



Attendance Policy 2024-25

Agreed: November 2024
Review date: November 2025

Aims and Objectives

Regular attendance and punctuality are key priorities, at Parkhill Junior School. For our pupils to achieve a high performance standard of academic and social success, they need to attend school on a regular basis. We aim to inspire and nurture all our children to become aspirational lifelong high performance learners, through our inclusive, ambitious and melting curriculum. We work closely with our families in order that our policy is successful.

As a school we aim to:

- Create an ethos that makes our pupils want to attend school and attend regularly.
- Ensure all children are given the maximum potential to achieve by attending school regularly.
- Keep all children safe and healthy by monitoring attendance rates.
- Maintain an attendance rate of 97%* and above.
- Increase parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to improve attendance.
- Recognise the key role of all staff but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Research shows a direct link between high achievement and good attendance.
- High attenders make better progress, both socially and academically than pupils whose attendance falls lower than the national target. (95%).
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more enjoyable and satisfying.
- Regular attenders settle into Secondary School more easily.

In order to give every opportunity for our children to attend our school regularly, we consider the following:

Critical relationships

A strong sense of belonging is critical to the engagement, learning and attendance of our children. Children need to feel valued at school. Our relationships need to be purposefully fostered, between and among children, staff, families and communities. Our Pupil Voice groups, High Performance Learning approach, nurture groups, PSHE and Rights-Respecting ethos promote this.

School Ethos

A supportive and positive school climate is key for children, staff, families and communities. Our school aims to provide opportunities for shared decision-making, autonomy, support and valuing of learner and family identities and strengths.

High expectations are in place alongside supports to meet these. Families are welcomed in a range of ways that reflect the needs of communities. Bullying and harassment, including racist, homophobic and anti-indigenous abuse, are always fully addressed.

Responsibilities - Families of children at the school should

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn.
- Ensure that their children attend every day unless they are significantly unwell, there should be a symptom – feeling ‘unwell’ is not enough.
- Ensure that the school is notified if their child is absent or is about to be absent from school and give reasons for this. This should be done on the morning of the first day of absence, before 9:00am and every day thereafter.
- Make all non-emergency appointments out of school hours or during school holidays. Where this is not possible, evidence of the appointment should be shared with the school in advance of the appointment.
- Not take term time holidays.
- Absences of 5 consecutive days or more must be supported by medical evidence. However, where patterns of absence emerge, we will require medical evidence immediately.
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve issues that may lead to non- attendance.
- Ensure that the school has their current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, childminders and at least two emergency contact details.

The Role of the Class Teacher

- To create a learning environment that makes all pupils feel included, safe and motivated.
- To know which pupils, have poor attendance and to look for any trends in non-attendance.
- Registers are completed electronically by 9:00am.
- Monitor their class’ attendance and
- To warmly welcome all pupils each morning and explicitly welcome back pupils who have been absent.
- Ensure good communication between class teachers and the Admin Team, relaying messages when necessary.
- To liaise with families in the playground regarding absence and attendance and to share any updates/new information with the Admin Team.
- Include in each pupil’s annual report to his/her parents/carers information relating to the number of absences that the pupil has accrued during that school year. The school may also comment on levels of authorised absence where these are considered to be a cause for concern.
- To discuss the impact of low attendance on learning and social interaction with families at consultation meetings where appropriate.
- Reward good and improving attendance – see below.

The Role of all School Staff

- Listen and respond to our families and pupils on matters relating to reasons for non-attendance.
- Make every effort to maximise attendance rates.

- Support parents in ensuring regular and punctual attendance of pupils and respond to any issue that may lead to non-attendance.
- Be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed.
- Make it clear to parents that it is the school – not the parent – that authorises an absence.
- Consider attendance and punctuality from a whole school perspective. The link between attendance and achievement will be monitored.
- Publish information relating to levels of absence, both authorised and unauthorised.

The Role of the EWO. (Education Welfare Officer)

As Local Authorities have adopted a traded services model, we have employed the Education Welfare Advisory & Support Service (EWASS) to provide our education welfare services. They are registered with the Independent Commissioners Office - no. ZA074629 and each office has had a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

The EWO's role is:

- To write to a parent/carer after the school has attempted contact and no improvement is shown.
- To implement an attendance contract between the parent, school and themselves where attendance is a concern. This will also specify any support offered.
- Letters to families will be sent as and when a threshold is triggered and they may be contacted more frequently at any time if their child's attendance falls, particularly where there is no justifiable reason.
- Proforma letters are sent to families whose child has had an unauthorised absence or persistent lateness.
- Letters will also be sent to families in recognition of improved attendance.
- Record and monitor lateness in liaison with the Admin Team.
- All significant absences are followed up by either the Attendance Officer or the Education Welfare Officer either by letter or visit.
- Complete any attendance data required by the Local Authority/Education Welfare Officer.

The role of the Head Teacher

- To ensure the ethos of the school contributes to children feeling connected to school, safe within school, valued and successful.
- Inform families at school induction meetings of the importance of regular punctual attendance.
- Inform families in the school prospectus and through parent newsletters of the need to attend regularly and of the requirement to contact the school by letter in the case of previously known absences and by emailing/telephoning by 9:00am before the start of school for other absences.
- Ensure that school procedures follow Government guidelines and local authority policies.
- Reward and promote the importance of good attendance with certificates additional playtime and super plays.
- Appoint a senior Attendance Lead who will monitor attendance regularly in the school. (2024-25 – the DHT, Ms Gurjeet Uppal)

The role of the Governing Body

- Governors have a valuable role to play in establishing the importance of attendance at school. They help school to focus upon the need for a clear policy on attendance and ensure that trends and patterns are closely monitored.
- Governors should support the initiatives, which are taken by a school to promote good attendance by monitoring the relative success of such measures.

The school will also:

- Reward good and improving attendance so pupils are motivated.
- Follow up unexplained absences by phone call, email, text message and letters as necessary no later than 10.00am.
- Telephone all listed contacts on a pupil's records if the number one contact is unobtainable.
- If a satisfactory reason cannot be obtained for a 'walk to school' child by 11:00am, the school will notify the police.
- Remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality via newsletters and the school website.
- Publish each child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report.
- Inform parents if we have concerns regarding their child's attendance and punctuality. Children with 90% attendance or less, whatever the reason for the absence, are classified as persistent absentees – see Appendix 4.

When attendance becomes a concern, the school will:

- In the first instance we will send 'Amber Warning Attendance Letters' via email to all pupils whose attendance drops below 95%. We will offer to support to the family and the child.
- If attendance does not improve and continues to fall we will send, via email, 'Red Warning Attendance Letters.'
- If the attendance does not improve and falls below 90%, then we will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer to highlight the child's attendance concerns and to involve other agencies to support in improving the attendance of the pupil.

Appendix 1

Rewards & Incentives for Punctuality, Regular Attendance and Improving Attendance:

1. Weekly recognition - during assembly, all those classes who have good attendance have their attendance percentage read out in reverse order until the weekly attendance winners are arrived at. Any class achieving 100% is awarded with a 100% certificate, a special 100% poster is displayed in main Reception area.
2. Termly recognition - children who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality will be awarded with a certificate. The class with the highest percentage will also receive recognition through a 'golden time' treat. (adult led activity)
3. End of Year recognition - children who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality for the whole year will be awarded with a certificate. Children who achieve 98% attendance and punctuality for the whole year will also be awarded with a certificate The class with the highest percentage will also receive recognition and a *Superplay* session.
4. Pupils whose attendance improves over time will be acknowledged. Parents may receive a letter which congratulates them on improved attendance.
5. Classes with the highest attendance each term, will line up first for lunch for a week.
6. During weekly assemblies, the Headteacher will present certificates that acknowledge excellent class attendance and punctuality.

Appendix 2

Absence Procedures Authorised Absence

Absence will be treated as authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with authorised leave. (defined as ‘leave granted by the Head of School’)
- The pupil is ill and has symptoms (medical evidence required for 4 days or more or for frequent periods of absence) or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause. • The pupil is attending an emergency medical/dental appointment that cannot be arranged outside school hours. (where evidence has been received)
- The absence occurs on a day set aside for religious observance; if extended days are taken these will be unauthorised and liaison may be necessary with faith leaders of the Redbridge faith forum.
- The pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school and evidence has been provided.
- The pupil is participating in an approved public performance or sporting activity which are not deemed detrimental to the child’s education.
- The pupil has been temporarily suspended from school.

The School does not grant leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday. This will be considered an unauthorised absence.

Absence will be treated as unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is absent for an unexceptional special occasion.
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday.
- Where continued patterns of absence are evident and no medical evidence has been received.
- The child is absent due to an optician or non urgent dental appointment.

Appendix 3

The Policy on Leave:

‘Leave’ in relation to a school means leave granted by any person authorised to do so (the Head of School or the Trust). The Head of School will only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance by completing a Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time form and where s/he is satisfied that there are exceptional or special circumstances to justify the request. Requests will not be granted for the purposes of a holiday.

Leave of absence will be granted sparingly if there are special considerations and will not normally be granted for more than 3 days per school year for any pupil (as advised in the Redbridge attendance strategy).

Exceptional Circumstances and Special Considerations for Leave:

The Head Teacher cannot forego their discretionary powers; however, the following will be considered for leave:

- The death of a close family member.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence up to a maximum of 3 days.
 - Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the L.A. The EWS will advise schools on individual circumstances.
- Time off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, which is subject to a licence being issued by EWS.
- Religious observance subject to a maximum number of 3 days in any one academic year. Pilgrimages (for example, Lourdes, Mecca, Rome or Jerusalem) are not religious observance that require absence during school term time.

Specific Circumstances not Included on the List:

- Illness of a relative - leave will not be granted for the illness of a relative as authorised absence unless the Head of School is convinced that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Prison visits - most prison visits can be achieved during weekends and holidays, but there may be exceptions when for example a parent is held in a prison a long way from home and when a head believes there is a justification to grant a day’s leave.
- Weddings of parents and siblings- If the Head Teacher is convinced that there is a persuasive reason as to why a wedding cannot be held out of school time one day’s leave will be granted.

Where the Head is exercising discretion for the most exceptional of circumstances, a maximum number of 3 days is permitted.

Appendix 4

Sanctions for an Unauthorised Leave of Absence:

A Penalty Notice may be issued for unauthorised leave of holiday absence. It will be issued by the London Borough of Redbridge following discussions with the Head of School in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Practice. If issued, this will incur a fine of £80.00 per child per parent being imposed, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £160.00 per child per parent if paid after 28 days. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice. In cases where unauthorised leave of absence exceeds 20 days or more but where there has been contact with the family, the school will advise the Education Welfare Service (EWS) immediately in order that steps can be implemented. (The EWS will have a checklist of requirements before a pupil can be removed from the school roll.) This may happen after extended leave of absence.

In cases where unauthorised leave amounts to 5 school days and there has been no contact with the family, the school will complete a *Children Missing Education* form and submit it to the pupil's home local authority.

Child Missing from Education:

Failure for parents/carers to contact the school where a child is missing education will result in a referral to the Local Authority for investigation.

Persistent Absence:

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a Persistent Absentee. Persistent absence is a serious 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. Persistent absence is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent to improve matters. In some cases, parents might be invited to agree a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract/Attendance improvement plan with the school as a way of managing improvement.

Appendix 5

Punctuality:

We insist on good punctuality at school as we want to support the development of good timekeeping habits. Persistent lateness does not constitute full school attendance (Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996). The school day begins at 8:55 am and pupils are required to be in school by then. At the moment each year group has an allocated start time which child should arrive by, the registers close 30 minutes after this time, these pupils will be marked as being 'late' and those arriving after the 31st minute will receive an unauthorised absence for the morning session. All pupils arriving late have to sign in.

A penalty notice for persistent lateness can be requested by the Head Teacher. Both School and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) monitor punctuality. The EWO may undertake a 'late gate' with the agreement of the Head Teacher.

Punctuality will be monitored by School and the EWO. Meetings will be arranged with families, as and when necessary, if lateness is an issue. A penalty notice for persistent lateness can be requested by the Head Teacher. The EWO may undertake a 'late gate' with agreement of the Head Teacher.

Exceptional Circumstances and Special Consideration for Late Arrivals:

(1) Adverse weather and/or travel conditions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, September 2024, and all the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Late collection at the end of the day:

Families must avoid this at all costs, as it negatively impacts the child. Regular late collection may result in a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss preventative strategies. Further late collections could result in a penalty notice being issued.

Appendix 6

Education Act 1996, Section 444 as amended by Section 82 and 109 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 444 Offence:

Failure to secure regular school attendance of registered pupil.

- (1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence.
 - (1a) If in the circumstance mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause the child to do so, he/she is guilty of an offence.
 - (1b) It is a defence for the person charged with an offence under subsection (1a) to prove that there was a reasonable justification for their failure to cause the child to attend regularly at school

- (2) Subsections (2a) to (6) below apply in proceedings for an offence under this section in respect of a child who is not a boarder at the school at which they are a registered pupil. (2a) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of the absence from the school at any time if the parent/carer proves that at that time the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause.

- (3) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of their absence from the school
 - (a) with leave, or
 - (b) any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents belongs.

Appendix 7

The role of the Education Welfare Officer:

The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to enforce regular attendance of registered pupils at school, which is carried out by the EWASS, working with schools. Data on attendance is collected termly by the Research and Data Team and it is the responsibility of the EWO to audit pupils who fall below target levels. The work of the education welfare service can be broadly divided into three categories:

Strategic Policy:

- Analysing borough wide data and identifying trends and areas of action and need.
- Developing policy initiatives and ensuring co-ordination and consistency across the borough.
- Liaising with DfE and other external bodies to ensure that government initiatives and best practice exemplars are communicated to schools.
- Developing a strategic role that encourages a consistent approach between nursery, primary and secondary levels.

School Action:

- Working closely with schools to analyse school level data and trends.
- Devising action plans with Heads to meet the specific needs of individual schools by, for example contributing to school assemblies, attending parents' evenings and undertaking late gates.
- Monitoring action taken by schools to improve attendance and reviewing school targets at half termly intervals.
- Ensuring effective and regular liaison between the EWO, school management teams and other key agencies or organisations.

Direct Intervention with Pupils and /or Parents and Carers:

Providing direct intervention with pupils who fall below target levels of attendance and devising strategies to improve their attendance in partnership with schools.

Ensuring that borough and school policies on attendance are implemented appropriately in each individual case including the use of legal action against parents where they are failing to fulfil their child's regular school attendance.

Working closely with schools at transition stages to ensure that identified vulnerable children are provided with all possible support to reduce the likelihood of increased non- attendance, where necessary working and liaising with partner agencies.



Appendix 8

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Pupils attend school for a maximum 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. The school regards absences as a very serious concern and there is an overwhelming connection between those students who are frequently absent and those who go on to underachieve in examinations. The school will only grant leave in term time in the most exceptional circumstances. Leave taken without permission of the Head of School/Executive Head Teacher will be recorded as unauthorised, and you may be liable to a Penalty Notice resulting in a £120 fine per parent per child. (£60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days). The fines will be issued by Redbridge Education Welfare Service. Extended leave may result in your child being removed from the school roll.

Pupil's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Class: _____

Name of Parent/Carer: _____

Address: _____ PostCode: _____

Daytime Phone Number: _____ Emergency Contact Mobile number: _____

Reason for absence: _____

Date Requested: _____

Date of Absence from _____ to _____ Inclusive

Please provide copy of flight tickets if applicable

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ABOVE INFORMATION

Parent /Carer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

To be completed by School

Copies of Travel arrangements seen: Yes / No

Leave: Authorised / Unauthorised

Head Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

PN to be issued: Yes / No Child to be removed from school roll: Yes / No

Copies given to parents: in person posted child's book bag Date: _____