



## Elton Primary School & Nursery

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**Headteacher – Mr Kevin Manning**

Our reference - PARL 1291

16th September 2025

Dear Parents /Carers

It has been great to see how quickly the children have settled back into their school routines and into their new classes. This half-term is 8 weeks long and is the longest one of the year! Parents' evenings will take place in the final week of the term, on Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st October.

With the start of a new academic year all schools have been asked by the government to once again focus on how to improve attendance. Regular attendance is vitally important for the children because of how the curriculum is sequenced. If children miss a few sessions then any gaps can be quickly addressed but if the absences become more regular then these gaps become difficult to address and the children's progress and attainment is impacted.

National average attendance for last year was around the 95% level. That means during the whole school year, the average child will be absent for about 9 days. The government sets the level of below 90% as the indicator that a child is "persistently absent". These children are missing 19 days or more during a school year – or almost a month of school days! All our school data (and national data) shows how non-persistently absent children significantly outperform persistently absent children in assessments. One quick example is that in our school last year, 90% of the children who were not persistently absent met the expected reading standard in the Year 6 SATS compared to 50% of those who were persistently absent.

Persistent absence continues to be the one weak area our school faces when compared with national schools. This trend is across all year groups and all genders and ethnicities.

The school follows the Local Authority's attendance policy. This can be found on our website under the policies section: [https://www.elton.cheshire.sch.uk/serve\\_file/39700011](https://www.elton.cheshire.sch.uk/serve_file/39700011)

We strive to be supportive around attendance and look to work with families as much as possible. The use of fines is often the thing that makes the headlines but that is a last resort and school will try a range of other strategies to support families. Unfortunately however school has no power when it comes to holidays, if you go on holiday, it will be classed as an unauthorised holiday absence. If you have 10 unauthorised absence sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period you will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). The 10 school week period may span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).



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The FPN will be £160 per child per parent. So if a family of three went on holiday – the total fine would be £960. If this is the first FPN the family has had, then the fine is halved if paid within 21 days. School does not receive any money from the FPN!

School can authorise exceptional absences but these can not be holiday related reasons.

Our school policy details how school will support families with attendance at different stages. This is summarised below:

#### 1. Key attendance statistics

- 100% - Outstanding achievement is recognised once a term. Children will be rewarded with a certificate and a prize.
- 96%-99% - Above national average attendance
- 95% - Current national average attendance
- 90%-95% - Below national average attendance
- <90% - Persistently absent - below this level then school will contact parents and offer support

#### Pathway of Support / Intervention

- By November, once a child falls below 90%, school will normally inform parents either verbally or through a letter. This won't be the case if we are aware of particular reasons such as a hospitalisation. This communication is just to ensure parents are aware that their child is currently meeting the definition of "persistently absent" and to offer support if needed.
- If attendance remains below 90% or decreases further over the next 4 weeks, school will write to parents to offer a meeting with Mr Manning, Mrs Henderson and/or Mrs Deakin so that we can discuss any potential barriers to attendance and discuss actions to address them.
- At this point if appropriate, school may request medical evidence to support any future authorisation of illness absences.
- If attendance remains low with little sign of improvement then a further meeting will be scheduled and a parental contract agreed. This will cover expectations from school and home on how we can address any issues that are acting as a barrier to attendance. The contract will run for 6 weeks.
- If following the 6 week period of the parental contract attendance hasn't improved, or during the 6 week it becomes clear no improvement is happening, then school will request that the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer starts a "Notice to Improve" monitoring period which can result in a fixed penalty notice if no improvement occurs.

As ever, if you have any questions regarding attendance then please ask either Mrs Henderson, Mrs Deakin or myself.

Yours sincerely



Mr Manning  
Headteacher

