

Elysian

Attendance Policy



Date Reviewed: July 2026

Date of next review: July 2027

Elysian is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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Purpose

The purpose of this Attendance Policy is to promote and support regular attendance and punctuality for all learners at Elysian. Regular attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, wellbeing, educational achievement, social development and positive life outcomes. The policy sets out the roles, responsibilities and procedures that enable Elysian to monitor attendance effectively, identify and address barriers to attendance at an early stage, and work collaboratively with learners, parents/carers, local authorities and other professionals to secure the best possible outcomes. In line with Elysian's therapeutic and trauma-informed approach, the policy seeks to balance high expectations for attendance with appropriate support for learners whose attendance may be affected by emotional, mental health, medical or other identified needs.

Scope

This policy applies to all educational sites operated by Elysian.

This attendance policy applies to all pupils enrolled in the provisions and outlines the expectations, procedures, and responsibilities related to regular attendance, punctuality, and engagement in all scheduled sessions and activities. It sets out how attendance is monitored, how absences should be reported, and the support available to help pupils maintain consistent participation. The policy ensures a clear, fair, and safeguarding-focused approach that promotes every pupil's right to access learning and achieve positive outcomes.

Definitions

- **Attendance** — Being present, on time, and ready to take part in the planned session, activity, or school day.
- **Authorised Absence** — An absence that has been agreed by a parent/carer or staff in advance, or that meets the criteria for acceptable reasons (e.g., illness, medical appointments, family emergencies).
- **Unauthorised Absence** — When a young person is absent without a valid reason or without the required notification from a parent/carer.
- **Lateness** — Arriving after the agreed start time for a session or school day. Some settings include a short grace period; others do not.
- **Persistent Absence** — When a young person's attendance falls below a set threshold (commonly 90% in UK education). This usually triggers additional support or intervention.
- **Safeguarding Concern** — When a young person's absence or pattern of absences raises concerns about their safety or wellbeing. This may require escalation to safeguarding staff.
- **Parent/Carer Notification** — The requirement for a parent or carer to inform the organisation of an absence, usually before a set time each day.

Policy Statement

Attendance is recognised as an educational, safeguarding and welfare priority. Elysian recognises that attendance is everyone's business and that securing good attendance requires effective partnership working between learners, parents/carers, school staff, local authorities and other relevant agencies. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Elysian recognises that poor attendance, persistent absence, severe absence, unexplained absence and patterns of non-attendance may be indicators of unmet need, neglect, abuse, exploitation, mental health difficulties or other safeguarding concerns. Attendance concerns will therefore be considered within the school's safeguarding arrangements and responded to through a child-centred, supportive and multi-agency approach where appropriate

At Elysian, we recognise the strong link between attainment and attendance and the important role that Elysian, Learners and parents/carers play in ensuring that it is as high as possible; we are committed to maintaining the highest levels of attendance and to reducing levels of absence. At Elysian, we recognise the relative starting points of learners when they start their journey with us. Anxiety, Mental Health and Emotional based school avoidance are the key needs learners demonstrate when they join us. These are also significant factors which impact on attendance. We understand that achieving optimum attendance may be a challenging journey, but we are committed to working together with parents, carers and young people to overcome these barriers. This requires trust, mutual respect and good communication between all, as well as high expectations and continuous encouragement for the learners involved.

Attendance is pivotal in keeping young people safe, academic achievement, promotion of social inclusion and to equal opportunity.

Attendance data is processed in accordance with UK GDPR and shared securely with the Local Authority and DfE where legally required.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Senior Headteacher is the Senior Attendance Champion who oversees attendance across Elysian. The Senior Attendance Champion has strategic responsibility for attendance, oversight of attendance data, evaluation of interventions, and ensuring attendance remains a safeguarding and educational priority across all schools.

The **Senior Attendance Champion** has strategic responsibility for:

- *promoting attendance culture*
- *analysing attendance data*
- *identifying attendance concerns*
- *overseeing interventions*
- *ensuring compliance with statutory attendance requirements*
- *reporting attendance trends to governors and proprietors*
- *ensuring attendance remains a safeguarding priority.*
- *Providing the proprietors with termly reports and for them to provide challenge and oversight to ensure compliance with ISS standards*

- working closely with the Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure attendance concerns are assessed, monitored and escalated appropriately where safeguarding concerns are identified;
- ensuring staff receive appropriate training regarding attendance, safeguarding and vulnerability factors associated with absence.

The Heads of Education and Learning on each site will oversee, direct and co-ordinate Elysian's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout Elysian.

This person will work alongside all staff, including the administration team, to ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will 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 it is evidenced that a learner is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers the reasons for their child/young person's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

A note or explanation from a learner's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The school will determine authorisation in line with DfE guidance and statutory regulations.

Learners will only be removed from roll in accordance with Regulation 9 ... including [list grounds: moved school, medical inability, etc.]. The local authority will be notified prior to deletion.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Ensuring a learner's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility.

Parents / Carers will:

- Inform Elysian in writing by email (or by phone if email is unavailable) on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with staff any planned absences well in advance, providing evidence when requested.
- Support Elysian with their young person in aiming for maximum attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for with reasons given and predicted return date where possible.
- Avoid taking their child/young person out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Where appointments are taken during the school day, ensure the learner will be in school before and after, where possible.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Communicate openly and honestly about any challenges faced, engaging with support where required.

Learners will:

- Attend every day.
- Communicate with parents/carers or staff about the reasons why they may be struggling to attend.
- Engage with support plans where these are implemented to improve attendance.

Procedures / Requirements

Attendance Benchmarks for Specialist Provision

Our school recognises the national attendance figures published by the Department for Education; however, these benchmarks are not appropriate for evaluating attendance within a specialist SEND setting. The needs of our pupils, including medical complexity, therapy commitments, and individualised timetables, mean that mainstream attendance expectations do not reflect the context of our provision.

For this reason, we align our thresholds and monitoring processes with the data provided in the **SEND Data Dashboard**, which offers benchmarks that are more representative of specialist settings and better reflect the attendance patterns of pupils with complex needs.

ELYSIAN attendance definitions		
Below 69%	70% – 87%	88% and above

Elysian has used the DfE website – Pupil Attendance in Schools (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools>) to inform the chosen percentage rates in the table above. This will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure we are remaining ambitious in our aspirations, compared to the average for state-funded special schools.

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, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

Dual Registration

For any pupil who is dual registered, Elysian remains responsible for ensuring that our attendance records accurately reflect the learner's engagement across both placements. The attendance register will be completed at Elysian in the usual way, and administrative staff on each site will maintain regular communication with the partner provision to confirm the learner's attendance for the sessions they are scheduled to attend off-site.

This cross-checking process ensures that our attendance data is accurate, up to date, and compliant with statutory requirements. Any discrepancies or concerns will be followed up promptly with the local authority attendance team and the partner setting to safeguard the learner and maintain clear oversight of their attendance.

Compliance and Monitoring

Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the day (9:30am) and again for the afternoon session at 1.00pm. DfE-approved codes will be used and data will be shared with the DfE and Local Authority, as required.

For Looked After Children in Hampshire, attendance is also logged on their Virtual School online register. For Looked after Children in Surrey, the Virtual School regularly checks attendance through a commissioned service called Welfare Call.

Elysian recognises that poor attendance may indicate safeguarding concerns.

Attendance concerns will always be considered alongside:

- *mental health needs*
- *emotional wellbeing*
- *exploitation risks*
- *family difficulties*
- *neglect*
- *bullying*
- *SEND-related barriers*
- *medical needs*
- *children missing education concerns*
- *child sexual exploitation (CSE)*
- *county lines activity*
- *domestic abuse*
- *radicalisation and extremism*
- *online safety concerns*
- *contextual safeguarding concerns*
- *child criminal exploitation (CCE)*

Persistent absence, severe absence and unexplained absence will be considered within safeguarding processes and escalated where appropriate.

Attendance registers will:

- *be maintained electronically*
- *be completed twice daily*
- *use national attendance codes*
- *be retained for six years*
- *be subject to regular audit*
- *comply with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.*

Code C will not be used for medical absence, SEND-related barriers, anxiety, or other circumstances that should be coded using the appropriate authorised or unauthorised attendance codes. It will only be applied in genuinely exceptional circumstances and will be time-limited.

Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions, although we recognise that some learners travel a significant distance, and this may impact on arrival times.

If a learner is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of provision hours or during holidays.

The morning attendance register is taken at 9:30am. Learners arriving after the register has been taken but before the register closes will be recorded as late using the appropriate attendance code. The register closes 30 minutes after the start of the session. Learners arriving after the register has closed will be recorded using Code U (Arrived after registration closed), in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and DfE attendance guidance. Repeated late arrival will be monitored and may result in further discussion with parents/carers to identify and address any barriers to punctuality.

Parent/carers process for reporting absence

If your young person is absent, you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- Email on the first day of absence before 8:30am. This is because we have a duty to ensure your young person's safety as well as their regular attendance. If email is not available, you must call and leave a message on Elysian's main phone line.

Please give the following information:

- Name of learner.
- Reason for absence.
- Likely return date.
- Request for contact to discuss challenges faced if required.

If you are unsure when your child/young person will return, for example, if they have a cold or upset stomach, you must contact Elysian each morning by 8:30 am, giving the information above.

Process for Elysian when absence is not notified by parent/carers

If a learner has not arrived within 15 minutes of the usual start time, Elysian staff will use all known contact details to attempt contact with the parents/carers. This may include contact with wider family and friends, taxi companies and any other known contacts. All absences will be followed up on the first day of absence.

Unexplained absence can be a serious safeguarding concern. If contact cannot be made within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the circumstances, Elysian staff may visit the home address, or contact the police or children's services to carry out a welfare check.

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any learner who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. Repeated unexplained absence, patterns of absence, difficulties in establishing contact with parents/carers or concerns regarding a learner's whereabouts will be considered under Elysian's safeguarding and Children Missing Education procedures. Where necessary, referrals will be made to the Local Authority and other agencies in accordance with safeguarding requirements.

Parents/carers can help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number.

There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child/young person misses 10% (3 weeks) or more of their expected registrations across the school year for whatever reason, this is defined as persistent absenteeism. If a child/young person has missed 10% or more of their expected registrations across one term or more for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees.

Elysian will fulfil all statutory attendance reporting duties.

In line with the Local Authority expectations, they will be informed where:

- a learner has been absent without authorisation for 10 consecutive school days (rolling, not term based)
- a learner accumulates 15 days sickness absence (consecutive or cumulative, across the academic year unless LA says otherwise)
- a learner is at risk of becoming a Child Missing Education
- attendance concerns require multi-agency intervention.

Supportive Measures

Elysian adopts a support-first approach to attendance. We will seek to understand the reasons for absence, identify barriers to attendance and work collaboratively with learners, families and partner agencies to secure sustainable improvements in attendance. Attendance difficulties will be viewed within the wider context of the learner's needs, strengths, wellbeing and safeguarding circumstances, and support will be tailored accordingly.

Where attendance concerns persist, Elysian may work with:

- *Local Authorities*
- *Social Care*
- *Virtual School Heads*
- *Health Professionals*
- *CAMHS*
- *SEND Teams*
- *Family Support Services*

to ensure coordinated support. Where attendance concerns indicate emerging needs, Elysian may initiate or contribute to Early Help processes and work collaboratively with wider partners in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children. Where multiple needs are identified, Elysian will contribute to coordinated multi-agency planning and intervention as appropriate.

Penalty Notices and SEND Context

While we recognise that in mainstream schools' penalty notices may be issued when attendance falls below expected thresholds, this approach is not always appropriate within a specialist SEND provision.

Many of our pupils experience significant and complex barriers to attendance, including medical needs, anxiety, and other challenges linked to their individual profiles.

As a result, we take a supportive and collaborative approach, working closely with each pupil's case officer and the local authority attendance team to understand the underlying reasons for absence and to help families overcome these barriers. Our focus is on early intervention, personalised support, and partnership working rather than punitive measures, ensuring that attendance strategies remain aligned with the needs and best interests of each child.

Falling attendance – still in the green zone

The most effective methods for addressing attendance issues are based on early identification and intervention. Where we have a concern around attendance, this will be raised at the earliest opportunity with the learner concerned. Parents and carers will also be informed, and we will work together to address low-level issues which are currently affecting the ability of the learner to attend. This may include problem-solving challenging peer relationships, liaising with taxi companies and transport teams or working with learners to problem-solve their daily plans and activities. Listening to the learner will be pivotal in success.

Falling attendance – in the amber zone

If a learner's attendance rate falls into the amber zone, the attendance lead for Elysian will be notified and a meeting with parents/carers will be called. This should include the learner where appropriate. If this forum is not accessible for the learner, their views should be sought prior to the meeting from a trusted staff member or the parent/carer. This meeting may be on teams or in person and will be attended by a member of the Management Team at Elysian. Potential barriers will be discussed along with possible solutions. An Attendance Action plan will be written and shared with the learner for their views. The action plan will be reviewed regularly, along with attendance data. The regularity of this review cycle will be agreed at the meeting.

Falling attendance – in the red zone

Elysian monitors persistent absence (10%+) and severe absence (50% or below), in line with DfE definitions.

Where a learner's attendance falls into the red zone, a weekly meeting will take place with parents/carers and the learner. The Head of Education and Learning will attend this meeting. It will also be necessary to inform the local authority at this point. The local authority will be invited to the meeting to offer any further support or resource that may be helpful.

Where a learner remains in the red zone, despite all interventions and efforts, for a period of 6 weeks or more, the following actions may be taken, dependent on circumstances:

- Annual review may be called.
- A referral to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team may be made.
- A referral for Early Help may be made, with the permission of parents/carers.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) / Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

Elysian recognises that some learners may experience Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), also referred to as Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA). This occurs when a learner experiences significant emotional distress, anxiety, fear or other psychological barriers that impact their ability to attend school. EBSNA differs from truancy, where a learner chooses not to attend without parental knowledge or despite an absence of significant emotional barriers. In cases of EBSNA, learners often wish to engage with education but experience difficulties attending due to anxiety, mental health needs, trauma, unmet SEND needs, adverse life experiences or other underlying factors.

Where EBSNA is identified, Elysian will adopt a supportive, therapeutic and child-centred approach that seeks to understand and address the underlying causes of absence rather than focusing solely on attendance outcomes. Assessment and intervention will be informed by the views of the learner, parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Support may include therapeutic interventions, emotional wellbeing support, pastoral mentoring, reasonable adjustments, sensory regulation strategies, mental health support, family engagement and multi-agency working where appropriate. Attendance concerns related to EBSNA will be considered within the wider safeguarding framework and may form part of Early Help or other coordinated support arrangements.

Elysian will implement graduated reintegration strategies tailored to the individual needs of the learner. These may include enhanced transition arrangements, phased returns, reduced demands, supported arrival routines, increased access to trusted adults, therapeutic sessions, temporary adjustments to timetables where clinically justified, and incremental increases in attendance over time. Any reintegration plan will be regularly reviewed, time-limited, and focused on achieving sustainable attendance while promoting the learner's emotional wellbeing, resilience and engagement with learning.

Off-site provision / alternative provision

Attendance for off-site provision will be recorded using [e.g. code B] and monitored daily

Positive Interventions

Continued positive discussions and activities will take place throughout the year, promoting attendance and educating learners in the importance of attending. Although we recognise that anxiety often plays a part in school refusal, we also know that attending Elysian and working with the animals to overcome anxiety will be the key to success. Sometimes we have to support anxious learners in sitting with a difficult feeling, in order that they learn to take control of their anxiety. The animals and farm environment is ideally suited to this and the space that is available means that learners can attend but not be overwhelmed with demand. Where possible, it will always be better to attend, even for a short while in a session to discuss the anxiety or issues, than to not attend at all.

Check-ins with trusted staff can be made available during the day to promote problem-solving.

Part-time timetables are an exceptional, short-term intervention and will never be used as a behaviour management strategy. They will only be implemented where there is a clearly evidenced health, medical, SEND, therapeutic or emotional wellbeing need and where the arrangement is judged to be in the learner's best interests. All arrangements will have clear objectives, review dates and plans to support a return to full-time education as soon as reasonably possible.

Part-time timetables will:

- *never be used as a behaviour management strategy*
- *have clear objectives*
- *be time limited*
- *be regularly reviewed*

The arrangements must be exceptional in nature, clearly time-limited, and subject to formal review to ensure they remain appropriate and effective. For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan, any such arrangements must also be agreed in advance by the Local Authority to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Learners on part-time timetables will be considered for Early Help support where appropriate.

Attendance Review Meetings

Attendance data will be analysed for:

- *learners with SEND*
- *learners with EHCPs*
- *learners known to social care*
- *children in care and previously looked-after children*
- *learners with mental health needs*
- *learners with medical conditions*
- *young carers*
- *children with a social worker*
- *children on Child in Need plans*
- *children on Child Protection plans*
- *children receiving Early Help support*

Attendance data will be reviewed:

- *daily by operational staff*
- *weekly by attendance leaders /heads on each site*
- *half-termly by The Senior Attendance Champion.*
- *termly by governors/proprietors.*

Leaders will monitor:

- *overall attendance*

- *persistent absence*
- *severe absence*
- *punctuality*
- *attendance of vulnerable groups*
- *effectiveness of interventions.*

Non-Compliance / Breaches

Attendance Review Meetings may be arranged when concerns arise regarding a pupil's attendance. These meetings are used to identify any barriers affecting attendance, review relevant attendance data, agree appropriate actions, determine what support may be required, allocate responsibilities, and set clear review dates. Where necessary, an Attendance Support Plan may be implemented and monitored regularly to ensure progress and provide ongoing support.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child/young person misses 10% (3 weeks) or more of their expected registrations across the school year for whatever reason, this is defined as persistent absenteeism. If a child/young person has missed 10% or more of their expected registrations across one term or more for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees.

Elysian will fulfil all statutory attendance reporting duties.

In line with the Local Authority expectations, they will be informed where:

- a learner has been absent without authorisation for 10 consecutive school days (rolling, not term based)
- a learner accumulates 15 days sickness absence (consecutive or cumulative, across the academic year unless LA says otherwise)
- a learner is at risk of becoming a Child Missing Education
- attendance concerns require multi-agency intervention.

Exceptions

If a parent or carer needs to request an authorised absence for medical, personal, or exceptional reasons, they must submit the request by email to the administrative team at their pupil's site. The email should clearly explain the reason for the request, specify the amount of time being requested, and include any supporting documentation such as medical appointment letters or evidence of exceptional circumstances.

All requests will be reviewed by the site's Head, who will use their professional discretion to approve or decline the absence in line with safeguarding responsibilities and attendance expectations.

Related Documents / References

- Links to:
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, updated July 2026)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance
- Independent School Standards Regulations
- Independent School Standards Guidance April 2026
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice 2015

Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Attendance Champion and Heads of Education and Learning, or sooner in response to legislative or regulatory change.

Appendix 1:

