



Attendance Policy

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| Review Frequency | Annual |
| Most Recent Review | Autumn 2024 |
| Next Review Due | Autumn 2025 |
| Head Teacher | Leah Wright <i>LWright</i> |
| Governor | Thomas Boal |

Senior Attendance Champion: Ms. L Wright / Ms S. Upfield

School Attendance Officer: Ms. T Abdelrhman

Local Authority Link Attendance Officer: Diane Jacobs attendance@ealing.gov.uk

Regular attendance is defined to be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.

Supreme court Ruling April 2017

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; (registration regulations 2006. 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**.

As a school we aim to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance and good time keeping for all children and groups of children
- Maintain a low rate of persistent and severe absenteeism (<90% and <50% attendance)
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of efficient and fulltime attendance.
- Help your child attain their full potential academically and socially

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 attendance is an indicator of safe, healthy and successful children
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attendance encourages responsible learning habits and prepares children for higher education and for their working life

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ensuring your child attends 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
- Phone in to the school on each day of absence or reporting on Studybugs, with a reason for an absence
- Provide a timely reason, satisfactory to the school, for an absence; otherwise, the absence will remain unauthorised
- Arranging (where possible) all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- **Do not plan any holidays during term time**
- Keeping the school updated by telephone, email, or letter of any changes of circumstances.

Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contact details

Absence should only happen when:

- a) Your child is significantly/symptomatically ill and therefore unfit to attend school. There should be an observable symptom(s); 'feeling unwell' is not enough. We may ask for medical verification where absence claimed as illness is frequent, prolonged or where there are absences immediately before or after a school holiday.
 - b) If there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty, the school **will ask for evidence**
 - c) If your child has a documented medical condition that hinders regular attendance, please let us know; the school will ask for evidence in such cases.

If you are leaving the area or changing schools, please complete a **Leaver's Form** (available at the school office or on our school website). Schools and the local authority are **legally obliged** to track pupils from school to school, even if you are leaving to live abroad. Follow-up enquiries on inadequate information can be intrusive. As well as calls, enquiries include unannounced visits to your given address. We have a duty of care and must follow all guidelines set out by the local authority.

What the school will do:

- While we expect a parent to contact us with a reason for each absence, on occasions, they might forget. Therefore, we will endeavour to call, text, or otherwise contact parents. Schools have a safeguarding role so, on occasion, home visits will be made by school staff or by the Local Authority Link Attendance Officer if a parent cannot be otherwise contacted. [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)
- Where a child has a Social Worker, we will inform them of absences.
- For Children Looked After (CLA), in addition we may share attendance concerns with: the child's Social Worker, the Carer, the parent if applicable and child's virtual school; the case worker assigned to the child (this may not be Ealing).
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality.
- The school will express 'a concern' either verbally or by letter (letter 1). If attendance does not improve or explanations for absence or lateness are unsatisfactory, you may be invited to a meeting following letter 2. The school will also outline what the attendance expectations are and what actions will follow
- We will seek to support you in various ways including:
 - a) We may invite you to participate in an Early Help and Assessment Plan (EHAP)
 - b) You may be invited to agree an Attendance Contract.
 - c) A referral may also be made to external partners, including the Local Authority School Attendance Service, whose officers visit the school regularly to review and support attendance and punctuality issues.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils, who the school (and/or local authority), consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify pupils, who need support from wider partners, as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Regularly inform parents about your child's attendance and absence levels.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in the school literature, on our website, at open evenings, in the Home-School Agreement, in pupil's annual reports and during meetings.
- Publish our attendance data on the school website
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality by celebrating in assemblies.
- If your child has a documented medical condition, we will wish to discuss this with you. We will devise an individual healthcare plan with you to support your child in school; this might also require us to refer to the school Nursing Team or, on occasion, contact your GP/health professional. The school will consider whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, and make referrals in a timely manner, working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support. In some cases, this may include a referral for Alternative Provision.
- Work closely with local mental health services, school level senior mental health leads, the local School Nursing Service and the local authority's special educational needs and disability teams(s) to ensure joined up support for families facing health or disability barriers to attendance.
- If your child has an education health and care plan, any attendance concerns will be discussed as part of the annual review.
- Share attendance data regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Service
- Where attendance concerns persist, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents/carers.
- Escalate the matter to the Local Authority Attendance Service (this includes unauthorised absence due to significant lateness) for prosecution, where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. (Letter 3)

Attendance support:

[Ealing Families Directory](#)

Phone: 0208 8255588

[SAFE - Supportive Action for Families in Ealing | Ealing Council](#)

[Housing Support](#)

Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust

Team email address: clcht.ealingschoolnurseteam@nhs.net

Admin hub line number: 0208 102 5888

www.clch.nhs.uk

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as 'authorised absences'. That is when the school accept the reason given for absence.

We realise that there are rare and unavoidable occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent, such as sudden bereavement, unexpected parental illness, or a family crisis. If this happens, please let us know and we shall try to deal with the matter sympathetically. Following such incidents, parents are expected to make any necessary arrangements for their child to return to school as soon as possible (ideally the next day). If the absence is likely to be prolonged, parents must write to the Headteacher outlining the reasons.

Please note that when illness is a frequent reason claimed for absence, the school will ask for evidence other than a parent's word to allow for further authorisation of absences.

Early Intervention to Support:

We encourage parents to notify us as soon as you detect a reluctance in your child to attend school, as it is widely recognised that early intervention is key to prevent further deterioration.

Many children experience difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school. This may be due to friendship issues, schoolwork, exams. In such cases pupils are still expected to come to school regularly. Further absence can exacerbate the problem and can create further problems as gaps in their education widen and a sense of isolation ensues. As a School there are ways, we can support to overcome these hurdles and we will tailor an individual programme by considering a variety of reasonable adjustments to timetables, arrival/end of day routines, offer of counselling, Mentor, and signposting to external agencies.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out / Going shopping
- Because you have visitors
- Because you did not know school was open
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Parent’s illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for an absence, or the school considers the reason given for the absence as unsatisfactory.
- Absence following or prior to a period of school closure (at the end and beginnings of terms and half terms) or following a period of authorised leave, unless satisfactory evidence to justify this has been provided
- Term time holiday – this will be referred to the Local Authority.

Please be aware that unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action. Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices (fines) 3*.

Persistent Absence and Severe absence

Once a child’s attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, they are automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE), irrespective of the reason for absence, as a **Persistent Absentee**. Once a child’s attendance falls below 50%, they are termed **Severely Absent**. Both scenarios present a severe problem for pupils. 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, particularly at GCSE.

| Attendance (%) | Real terms | Missed lessons |
|----------------|---|-------------------|
| 95% | Attendance of 95% for the year equals 10 days that your child has been absent, that is 2 full school weeks of your child’s learning missed for that year. | 50 missed lessons |
| 80% | Attendance of 80% for the year equals 38 days absent per year that is over 7 school weeks missed. | 200 lessons |
| Punctuality | Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year | 20 lessons |

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and, as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent, the Local Authority, and other external partners to support parents to improve matters. In such cases, parents will be offered an Early Help Assessment and might be invited to agree an Attendance Contract with the school or the Local Authority as a way of managing improvement.

3* The National Framework for Penalty Notices has introduced a national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered from **19th August 2024**. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period will now meet consideration for issuing a penalty notice. The 10 school week period may span different terms or school years. Only 2 penalty notices can be issued within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. A **first penalty notice** is charged at an **increased rate of £160 (if paid within 28 days of issue)**, and **reduced to £80 (if paid within 21 days)**. A **second penalty notice** is charged at a flat rate of **£160 if paid within 28 days with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80**. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, prosecution could be considered. The three-year period begins from the date of the first penalty notice issued on or after 19th August 2024. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. Failure to pay will result in prosecution in magistrate's court for irregular attendance, where, on conviction a fine of up to £2,500 may be imposed as well as a record of criminal conviction. Payment of the penalty discharges liability for the offence; it is an alternative to prosecution.

Unauthorised Absences are reported to the Local Authority (this includes absence due to significant lateness). The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. The school will then work in partnership with you until matters improve. **Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action.** Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices (fines) 3*¹ prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

Exceptional Leave - Term Time Leave of Absence

Amendments to the 2006 School Attendance Regulations make it clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. 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. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

We will consider requests for leave of absence to take part in a regulated performance or employment, when supported by a licence issued by a local authority, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education.

Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be considered. All leave is granted at the Headteacher's decision. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to complete an application form well in advance and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements (forms are available at the school office and on our school website). Parents sometimes confuse 'telling' the school as being good enough; this is not so.

You will be asked to provide the following information:

- Evidence supporting the reason for the pupil's absence. *
- The address/es at which the pupil will be staying.
- The details and contact information of the adult responsible for the pupil's care while they are staying at this address/these addresses and their relationship to the child.
- An evidenced return date confirming your intention to return within a reasonable time (travel documents such as flight tickets would be suitable). If you are unable to provide

an evidenced return date a reason for this must be provided along with any available evidence supporting this statement.

*It is the parent's responsibility to provide this evidence. The school are not responsible for finding this information and are not obliged to accept the evidence you provide if it is not believed to be sufficient.

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 ([click here for term dates](#)). 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.

If you experience unexpected delays in returning from a trip abroad or within the UK, 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. Medical Documentation should be in English. In certain circumstances, if a child remains abroad at the beginning of a school term and absence is extended, their school place may be at risk.

- 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 Notice. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established, they may be regarded as a 'Child Missing Education' and their place cannot be guaranteed.
- Except for leave taken in an emergency, retrospective approval cannot be given without an application having been made. Satisfactory evidence of an emergency will need to be provided.
- A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent in respect to each of their children, in line with the local authority Fines protocol [Ealing School Attendance Fixed Penalty Notice Protocol](#)

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. See [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) (Pg.56 National framework for penalty notices).

Punctuality - Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality

Good punctuality is a prerequisite to good learning and shows a respect between pupil, family, and school. Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality at the start of the school day. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child. If showing up late to school becomes a habit, children may develop the notion that lateness is acceptable behaviour. This belief can negatively impact their future work ethic and employment opportunities.

- Morning registration is at 8:45 a.m. You need to aim for your child to come through the school gate at 8.35 a.m., when they open. The gate closes at 8:45am and from that moment onwards your child is marked as 'late' and must arrive via the school office.
- All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information is discussed at regular meetings with the local authority

Attendance Officer and can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.

- Arrival after the close of registration, where there is not an acceptable reason, such as a medical appointment, will be marked as a missed session; unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance. The U code has the value of an unauthorised absence and could meet consideration for a penalty notice. When late arrivals are frequent or persistent, we will want to discuss this with you to assess what support or guidance you or your child may need. A referral may also be made to the Local Authority Attendance Service and or other external partners for additional support and monitoring.
- **Please remember that absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time and ready to learn.**

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than at the end of Nursery or Year 6) parents are asked to:

- Give the school comprehensive information about your plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, who your child will be living with, your child's new school and the start date when known and travel documents if the pupil is moving outside of the UK. This should be submitted to our school in writing. A Leaver's Form is available from the school office or on our school website, which you should complete. (A destination country or another named Local Authority without other details is not sufficient).
- For children leaving school with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will notify the Ealing SEND team. (Children with EHCP's in a special school, cannot be removed from roll without permission from the Ealing SEND team).
- When a child leaves and we do not have information about where they have gone/will be educated, then he/she 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 Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (formerly Social Services), the Police, benefits/council tax records and other agencies, to try to locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Withdrawals:

- Parents who remain resident locally can only withdraw their children from school if they have a confirmed start date at another school or are undertaking to educate the child at home (Elective Home Education). If the latter, this must be confirmed in writing to the school by the parent. Pupils remain registered at school until such conditions are satisfied. [Elective home education \(EHE\)](#)

Pupils with EHCPs

All pupils with an EHCP who are being withdrawn to be Home Educated, must have the approval of the Ealing SEND team.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure efficient and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils of statutory school age (Education Act 1996). This is the legal requirement. The Local Authority School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families and other partnership agencies to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or are given a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine).

Data and Monitoring:

Registers are taken for the AM and PM sessions.

The following codes are used to record pupil attendance.

ATTENDANCE and ABSENCE CODES (DfE, 2024) can be found here: [Department for Education Guidance 2024](#)

The Department for Education expects schools to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe. Further, to facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, all schools are also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority (DfE, 2024).

Legislation and Guidance

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Resources for families | Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

[School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendices

Attendance and Punctuality Thresholds

| | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| Green | 96-100 | Monitored by teacher and school office |
| Amber | 90-95 | Meeting with Senior Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer Referral to Ealing Attendance Service where appropriate Fixed Penalty Notice where appropriate |
| Red | Below 90 (Persistent Absentee) *Below 50% (Severely Absent) | Meeting with Senior Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer Referral to Ealing Attendance Service Fixed Penalty Notice Legal intervention Court action |

