



Attendance & Punctuality

Reviewed: July 2016
Updated: January 2017

“Attendance Matters.....”

Regular school attendance is of vital importance. It shows a commitment to our school and provides your child with the routines expected in society. It gives children the opportunity to benefit from education and avoid being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviours. Cherry Lane’s expectations are for full attendance.

Good attendance is essential for children’s progress and achievement. Good punctuality shows respect for school rules, teachers and other children. Children who are continually late are missing an important part of the day including work setting and social interaction with their peers. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. Arrival after the closure of registration is an unauthorised absence in accordance with the government guidance.

Nursery provision is non-statutory but we encourage parents to develop good attendance and punctuality at this early stage as this instils the children with good habits. We have a reward scheme through the ‘Here Every Day’ project to encourage good attendance in the Nursery.

Attendance Expectations:

The DfE expect pupils to attend school at least 95% of the time. School and parents/carers are required to work together to ensure that all pupils reach this target. This policy sets out the roles, responsibilities and action that may be taken in order to achieve good attendance.

Why Attendance is so important:

Ensuring regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents/carers and permitting absences from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution. A child who is not in school is missing out on a part of his/her education and is being deprived of the learning that may provide access to future employment and opportunities.

We as a school will:

- Welcome children back from an absence and ensure their reintegration is as smooth as possible
- Send out regular attendance newsletters
- Ensure accurate registers are kept – these are legal documents.
Key Stage 1 8.50am and 1.10pm
Key Stage 2 8.45am and 1.30pm
Late pupils **MUST** register outside the Lower School Hall
- Provide CME (Children Missing Education) Audits each month to the Local Authority, this includes all absences.
- Maintain positive links with external agencies i.e. The Participation Team, Children’s Services.
- Promote rewards for good attendance and most improved attendance. **Special awards are made for Children with outstanding attendance.**
- Monitor and record absences and late arrivals. Identifying the reasons for the absence. Meet with Reception parents following the first term if the attendance is a cause for concern
- Use truancy call for first day followed by one to one calls
- Send letters for unexplained absences
- Initiate individual action plans for Persistent Absentees, any child whose attendance falls below **90%**

Parents Responsibilities:

- Ensure attendance and punctuality, unless your child is too ill, they should be in school.
- Ensure that their child/ren arrive at school at least 5 minutes before the start of the day.
- Notify school as soon as possible to explain the absence either in writing or by phone
- In the event of being unavoidably late, at either end of the day, please notify the school as soon as possible and report to Reception on arrival.
- **Provide up to date contact numbers and addresses. This is vital in case of emergencies otherwise the school may have to contact Children's Services**
- Help with school work, ensure the child has the correct equipment and know the routines.
- Be positive, problems do occur with work or other children. Reassure your child and come into school and talk to either the Class Teacher or Learning Mentors to discuss any worries

Understanding Absences

Of course there are going to be times when your child has to miss school through illness, bereavement or religious observances, in line with Local Authority guidance. You should contact the school on the first day of absence. It is only the school which can authorise an absence not the parent/carer. For children who have been identified as poor attendees, evidence for the absence will be required otherwise it will be unauthorised. Medical or dental appointments will only be authorised if an appointment card is produced but good practice would be to keep routine check-ups to outside school hours. A child will be expected to attend school before or after these appointments.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable for which no 'leave' has been given or the absence has been condoned by the parent unjustifiably. Late arrivals after the registers have been closed are marked as unauthorised for that session. Registers close at 9.00am. Continual unauthorised absences can lead to sanctions and or legal procedures.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable this lateness will be recorded in the registers which are regularly inspected by the Participation Officer. If a child has continual absences or lateness a meeting will be arranged between the Learning Mentor, a Parent Support Worker and the parents/carers to discuss the issues. see Appendix 1

Persistent Absence

Any child whose attendance falls below **90%** for **whatever reason** will be issued with an Individual Action Plan, which will offer support for the child and guidance for the parents/carers. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to your child's education and we need parents/carers fullest support to tackle the issues. Any absence will require evidence i.e. GP appointment card, prescription repeat form. The child will also be made known to the Participation Team who will arrange an Attendance Panel to discuss the reasons of absence and to offer support where necessary.

The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec.44.1 and 44.1a

'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent/carer is guilty of an offence.'

The Participation Team

The Participation Team are based at the LA and each school has a designated officer from this team. The team can offer support and information to parents and children. They are an independent team who will give impartial advice, if they are unable to resolve attendance issues they have the power to issue penalty notices or pursue prosecution through the courts. To contact them: telephone 01895 250858 or participationteam@hillindon.gov.uk alternatively we offer the support of our Learning Mentors or Mrs Alice Carroll, Pastoral Manager.

Monitoring

Cherry Lane uses Truancy Call, which sends automated messages to parents where no explanation for absence is given. Parents can then respond by messages that are retrieved throughout the day. It also ensures the well-being and safety of the child. Truancy sweeps are made, within Hillingdon, in partnership with the police and the Participation Team.

The attendance of each child is monitored by the Attendance Co-ordinator and School Welfare Officer, we particularly look for patterns i.e. Mondays or Fridays. If a child's attendance falls below 93% we start the monitoring process. If the attendance does not improve through this monitoring period we will ask the Participation Officer to intervene.

Parents of children with poor attendance will be invited to meet with the Participation Officer to discuss any issues but without improvement an Attendance Panel will be initiated led by the Participation Officer on behalf of the LA. The decision to issue a penalty notice or prosecute each parent/carer per child is taken by the Participation Team. Parents can be fined up to £2500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Magistrates can also impose Parenting Orders, which means the parents must attend parenting classes. (Ed. Act 1996 – Section 444 (i) and 444(1A, amendments 2013 reduce the timescales for penalty notices). Penalty notices of £60 may be issued as an alternative to prosecution these can rise to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice.

Nursery Attendance:

If there are concerns regarding the absence of a nursery pupil, the school will follow similar actions to mainstream school up to meeting with the Attendance Officer. The offer of a Family Support Worker and Nursery Manager can be offered. After this stage, if attendance remains at or below 90% (the persistent absence level), the Head Teacher can take the decision to remove the pupil from roll.

Exceptional Leave

DFE guidance states there is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We recognise that there may be very exceptional circumstances, which may result in a pupil being unable to attend school, such as a death in the family or hospitalisation and recovery. **All requests for exceptional circumstance leave must be put in writing to the Headteacher or Mrs Davie (Attendance Officer). This letter must contain the reason for the request and the dates of absence, including the return date. Headteachers determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.** Travel arrangements should not be confirmed before seeking permission from school, otherwise leave will not be authorised and details will be passed to the Participation Officer. Repeat requests/patterns will not be authorised. **Parents/Carers maybe asked to provide proof of original booking.** All exceptional leave will be logged on the student's record.

The Participation Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued per parent, per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid you will receive a summons to Uxbridge Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the Participation Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

If children are absent for more than a 20 day period the child can be removed from the school roll and referred to the Local Authority Participation Team.

Absence for religious observance

The school will follow local authority guidance regarding absence for religious observance. All requests for such absence must be made known to the school before the said observance.

Equal opportunities

All pupils irrespective of individual circumstances should have an equal opportunity to attend school regularly. Children regardless of age, race or gender should receive the same approach towards their reasons for absence.

Summary

- To raise attendance to at least the national level for primary children – 95%
- To give both children and parents/carers the opportunity to recognise the importance of education not just academically but the socialising skills.
- To give parents/carers the chance to discuss any issues regarding attendance or punctuality.

“Every Day Counts....”

Reviewed: January 2017

Cherry Lane Primary School



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Headteacher: Mr Stephen Whitehouse

Attendance & Punctuality Policy Update – January 2017

Late Desk

For safeguarding reasons, parents will have to say goodbye at the door and will no longer be allowed to enter the building. Should parents wish to have contact with their child's class teacher, an appointment can be made via the School Office or you may speak to the teacher at the end of the school day.

As a reminder, Reception–Year 4 register at the late desk in the main playground, Years 5 & 6 will need to register at the late desk in their building.

Both late desks will then close at 9.00am. Any children who are late after this time will need to report to the main reception area.

Persistent Lates

As from Monday, 9th January the registers will close at 9.00am.

If your child is regularly late, even by three minutes every day, this can add up to over seven and a half hours of **lost** learning time in one month. 15 minutes late each day is the same as missing two weeks of school.

Anyone arriving after 9.00am will be registered as an unauthorised absence. This can affect your percentage attendance and therefore you may fall below the Department for Education threshold for persistent absence.

This means that if a pupil's absence falls below 90% at any time within the school year, they will fall into the category of persistent absenteeism and the London Borough of Hillingdon Participation Team may become involved.

The Participation Team can issue Penalty Notices for **any** unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices can be issued per parent, per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid you will receive a summons to Uxbridge Magistrates Court. If unauthorised absences are repeated the Participation Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.