



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

At school, on time, every day

September 2023

Introduction

In order for your child to achieve to the best of their ability, they must be at school, on time every day. There is a proven link between poor attendance and lower educational outcomes. Not only does poor attendance affect the children's education and future it makes it much more difficult for them to settle and make friends. Let's work together to make sure that the children have excellent attendance. It is every parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child comes to school except in very exceptional circumstances. This duty is both a legal and moral one. The school's and national expectation for attendance is 96% and above (less than 7 days per school year missed), children are expected to achieve this target annually.

The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at a school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law, under Section 7 of The Education Act. In the event of regular unauthorised absences, a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Educational Welfare Department. An offence is not, however, committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- The pupil was absent with agreement of the school
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any **unavoidable** cause – medical evidence may be required
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents/carers. The fact that a parent has offered a note (or phone call, or personal contact) in explanation does not in itself oblige the school to accept it as a valid reason for absence. **If, after investigation, doubt remains then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.**

Reporting Absences - Procedures

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence. We have an answerphone facility for reporting absences and a phone call must be made by 9.00am. If the Academy has not been notified of the absence by 9.00am then a text message or email will be sent requiring the parent/carer to call the school urgently. If, after this, the school does not receive a phone call then you will receive a phone call from us. An email or message passed on by another parent is not acceptable. **A home visit may be made if contact has not been made on the first day of the child's absence.**

For sickness and diarrhoea (more than one episode) children are required to remain absent from school for a period of time after the last bout of illness. If your child is well after 48 hours after the last bout they should return to school. If they just have one episode, please call the school for advice.

If a child feels unwell without a temperature, (for example they have a headache, cold, stomach-ache or sore throat) please inform the class teacher or school office. **The child should still attend school that day.** If they start to feel worse and inform a member of staff during the course of the day and we feel they are unwell please rest assured we will contact you immediately.

Medical evidence may be requested.

Lateness

It is important for children to arrive at school on time, as lateness is detrimental to their learning, welfare and the learning of others.

Reception, Key Stage One and Two

In Reception, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, school starts at 8.40 am and your child(ren) must be in class by 8.50 am. The school gates will be closed at this point. If your child arrives after 8.50 am they will be marked as late and will need to enter the school via the school office so their lateness can be recorded. Lateness is monitored closely and appropriate procedures will be put in place including referral to the Education Welfare Service for legal action.

Nursery

In nursery, the classroom door will open in the morning at 8.45am, children should arrive for then. The morning session finishes at 11.45am and children must be collected promptly. The afternoon session starts at 12.15pm and children should arrive for then. It ends at 3.15pm. please collect promptly. Children who attend all day should arrive at 8.45am and be collected at 3.15pm.

Children arriving after the register has been closed will be marked late. Figures of lateness will appear on your child's school reports. Arrivals after 9.30am will lose their attendance mark and will be recorded as unauthorised absences.

Lateness Actions:

- If your child has three recorded "lates" in a six week period you will be issued with a warning letter
- If there is no improvement in your child's punctuality then a meeting with the child's phase leader/principal will be arranged for you
- If there is any further lateness after the first two actions then your case may be referred to the Havering Education Welfare service who may issue you with a fixed penalty fine

Medical and dental appointments

Advance notice of medical/dental appointments must be given except in emergency situations, in writing and evidence will be asked for (appointment card). No more than half a day's absence should be required for most appointments and pupils should return to school straight after the appointment. **Please make every effort to have appointments in holidays and after school– this way the children's day will be less disrupted.**

It is not permitted that parents/carers come to school to collect children for appointments in the middle of the school day without prior notification.

Educational Welfare Service

Local Authorities are charged in law with enforcing school attendance and punctuality where pupils of compulsory school age are concerned. It is important that LAs are informed of attendance and punctuality problems. Educational Welfare Officers will be consulted where parents/carers are not fulfilling their legal and moral duties or schools are experiencing difficulty in determining whether absences are justified. Where applicable, fines will be applied for by the local authority.

Family Holidays

The Academy **cannot and will not authorise** any holiday during term time. If a holiday is still taken, this may result in a fine from the London Borough of Havering. If a student is absent prior to or does not return after a school holiday (half term, Christmas, Easter or Summer) the parent/carer will need to provide medical evidence to cover the absence where the Academy is informed that the absence is due to illness. Failure to provide this evidence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised and as such, this will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

A child who has 5 days off school for a family holiday will have an attendance percentage lower than national expectations if they have just two days off school due to illness at other points in the year. 96% is the minimum expectation for attendance which is equal to a child having 7 days off school for the academic year (September to July).

Rewards for Good Attendance

Our Academy rewards children with good attendance and we have a variety of rewards in place. Every member of the school community must work together to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality is achieved.

Monitoring Poor Attendance and Punctuality

Parent/Carers who do not follow our attendance policy and support the best educational outcomes for their children are not meeting their legal obligations or the educational needs of their children.

We have a range of processes in place to monitor poor attendance and punctuality. We also may conduct a home visit if we are concerned about the whereabouts or safety of a child.

Expectations for attendance and punctuality are the same for nursery as the rest of the school.

Trips and Visits

If a trip or visit is taking place for a child's class and a parent/carer has chosen not to send their child on the trip they are still expected to attend school as normal. If the child is absent on that day, medical evidence to show they were too unwell to attend school will be required in every case.

Support

If your family needs support with improving punctuality or attendance, please speak to your child's class teacher or phase leader to discuss this. We are always happy to help our families.