



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Purpose of Policy

It is the aim of ELKOLET that students enjoy learning, experience success, and realise their full potential. Not only from an academic standpoint, but from a social, emotional and mental health perspective as well. All of our students are not suited to mainstream education, some may be school refusers, therefore, every student at ELKOLET gets bespoke support to increase and maintain their attendance.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning and their mental health.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and peer relationships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between school and higher education, employment or training.

ELKOLET records and monitors attendance of students while attending ELKOLET's Alternative Provision, however the Commissioning School/Agency retains responsibility for the student's overall statutory full-time education and attendance.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between ELKOLET, the Commissioning School/Agency, parents/guardians, and the students.

To help all parties achieve good attendance and punctuality, ELKOLET will:

- Report to parents/guardians on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Provide support for parents/guardians and students to help improve attendance
- Celebrate hitting attendance and punctuality targets

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of ELKOLET's Administration Manager

- Ensure that attendance is recorded accurately and analysed.
- Ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

- If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, the attendance officer will sensitively raise the issue with the parent/guardian to ascertain reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. The attendance officer may involve the DSL should the student continue to miss school and a new intervention plan put in place.

Responsibilities of ELKOLET Staff:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the DSL on matters of attendance and punctuality and
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

Responsibilities of Students:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive to ELKOLET on time.
- Go to all their lessons on time.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law. However, at ELKOLET, we understand that for many of our students, attending school is difficult and causes issues at home. Therefore, ELKOLET commits to working closely with parents/guardians to support them and put in place process to help their child attend.

Parents will:

- Inform ELKOLET of absence if their child is meant to be at the provision.
- Discuss with the DSL any planned absences well in advance.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

Responsibility of Commissioner

The responsibility to contact ELKOLET for the daily attendance of a student lies with the Commissioner. ELKOLET will work closely with the Commissioner to ensure that all students are accounted for and that absences are followed up on swiftly.

The Commissioner will

- Check daily with ELKOLET to check the attendance of their student at ELKOLET.
- Have day to day oversight of all attendance matters

- Work alongside ELKOLET with students and their families who are at risk of becoming persistently absent or late
- Ensure that records of attendance of their students attending ELKOLET are complete and accurate
- Take responsibility for preparing case files and other paperwork for attendance interventions such as Penalty Notices and referrals to the County's Attendance Litigation Panel

Recording and Monitoring Attendance

To ensure that every student is accounted for, attendance will be taken at the start of their day, and after any breaks.

Attendance records are legal documents. ELKOLET will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Registers will be stored securely online.

ELKOLET will monitor attendance regularly and identify students whose attendance is becoming a concern.

Particular attention will be given to students experiencing:

- persistent absence;
- severe absence;
- repeated patterns of absence;
- increasing lateness;
- unexplained absence;
- absence following a safeguarding incident;
- absence associated with bullying;
- absence associated with SEND or additional needs; or
- absence following a significant change in circumstances.

ELKOLET will work with the commissioning school to determine appropriate support and intervention. Attendance concerns should be addressed at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting until absence becomes severe.

Reasons for Absence

Illness

Genuine illness constitutes an authorised absence. It should always be supported by a note from parents. Long term absences should be investigated, and confirmation of illness sought through a medical certificate. If a student is absent for a prolonged period or ELKOLET notices a pattern of

absence emerging, parents should be involved, alongside the Commissioner, to discuss the problems.

Caring For Family

Here we would apply our discretion as to whether or not we grant leave of absence. Children should not be allowed to habitually take on responsibilities in the home at expense of schooling. Where circumstances are exceptional and genuine, consideration should be given to authorising leave until other arrangements can be made. A time limit for the absence should be set.

Special Occasions

ELKOLET will exercise its discretion, in conjunction with the Commissioner, as to whether or not to grant leave. Only truly exceptional circumstances should be sanctioned (Birthdays are NOT considered to be a special occasion).

In considering individual cases ELKOLET will have regard for the following:

- the nature of the event
- its frequency (i.e. whether or not the event is a one-off)
- whether advance notice was given
- to overall pattern of attendance for the child

Family Bereavement

ELKOLET will respond sensitively to request for leave of absence. Where, however, the student is absent for more than the agreed period, early contact should be made with the family and the Commissioner.

Work Experience

If a student is found, during the period of work experience, to be absent from the work experience location without a good reason, the absence should be treated as unauthorised.

Study Leave

Where this is granted, either by ELKOLET or the Commissioner, it constitutes an authorised absence.

Appointments- Medical & Dental

These are discouraged in school time. Students are expected to return promptly to the school and resume studies on completion of the appointment. If a student fails to return from an appointment without adequate explanation, the absence should be treated as unauthorised.

Religious Festivals

Students are allowed leave for a day set aside for a religious observance. Application for more than one day must be made in writing in advance otherwise the absence will be regarded as unauthorised.

Holidays In Term Time

As ELKOLET is not the full-time provider of a student's education, holidays within term time must be requested to the Commissioner.

Extended Holidays

As ELKOLET is not the full-time provider of a student's education, extended holidays must be requested to the Commissioner.

Responding to Absence

Where a student is unexpectedly absent and no explanation has been provided, ELKOLET will seek to establish the reason for absence as soon as reasonably practicable.

The response may include:

1. checking the attendance record;
2. contacting the parent/carer;
3. contacting the student where appropriate;
4. checking whether the student is expected elsewhere;
5. contacting the commissioning school;
6. considering whether there are safeguarding concerns; and
7. escalating concerns where the student cannot be located or their safety cannot be established.

The response will be proportionate to the circumstances and the student's individual vulnerabilities.

Children Missing in Education

ELKOLET recognises the importance of identifying students who may be at risk of becoming children missing education.

Where a student:

- stops attending ELKOLET;
- cannot be located;
- is repeatedly absent without explanation;

- appears to have ceased receiving suitable education; or
- leaves a placement without confirmed alternative provision,

ELKOLET will notify the commissioning school and consider whether further safeguarding or local authority action is required.

ELKOLET will not assume that a student has simply left education because they stop attending its provision.

The commissioning school and relevant local authority will be involved in accordance with their statutory responsibilities.

Additional General Guidance for Parents

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers, and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from not attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Speak with your designated contact and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons- difficulties with schoolwork, friendship issues, or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance and work together to tackle the problem.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time in the morning. Ensure that your child leaves home in plenty of time, with book bag, water bottle and, if necessary, a packed lunch. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education- be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch! A child attending an AP for the first time may be daunting at first for both of you, but consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

Leavers

If your child is leaving ELKOLET, other than when transferring back to the commissioning school or to another school, parents are asked to give ELKOLET and the commissioner comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move, new address and telephone numbers, details of their child's new school and the start date when this is known. A form should be available in the commissioning school's office. If children leave and the above information is not provided, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By providing us and the Commissioner with all the above information these investigations can be avoided.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from the commissioning school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the head teacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the head teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sports people can seek leave of absence from their commissioning school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the head teacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the head teacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.