

Attendance Policy

Chisenhale Primary School



Learning Together for a Better Future

November 2020

Agreed by Governors: November 2020

Review Date: November 2022

Our vision and values support Articles 3, 28, 29, 31 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. Article 3: The best interests of a child must be a top priority in all things that affect children. Article 28: Every child has the right to an education. Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. Article 31: Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

ATTENDANCE POLICY Chisenhale Primary School

School Attendance Aims

At Chisenhale we celebrate children's achievements and good attendance and punctuality are a crucial element of this. We also recognise the link between underachievement and poor attendance. If children are at school they will benefit from the quality and breadth of the curriculum offered. We aim to be an inclusive school and expect all children to attend daily and on time so they can have full access to the curriculum. We are fully committed to all of our pupils achieving well and to making good progress over the time they spend with us and recognise that good attendance will support this.

Chisenhale School Attendance Procedures

ABSENCE

We aim to promote effective home school links to improve attendance. We do this in a number of ways;

1. FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE

Parent/Carers **must** notify the office staff or class teachers to account for their child's absence or they **must** phone the school before 9am and leave a message on the answering machine (Option 1)

2. CONTINUED ABSENCE

Parent/Carers need to contact the school if their child is going to be absent from school.

3. A member of the school staff will carry out first day phone calls to families where a reason for absence has not been given by parents/carers

4. Attendance will be monitored on a monthly basis and letters will be sent to parents in cases where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, where the pupil has absences for which no valid reason has been given or where the pupil has been late for school on more than 3 occasions. If the attendance or punctuality does not improve a follow-up letter will be sent.

5. Where concerns continue around a child's absence or punctuality, parent/carers will be invited to a meeting in school with the school's Attendance and Welfare Advisor to discuss reasons for the absences and ways of supporting the family in improving attendance

6. If attendance or punctuality continues to be an issue, the school will complete a referral to the Attendance and Welfare service which could lead to court proceedings, if there is no improvement.

7. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

In partnership with Tower Hamlets Local Authority (LA), Chisenhale implements the Penalty Notice Scheme as required under statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE,2013) in order to improve attendance and punctuality. Penalty notices can be issued in any of the following circumstances:

- In instances of a pupil having 6 sessions (3 days) of unauthorised leave/holidays in term time. A session is a half-day and unauthorised means without the consent/authorisation of the school.
- Where parents/carers fail to attend without reasonable cause meetings with the the school, to which they have been invited to discuss their child's unauthorised absences and/or leaves.
- In cases of pupils identified as having Persistent Absence (where the attendance of pupils falls below 90% in a period of a school term they are designated as having Persistent Absence) with 20 or more sessions of unauthorised absence (not authorised by the school) and with substantial evidence of failure on the part of the parent/carer to work in cooperation and partnership to address and improve the situation.
- In cases of frequent late arrival at school (10 minutes after the register has closed) with 20 or more avoidable late marks occurring over a period of a school term. The journey involved and particular issues such as adverse weather conditions and disruptions to transport will be taken into account as necessary.
- Where there is a combination of unauthorised absence and avoidable lateness amounting to 20 sessions or more over the period of a school term.
- In cases where a pupil has been stopped by the truancy patrol on more than one occasion within the period of a school term, with no valid reason for not being in school. This would include pupils accompanied by parents/carers, guardians, or other adults.
- Where parents/carers fail to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion from school without reasonable justification.

For further details of the scheme please see Appendix 1.

8. The school will report its overall attendance figures to the LA and will comply with the DFE regulations to identify and report persistent absentees i.e. pupils who's attendance falls under 90%, on a half termly basis

LATENESS

- Any children that arrive after the end of registration will electronically sign in with the Inventory system, noted as late on the register and the time of arrival noted.
- A child that has persistent late marks will have a letter sent home, and the parent/carer will be invited in to discuss this.

Chisenhale School Registration Procedures

Registers will be kept in accordance with the guidelines issued in the LEA's circular 3/99, the 'Marking and Maintenance of School Registers'.

- A member of staff will complete registers twice a day: in the morning and afternoon sessions as this is a legal requirement
- All registers should be marked by 9.00am and within 5 minutes of returning to class after lunch (times vary for different key stages).
- Registration is done using our online RM Integris system.
- Appropriate absence codes need to be added, including a note on the system explaining the reason for this code.
- Where the reason for absence is not known to the teacher an N can be added. Office staff will change this to the correct code following messages from parents or phone calls home.
- Teacher must take care to complete registers accurately as there is a first day of absence call policy.

Targets

Targets are set each year building on the improvements of the previous year and we are aiming to achieve a whole school target of **96%**.

Our school's commitment to improving attendance

- The school aims to offer a high quality curriculum so that pupils feel motivated and want to learn.
- Teachers will plan to cater for differing needs of pupils
- Teachers will monitor absences for patterns and highlight concerns with the Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher
- The school will follow up any unexplained or unauthorised absences with parents
- Excellent and improving attendance will be recognised and celebrated
- Teachers will highlight any attendance concerns with parent/carers during parents meetings
- The school will inform parents in the end of year report of the child's yearly attendance
- The school has a number of staff available to help parents who are struggling to get their children to school regularly or on time. These include the Assistant Head, the Learning Mentor, the Parental Engagement Officer and the School Nurse.

- The school will refer parents on to other services where appropriate.

Our pupils' commitment to improving attendance:

- Pupils will attend school regularly
- Pupils will arrive in school before the gates close be in their classrooms, ready to learn
- Pupils should take full advantage of the opportunities the school offers
- Pupils should bring any issues or concerns to the attention of the class teacher or member of the school staff

Our parent/carers' commitment to improving attendance:

- Parent/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually as defined in the Education Act 1996.
- Parent/carers will notify the school at the beginning of the day if their child is to be absent, by telephone, sending a note or in person
- Where possible parent/carers will arrange appointments outside school hours for example dental check-ups
- Parent/carers will engage with the school in improving their child's attendance where issues have arisen

Types of Absence

Authorised Absence

A child has been absent and the school accepts the reason given by the parents/carers. In certain cases the school may decide to only authorise absences when a appropriate documentation has been provided e.g. medical certificates, dental notes or GP letters. This is usually the case when a child already has a high level of unauthorised absence or is on the persistent absence register.

Unauthorised Absence

A child has been absent from school without the parents providing a reason; the school has not accepted the reason provided; a pupil has truanted or taken extended leave.

Extended Leave/ Holidays

The Governors and school have adopted the LA guidance on leave during term time; therefore any extended leave/ holiday leave will be regarded as an unauthorised absence. Where pupils take 3 or more days of unauthorised holiday leave during term time parents may be issued with fixed penalty notices by the Attendance and Welfare Service.

Special Leave

The school will allow a limited number of days absence *for the following reasons only:*

- **family weddings and funerals**

Where the wedding/ funeral is in this country a maximum of 3 days absence may be authorised and where the wedding/ funeral is abroad a maximum of 5 days leave may be authorised.

- An application for leave form must be filled in and given to the school admin officer
- The Head may need to meet with parents to discuss the application
- The parents will be informed in writing if the leave has been granted
- Parents need to provide evidence of the wedding or funeral eg wedding invite, copy of death certificate

Absences just before or just after a school holiday

Where a pupil is absent just before or just after a school holiday this will generally be regarded as an unauthorised absence. If parents inform the school that the pupil is absent due to illness the school may ask for medical evidence before authorising the absence. Where pupils arrive back late from a holiday due to circumstances beyond their control, such as the child being unwell and unable to travel or the plane being cancelled by the airline, the school will ask for evidence before authorising this absence. For example, the school may ask to see evidence of the original booking.

Appointments

Whilst we understand that some children will need to attend extra appointments we expect these to cause the least disruption possible to the school day. For example, for a 2pm appointment, we would expect the child to attend school in the morning. Equally we would expect the pupil to return to school for the afternoon session following a morning appointment, except where medical advice is that the child needs further time off.

Where possible parent/carers should arrange appointments outside of school hours.

Procedures for dealing with absence at Chisenhale Primary School

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring their class register has been completed in a timely fashion for each session daily.

All children who arrive after the close of registers will be recorded as late by the admin officer and the time of their arrival will be recorded.

The admin officer will be responsible for writing reasons for absence into the register and for inserting the correct codes.

All notes received by class teachers should be sent to the office so that the admin officer can record the reason.

Verbal messages received by the class teacher should be recorded on the register.

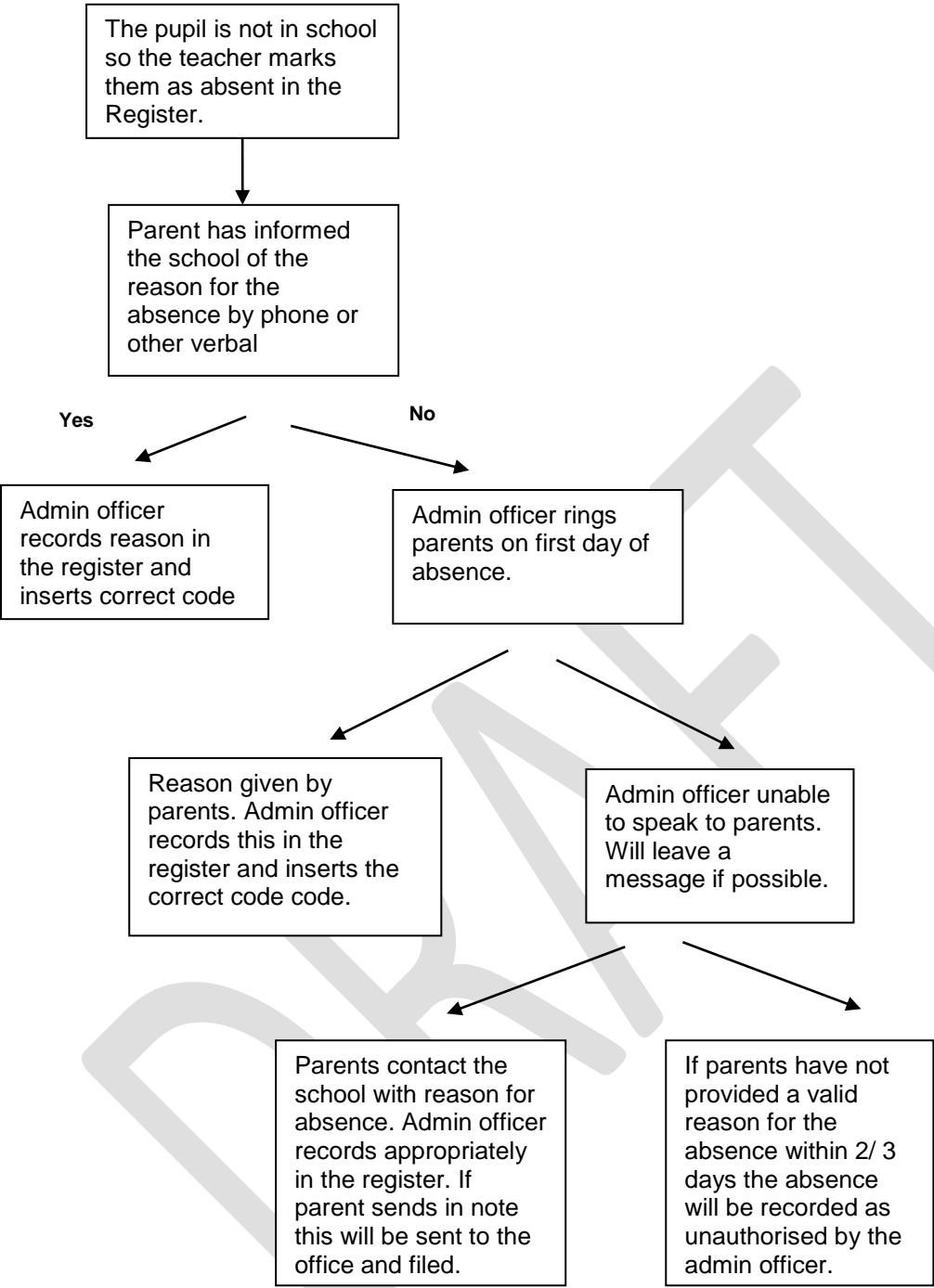
The admin officer will be responsible for appropriately filing absence notes.

Letters will be sent to parents whose children have high levels of absence or more than 3 days of unauthorised absence by the attendance coordinator. A record of these letters will be kept on the shared drive.

The admin officer will write to parents of children who regularly come to school late and will keep a record of these letters on the shared drive.

The Attendance and Welfare Advisor will invite parents of children with poor attendance/punctuality to a meeting to discuss how the attendance can be improved.

The attendance team will meet regularly to discuss any attendance issues and to agree which families need to be formally met with by a senior member of staff and the issues addressed.



Appendix 1

Fixed Penalty Notice

In partnership with Tower Hamlets Local Authority (LA), this school will be implementing the Penalty Notice Scheme as required under statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE,2013) in order to improve attendance and punctuality.

A Penalty Notice may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence or lateness or where parents/carers fail to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion from school.

Penalty Notices apply on an individual child per parent basis. Therefore a parent with 3 children who meet the criteria may receive 3 Penalty Notices. In a family with 2 parents/carers with three children who meet the criteria, each parent/carer may receive 3 Penalty Notices – meaning that a total of 6 Penalty Notices may be received.

The issue of a Penalty Notice may be considered appropriate in any of the following circumstances:

- **In instances of a pupil having 6 sessions (3 days) of unauthorised leave/holidays in term time. A session is a half-day and unauthorised means without the consent/authorisation of the school.**
- **Where parents/carers fail to attend without reasonable cause LA led In-School Attendance Panels, to which they have been invited to discuss their child's unauthorised absences and/or leaves.**
- **In cases of pupils identified as having Persistent Absence (where the attendance of pupils falls below 85% in a period of a school term they are designated as having Persistent Absence) with 20 or more sessions of unauthorised absence (not authorised by the school) and with substantial evidence of failure on the part of the parent/carer to work in cooperation and partnership to address and improve the situation.**
- **In cases of frequent late arrival at school (10 minutes after the register has closed) with 20 or more avoidable late marks occurring over a period of a school term. The journey involved and particular issues such as adverse weather conditions and disruptions to transport will be taken into account as necessary.**
- **Where there is a combination of unauthorised absence and avoidable lateness amounting to 20 sessions or more over the period of a school term.**
- **In cases where a pupil has been stopped by the truancy patrol on more than one occasion within the period of a school term, with no valid reason for not being in school. This would include pupils accompanied by parents/carers, guardians, or other adults.**
- **Where parents/carers fail to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion from school without reasonable justification.**

The school will refer pupils where there is cause for concern about unauthorised absence and/or lateness to the Attendance & Welfare Service. In most circumstances each liable parent/carer shall receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued.

If following the issuing of the warning notice the pupil has further unauthorised absence or avoidable late marks, the parents/guardians of the pupil may each receive a Penalty Notice for £60 which must be paid within 21 days or it will increase to £120 each which must be paid within a further 7 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court for the original non-attendance and a possible criminal conviction.

In those specific circumstances related to;

- (i) the taking of 6 sessions (3 days) or more of unauthorised leave/holidays in term time where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not/would not be given**
- (ii) where parents fail to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion from school without reasonable justification**

the pupil will be referred immediately to the Attendance & Welfare Service for issue of the Penalty Notice.

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