

## **Attendance policy**

Regular school attendance is extremely important. Without it, the efforts of teachers and schools will come to nothing. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

### **Reporting Absences**

If a child is unfit for school, the parent/carer should contact the school on the first day, in person or by telephone. When the child returns, he or she must bring a written note signed by the parent/carer for each period of absence. Absences will not be authorised without a written explanation. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments that are unavoidably in school time, provided a written explanation is received.

If a child is absent without parental notification these are our actions.

1. A courtesy phone call will be made to speak to parent/guardian.
2. If we cannot make contact with the parent/guardian other contacts on our system will be called.
3. If 1 or 2 is unsuccessful 2 members of staff will call at the home address.
4. If 1,2 and 3 are unsuccessful the police will be called.

If a child does not want to attend school for any reason, it is important that parents/carers do not collude with the child by supplying a note stating sickness as a reason for absence. Parents/carers must discuss the problem with the school at the first opportunity and, if it cannot be resolved, a referral may be made to the Attendance and Behavioural Support Service.

### **What constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence?**

Authorised absences are those which the school agree are unavoidable, e.g. illness, family bereavement, etc. and absences for which leave has been given.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school considers unreasonable, e.g. minor ailments, truancy, excessive lateness, shopping, holidays in term time etc. An absence is unauthorised until an acceptable written explanation is received. If no acceptable explanation is received, in writing, within one month of the absence, the absence will remain unauthorised. It is for the school, not the parent/carer, to decide whether an absence should be recorded as authorised or unauthorised on receipt of a note. The submission of a note does not automatically register the absence as authorised.

Absence will be authorised during term time for children who are involved in sporting, musical or artistic activities providing their attendance is above 95% at the time of

application. If attendance is below 95% absence will not be authorised and in the case of drama or theatre productions, a Performing Licence will not be issued.

Coding for absences will be guided by borough and government guidance during the covid 19 pandemic.

## **Holidays**

Under new DFE legislation as from 1 September 2013, Headteachers **may not grant** any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Family holidays are not regarded as exceptional circumstances, therefore any absence taken for holidays will be subject to a fixed penalty notice. From

1 September 2013 fines will be as follows:

£60 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 21 days

£120 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 28 days

Please note that we will look for medical/documents for evidence if children are ill prior to or after a holiday, and if a child is not back in school due to a flight delay. These absences will be marked as unauthorised until evidence is produced. Evidence should be produced for the school within 7 school days. Parents/Carers should not ask the children to give a different reason for their absence in order to not report a holiday as this puts all parties in an unfair position

We have some new borough guidance for Autumn 2020 after COVID and in terms of travel and holidays.

*The decision to 'authorise' absence is at the head teacher's discretion, based on their assessment of individual circumstances and situations.*

*Circumstances vary from school to school and so there can be no absolute rules on this subject.*

*We have had communication with neighbouring Boroughs Education Welfare Teams and are all in agreement that a common sense approach is used.*

*The Fines for 'leave in term time' will remain in place and it is advised that schools look at each application on an individual basis when deciding if it meets 'exceptional circumstance'. Taking into account any evidence that can be provided that a holiday has had to be re arranged and that it could not have been re booked in non-term time.*

*We would encourage you to discuss any applications that you are considering to ‘Authorise’ with your named Local Authority Attendance Officer or alternatively, if are using your own attendance service provider, discuss with them but ultimately it is the Head teachers final decision.*

## **Appointments**

Appointments with the GP or dentist etc. that have to be made during school hours should be notified to the school in writing, in advance. The appointment card or a note is acceptable. Wherever possible, appointments should be made out of school time.

## **Notified Travelling**

When the parents of traveller children notify the school in advance that their child/ children will be absent from school for the reason of travelling, a pack of work will be set by the class teacher. The work set will be appropriate to the age and ability of the pupil and may consist of:

- Reading an appropriate text/book
- Commenting upon the reading through activities such as book reviews, story board retelling, and drawing of favourite character and explaining choice.
- Consolidation worksheets
- Learning tables and number facts. This may be through games or short practices.
- Work relevant to the topics being covered by the class particularly in humanities while the child is absent. (This will ensure a smoother return for the child)
- On-line work including My Maths and Bug Club.

The pack of work should, where possible, be given and explained to the parent with the child present particularly in the case of KS1 children or if necessary just to the child.

When the child/children returns to school, following the period of travelling, the work will be discussed with the teacher as a means to helping them settle back into school. Depending on the nature of the work set, (e.g. speech and language work), it may not be a requirement for the work to be returned to school.

The notification given by the parents, preferably via a letter, will be kept on file and in the appropriate section (Notified Travelling) of the ‘Absences’ folder.

Where notification has been given and work has been set the child is not considered to be absent from school but educated off site (code B).

The school will be following borough guidance of 200 sessions as a minimum requirement for families travelling to attend school. Travelling families will be aware of the advice and the school will monitor accordingly.

### **Punctuality**

Punctuality is just as important as regular attendance. Even if a child is only 10 or 15 minutes late each day they miss the very important introduction to that day's lessons. Should a child be unavoidably late and miss the register (08.50 for KS2 and 08.55 for KS1 and Reception) they must report directly to the school office where their attendance will be recorded on the register. Any child attending school between 8.50 and 9.05 (KS2) and 8.55 and 9.10 (KS1) will be recorded as L. Children arriving after 9.05 (KS2) and 9.10 (KS1) is recorded as an unauthorised absence. If the child attends later than 09.50 when the register has to close, they will be recorded as absent and a note will need to be supplied the following day.

For the Autumn term of 2020 there will be staggered start and registration times for all year groups. The school will keep a staff member on the school gates to admit children who are up to 10 minutes late and registers will be kept open for some time to allow for all families to get in to school.

### **Monitoring of attendance**

The school records and monitors pupil attendance. If there are any concerns with pupil attendance, the school contacts parents/carers to discuss the issues.

Absence checks are made a minimum of each half term by the Attendance and Behavioural Support Officer. Attendance falling below 90% will be investigated and parents will be notified that their child's absence has fallen below this level. Persistent absence through illness will be followed up by the Health Authority/Attendance and Behaviour Support Officer.

### **Informing Parents**

A summary of a child's attendance record is attached to the Annual Report. At the end of the year all parents receive a report about their child's progress. This report includes a record of their child's attendance throughout the whole year and also shows any unauthorised absences.

Where attendance has been disappointing the head teacher and/or class teacher will make comment on this fact and possibly highlight how it has affected the child's overall progress throughout the year.

If a child's attendance is shown to be giving us a cause for concern a letter will be written to the parents informing them of this. Often parents can be unaware that a few single days of absence can soon add up.

Similarly if a child is persistently late a letter will be written to parents informing them of this. Attendance records are passed onto Secondary school.

If a situation does not improve the Attendance and Behaviour Support team will be informed and will probably visit the child's home.

### **Attendance and Behaviour Support Service**

The Attendance and Behaviour Support Service support the school in enforcing school attendance. Each school is allocated an Attendance and Behaviour Support Officer who will liaise with them to ensure attendance meets targets set and will contact parent/carers where there is persistent absence.

### **The Law**

The law states that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that a child attends school regularly and on time. Neglect of this responsibility can result in the prosecution of parents/carers, the penalty for which can be up to a £1000 fine. It is not uncommon now for the parent/carer of a child with persistent absence, or unauthorised holidays, to be served with a penalty notice.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Deputy Head/Assistant Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring the attendance of children in the school and meets regularly with the Attendance and Behaviour Support Officer from the local authority, who inspects records of attendance and lateness.

SEPT 2020