



Attendance Policy

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| Review Frequency | Annual |
| Most Recent Review | Autumn 2021 |
| Next Review Due | Autumn 2022 |
| Head Teacher | Leah Wright <i>LWright</i> |
| Governor | |

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Information for parents/carers

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent; and in accordance with the registration regulation 2006 (amended). Section 444 of the education act 1996. 'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.' A pupil's unauthorised absence is an offence for the parent.

"Attendance matters...Every day counts..."

As a school we aim to:

- Meet our attendance target of **96%**.
- Maintain parents'/carers' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Maintain a maximum attendance for all children with a minimum of unauthorised absence.
- Maintain a low rate of persistent absenteeism.
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of efficient and full time attendance.
- Maintain punctual time keeping.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to high school.

As a parent/carer you can fully support us by:

- Ensuring your child attends school regularly. (Attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils, unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent; only the school can authorise an absence.)
- Absence should only happen when:
 - (a) Your child is significantly/symptomatically ill and therefore unfit to attend school. There should be an observable symptom; 'feeling unwell' is not enough. We may ask for medical verification where illness-absence is frequent, prolonged or where there are absences before or after a school holiday. If your child has a documented medical condition that hinders regular attendance, please let us know.
 - (b) If there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty/period of difficulty.
 - (c) Your child has been advised to isolate by NHS Track and Trace. See addendum for COVID-19 related absences.
- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when your child will return.
- Ringing the school again if your child has been absent for 3 days, to update on the situation.
- Informing the school, as soon as possible, of any health issues that may cause long term absences e.g. 15 days or more per annum.
- Keeping us updated by telephone or by letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- Arranging all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- If you as a parent, suffer with any underlying health issue, please make arrangements in the event you are unwell and unable to bring your child to school i.e. a friend, neighbour, another

parent or a family member to help you. Parental illness is legally not acceptable for a child missing school.

- Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers i.e child minders and emergency contact details.
- **If you are leaving** the area or changing schools, please complete a **Leaver's Form** (available at the school office). Schools and the local authority are obliged to track pupils missing from school. This can be intrusive in the absence of reliable or confirmed information.

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences as soon as possible.
- Remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in various forms of communication i.e. the school newsletters, Home – School Agreement.
- Publish our attendance figures in the school Newsletter & Website
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance:
 - Certificates and Cup for attendance and punctuality (awarded weekly in assembly)
 - 100% attendance certificates awarded to children on a termly basis.
 - Over 95% attendance certificates awarded to children on an annual basis.
 - 'Great Improvement' certificates awarded to children as appropriate throughout the year.
 - Attendance rewards assembly Every Term - 1 Boy, 1 Girl, KS1, KS2.
- Analyse attendance data, especially in relation to progress.
- Analyse attendance data in relation to specific pupil groups.
- Ensure staff within the school is aware of the significant correlation between good attendance and academic progress and social development.
- Provide your child's attendance figures with their annual school report.
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance.
- Make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer, who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters, if we continue to have concerns about your child's attendance or timekeeping.
- Hold a meeting to complete a **Parenting Contract** if we continue to have concerns about your child's attendance.
- Send texts out when a child is absent and no reason have been given.
- If a child has 20 days continuous unauthorised absence, the school will remove that child from roll following reasonable enquiry.

Term Time Absence

From the 1 September 2013, the rules regarding authorised term time absence have changed, dramatically. The school has **no** flexibility; the government has stated what must happen. **Headteachers are not allowed to grant 'leave of absence' for holidays.**

Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the school.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is defined as when the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence, or there is no reason given for the absence. Unauthorised absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service will contact you and consider taking legal action against you which could result in a fixed penalty fine or other legal action.

Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action.

Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices (fines) prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

Persistent Absence

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, they are automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as a persistent absentee irrespective of the reason for absence.

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with and the Local Authority and the parent to improve matters. In such cases, parents might be invited to agree a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract' with the school as a way of measuring improvement.

Persistent absence is a serious problem for children. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement

Absence around school holiday periods

- Un-notified absence before and or after school holiday periods will be regarded as unauthorised leave (parents are reminded that the school attendance policy requires the parent to notify the school of absence on each day)
- Absence claimed by a parent as illness before or after a school holiday must be reported during the period of absence and contemporaneous medical evidence produced to the school, otherwise it will be regarded as unauthorised leave.
- Except as in the case of an emergency, retrospective approval cannot be given without an application having being made and/or satisfactory evidence provided.

Exceptional Leave - Term Time Leave of Absence

Amendments to the 2006 Attendance Regulations make it clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. That, only in **exceptional (and documented) circumstances**, can leave be allowed. We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of term time leave. There is **no entitlement** to time off during term time. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. if there is an emergency) at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body.

Term Time Holiday Absence

The school is no longer allowed to authorise any holiday. Where a child misses school due to holiday fixed penalty fines will be issued by the Local Authority. If a child fails to return to school at the start of Term, Half term, or is absent from school at the end of term claimed as illness, the school will require medical verification/documentation. Where parents experience delays to travel plans/flights the school will require evidence

It is our policy that, only in an exceptional circumstances, will term time leave be considered. All leave is granted at the Headteacher's discretion. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form well in advance and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements (forms are available at the school office). Parents whose first language is not English are encouraged to arrange a meeting with the school and bring a friend or companion to assist them. Parents sometimes confuse 'telling' the school as being good enough, this is not so, you will need explicit permission from the school for any leave.

If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening.

Absence claimed as illness before or after a school holiday must be reported during the period of absence and medical evidence produced on return to school otherwise, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised leave. Medical documentation should be in English.

If a child is not present at the beginning of a school term, we cannot guarantee that a place will remain available on their return to school. If you experience delays in returning from a trip within the UK or

abroad for whatever reason, the school will require documentary evidence accompanied with proof of original return dates i.e. tickets or an official travel plan showing intent to return on time.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and you may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine*. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established he/she may be regarded as a 'Child Missing Education'. In certain instances the child may also risk losing their school place.

*Payment of the penalty discharges liability for the offence. It is an alternative to prosecution. There are 2 levels of penalty notice - £60 (if paid within 21 days of issue), and £120 (if paid later than 21 days but within 28 days). Failure to pay will result in prosecution in magistrate's court for irregular attendance, where, on conviction a fine of up to £1000 may be imposed as well as a record of criminal conviction.

Please see links below for Government policy.

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/help-with-getting-your-child-to-go-to-school>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/401467/parental_responsibility_measures_for_school_attendance_and_behaviour.pdf

Where a parent needs to take a child out of school for an exceptional circumstance an application must be made in writing in advance to the Head Teacher who will grant leave only at her discretion, if leave is granted for exceptional reasons and the child has not returned to school as agreed, documentation will be required by the school where delays have occurred.

Punctuality

Morning registration is at 9.00 am. Every pupil arriving after this time is considered late and must report to the school office. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8.45 am, latest 8.55am. It is important to be on time, as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day. If your child misses this short, but vital, session their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.

Repeated Lateness

Parents will be invited in to school to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team where lateness becomes frequent or significant. Where there is no improvement, lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised missed session and will be referred to the Local Authority. Please be aware that unauthorised absence can form the basis of a prosecution

Uncollected children

Children should be collected from school on time when possible. It can be distressing for children if they do not know why they have not been picked up from school. If you are going to be late due to an emergency, please call the school office as soon as possible.

Parents/carers, who are regularly late in collecting children, will meet with the headteacher to discuss why the difficulties regarding collection times are occurring. Where this continues, parents may be charged by the hour and concerns may be shared with welfare agencies.

If a child is not collected at the end of the day or when a club has finished, and school are unable to contact parents or emergency contacts, the headteacher may make the decision to contact either Children's Services (formerly Social Services) or the police.

Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to high school, parents/carers are asked to give the school full information about their plans, including the date of move, the new address or at least

the town they will be moving to, details about the new school and start date, when known, and reasons for moving etc. A form is available at the school office that should be completed.

Parents/carers should also:

- Confirm that the school has your current mobile phone number.
- Take our school's compliment slip so the new school can easily contact us and records can be transferred from school to school easily and efficiently.
- Let us know when you move.

Children Missing Education (CME)

If parents/carers do not give information about children leaving, and a school cannot contact a parent/carer, then the child is considered to be a child missing education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) in order to find out where a missing child might be. The police and other agencies might also become involved.

Notifying the school if your child is leaving is very important.

Legal Note

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on 'Best Practice' guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents/carers are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

John Perryn COVID-19 Attendance Policy Addendum

Background

In March 2020 when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Then the circumstances changed, the NHS Test and Trace system was set up and we developed a better understanding of the measures we need to put in place to create a safer environment in school. All children, in all year groups, should, once again return to school full time from 8th March 2021. It is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School Attendance is therefore mandatory again from 8th March 2021. This means, from that point, we welcomed your child back into school and the usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil and they are of compulsory school age
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with Local Authorities' codes of conduct

Returning to School

All pupils, of compulsory school age, must be in school unless a statutory reason applies and where the absence has been authorised by the school (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, has been told to quarantine, is absent for a necessary and authorised religious observance etc).

We understand that some children, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised

that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes. This may also include some pupils with EHCP plans.

A very small number of children will still be unable to attend school in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves. If your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to get a test and you should inform school of the results of that test.

If your child is unable to attend school for this reason or because you consider they may have other risk factors, you should talk to your child's class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team so that we can better understand your situation and discuss what support is in place in school and in terms of access to education at home resources (remote education).

If your child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer access to education at home resources via our online learning platform, Seesaw. We will monitor engagement with this activity to ensure learning is being accessed appropriately. This may also apply to some pupils with EHCP plans where parents will be involved in the planning of a child's return to school.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

Exceptional leave

There is no entitlement to leave during term time for the purpose of a holiday. Parents should plan their holidays within school breaks. If you need to take your child out of school for an exceptional circumstance, you must apply in writing and seek permission from the school as usual. Please also consider that your child will need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. Please ensure that you check the current rules on travelling abroad before booking a holiday.

If you and your child have been delayed in returning to the UK during the lock-down period or travelling abroad and you have been told to quarantine, you should not attend school during the period of quarantine. Please discuss such circumstances with the school and provide documentary evidence in support of absence; the school will consider the circumstances of the trip/time abroad to inform their decision to authorise absence or not.

Outbreaks

In the event of a local outbreak, the school or number of schools may need to close temporarily to help control transmission. If this is the case, the school will provide your child with education at home through our online platform, Seesaw.

Punctuality

Please ensure your child arrives on time and is collected on time in order to minimise disruption. Please contact us ahead if you are experiencing difficulties. If lateness persists, we will want to discuss this with you and agree some support measures; if matters do not improve, the lateness will not be authorised and the matter may be referred to the Local Authority School Attendance Service, who may invite you to agree a parenting contract to improve matters.

Management of non-attendance

Families should notify their school as normal if your child is unable to attend on any given day and update the school regularly regarding on-going absence. Where a child is not regularly attending the school, we will want to discuss this with you to understand what the difficulties are and agree with you some supportive measures to improve matters as early as possible. We will follow our normal absence procedures to establish the reasons for absence (please refer to our main Attendance Policy). Where our efforts do not result in an improvement in attendance or time keeping, we will refer to the local authority School Attendance Service for additional support, advice and ultimately parental enforcement.

Referrals to the Local Authority (LA)

All unauthorised absence, including significant lateness is reported to the LA School Attendance Service to seek additional advice and support for parents as necessary. Where unauthorised absence is frequent and/or persistent, sanctions will be imposed and will include warnings, penalty notices (Fixed Penalty Fines), prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

Where a child or family is away from home including abroad, and unable to return home due to the pandemic/travel restrictions, parents are expected to provide the school with detailed information as to the whereabouts, reasons for travel and estimated return dates and we will do our best to support you. Where the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will not be authorised, and this could result in Fixed Penalty Fine (please refer to our main Attendance Policy) Where such cases are not satisfactorily explained and evidenced, we cannot guarantee to hold a place open for your child. Please be aware that leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time for the purpose of a holiday.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Where the school is unable to contact a child/family over a 3-day period, they will contact the School Attendance Service to carry out enquiries to try to locate them. A door-step home welfare visit will also be undertaken.

Where the school and the Attendance Service have failed to locate the child/family within 10 days, the child will be referred to the LA Children Missing Education Officer (CME officer) who will undertake additional checks with other agencies to locate them, including consultation with social care, the police, health and housing. Where these enquiries do not lead to confirmation of the child's whereabouts, the matter will remain open to that service who will widen their enquiries. In these circumstances, the school cannot guarantee to keep a school place open for your child.

Safeguarding

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare from any year group, we will consult with Ealing Social Care in line with our Child Protection Procedures.