/carers to a supportive meeting with a member of the attendance team and the year group leader to identify any barriers to attendance and agree appropriate support. This will be monitored for a period of four weeks.
- If the attendance still does not improve over a monitoring period, we will invite the parent into school for a pre-referral meeting (Stage 1) with a member of the attendance team and the Brent's Schools Attendance Service to highlight the child's attendance

concerns and work together to explore strategies on how to improve attendance. This may take place in a group with other parents/ carers.

- Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and the threshold has been met, Brent's Schools Attendance Service will proceed to Stage 2 of the external attendance process. At this stage, each case will be reviewed individually, and the Attendance Service will determine the most appropriate course of action. This may result in families being issued with an Education Penalty Notice (EPN). We encourage all families to engage with the school's attendance support service at the earliest opportunity to avoid escalation.

Persistent Absence (PA)

When a child's attendance falls to 90% or below, they are automatically classified as a Persistent Absentee by the Department for Education (DfE)—regardless of the reason for absence.

Persistent absence is a serious concern, as missed learning can have a long-term impact. Much of the work missed during absences is difficult to fully recover, and these gaps in learning can place pupils at a significant disadvantage throughout their education.

Leave of Absence

Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There are many situations which could constitute exceptional circumstances. At Elsley, we interpret 'exceptional' in this context as being unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the pupil, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. The Headteacher will consider each case on an individual basis (looking at past requests, attendance and attainment). The expectation is that any essential absence will be kept to a minimum, eg half a day or one day.

By way of example, within the last five years at Elsley Primary School, absence requests of more than three days have never been authorised. Most requests will be refused based on the fact that there are 13 weeks of holiday each year.

If requesting term time leave, a form must be completed in advance. Forms are available from the school office or on the school website. It should not be assumed that the request will be granted and flights should not be booked prior to receiving a reply from the head teacher.

For religious observance, 1 day (only) will be authorised in accordance with the government guidance which states that absence for religious observance is allowed if the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the child's parents' religious body. Additional evidence may be requested.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and we may refer parent/carers to Brent's Schools Attendance Service and parent/carers may receive a Formal Warning, Education Penalty Notice or be prosecuted in court.

Legal Sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Brent's Education Officer will consider the individual case, including:

*Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

*Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil.

*Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution.

*Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

*Each parent/carer who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually be addressed to the parent/carer who allowed the absence.

Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy