



Attendance and Late Policy

Good attendance and punctuality is essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life.

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GOOD ATTENDANCE IS ESSENTIAL IF CHILDREN ARE TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF SCHOOL AND GAIN THE APPROPRIATE SKILLS, WHICH WILL EQUIP THEM FOR LIFE. THEREFORE NO LEAVE WILL BE AUTHORISED BY THE HEAD TEACHER UNLESS IT IS FOR AN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy in which children, staff, parents and the (Harrow LA) Education Welfare Service through the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) can work in partnership. As a parent, you have a legal responsibility to make sure your child gets a full-time education between the ages of five and 16. All staff at Harrow Primary also encourage punctuality and good attendance.

Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such with awards, praise and certificates.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply. In the case of absence, exceptional circumstances, which can be authorized by the Headteacher are deemed to be ones relating to e.g. serious illness, bereavement or a close family member's hospitalization. Documentary evidence may be requested for such instances e.g. medical note. In each instance, an appointment to meet the Headteacher and discuss the absence or potential absence is necessary for exceptional leave to be sanctioned.

a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance; they are reminded of this duty at the outset at the student registration stage.

b) Prior to the engagement of the EWO, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

Further details regarding roles and responsibilities is identified in the appendix to this policy.

PRINCIPLES

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

All children should be in the school at 8.50 a.m. each day. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances.

- Morning registration ends at 8.55 a.m.
- If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she must report to the school office and will be marked as 'Late'.
- Arrival after 9.00am is recorded as an unauthorised late mark.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY - THE LAW AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the school is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept.

All staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance.

Specific responsibilities for attendance matters are identified in the appendix. The Headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Attendance Administration staff and the Family Liaison Officer.

Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.

Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed half-termly and any immediate causes for concern are discussed at weekly staff meetings. It is reported at parent meetings and in school reports.

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

The Headteacher, **not parents**, authorises absence.

Absence known to be for the following reasons could be authorised but this is not automatic, every case is reviewed individually:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours
- Exceptional circumstances such as care needs, or similar

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent, both parents, and a carer with whom the child resides. Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly via many means including school assemblies, regular communication/letters and, school reports. Punctuality is also stressed as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole. Attendance is discussed with each parent at consultation evenings, with the current percentage attendance being reported.

REASONS FOR ABSENCES:

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school **before 9.00am** on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child. This will normally be done on the first day of un-notified absence.

PARENTS

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctors/dentist/hospital is required.
- c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- d) If your child is absent due to vomiting then they should not return to school for **the next 24 hours** after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- e) For every instance of absence the school requires a written, signed explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced. Failure to provide a written note will result in the absence being deemed 'unauthorised'.
- f) Medical certificates are required for absence greater than five days.

FAMILY HOLIDAYS/ ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. **Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time.** Parents do not have the right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and such instances will be treated as contravening the schools policies in relation to attendance. These will be marked as unauthorized absence.

DEFINITIONS

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation has been given.

Unauthorised absences include:

- * holidays taken during term time
- * going shopping
- * birthdays
- * truancy
- * absences which have never been properly explained
- * children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

ANY UNAUTHORISED LEAVE MAY BE REFERRED TO THE HARROW LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER (EWO) AND MAY RESULT IN A FIXED PENALTY NOTICE (FPN) BEING ISSUED OR COURT PROCEEDINGS MAY BE USED TO PROSECUTE PARENTS.

LATENESS

A member of staff is on duty from 8.40am. ***The bell rings at 8.50am to indicate the official start of the day. School ends at 3.30pm.***

LATE FINE

The school will issue a late collection fine of £5.00 for children collected after 3:40pm and £5.00 for every 10 minutes thereafter. For safety reasons any child who is collected after 3.30pm will require an adult to collect them from the school office.

- Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present and on time.
- Arriving more than ten minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence.
- Children who are late often will also be given a break-time detention. Parents will be notified if there is a recurring pattern of lateness which requires redress.
- Children who are persistently late will be referred to the EWO and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child may arrive late for a period of time because of transport difficulties or because of prolonged illness. The school would adopt a flexible approach in these instances and work with the child and parents to help in any way possible.

REWARDS

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

Certificates are awarded at the end of each term for 100% attendance. This is celebrated in the final end-of-year whole school assembly.

INDIVIDUAL INCENTIVES

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognize the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.

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