



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Updated: Sept 2023

Signed: SJ

Review Date: Sept 2024

London Colney Primary & Nursery School is committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning.

Whole School Target setting

- This school sets targets in accordance with current regulations. The annual target set is a percentage of the total possible sessions in the school year. This is currently set at 96%
- The school places a great deal of importance on good attendance and punctuality and rewards pupils appropriately.
- The whole school works towards reaching targets set and is expected to continue to improve.

Legal Framework

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

This information is based on:-

- ❖ *This Education Act 1996*
- ❖ *The Children's Act 1989*
- ❖ *Children and Young Persons Act 1933*
- ❖ *The Education (Pupil's Attendance Records) Regulations 1997*
- ❖ *The Education (Pupil's Registration – Amendment) Regulations 1997*
- ❖ *Social Inclusion Pupil Support – DfES circulars 10/99 and 11/99*

Copies of all above documents are available from the Education Welfare Service.

- ❖ *If a parent fails to register a child of compulsory school age at a school and does not intend to educate the child otherwise than at school, the LEA will serve the parent with an Attendance Order under Sections 437-439 of the Education Act 1996.*
- ❖ *If a pupil who is registered at a school fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason, and attempts by the EWS and school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the EWS will, unless there is statutory defence, take legal action against the parents before the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or by applying for an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children's Act 1989.*
- ❖ *If, after taking legal action, the child still fails to attend school regularly, the EWS will keep the case open and will, if deemed appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.*
- ❖ *In cases where the parents withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the EWS will promptly begin legal proceedings on the grounds that no other course of action is available.*

Responsibilities & Expectations

- Parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school.

- School will ensure records of attendance are maintained accurately and consistently on a daily basis in accordance with government legislation and guidance.
- Records will be kept for a minimum of 3 years
- Schools can no longer grant leave of absence, except if the Headteacher is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances, for short periods (see section 'Leave of Absence').
- Only the Headteacher can authorise absence.
- The school will provide a safe learning environment and maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- The school will provide attendance details on the child's annual report.
- The school will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- Details of poor attendance/punctuality will be reported to subsequent schools.
- Absences from school affect the whole school community, not just the child concerned.
- Parents/carers are expected to ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents/carers must inform the school on the 1st day of absence and give a reason for their child's absence. Parents/carers will also maintain daily contact with the school until child returns to school.
- Parents/carers are expected to inform relatives and friends of the school attendance policy so that no holidays are to be arranged during term time as the absences will be unauthorised in most circumstances.

If a Child is Absent

The school will:

- Record notification of absence by telephone.
- If notification is not received, telephone parents/carers by 10.30am on the first day of absence and record the outcome of the call.
- Maintain regular contact with parents/carers throughout the child's absence.
- Keep written notification from parents/carers on file.
- Inform parents/carers in writing if a child's attendance falls below 90%.
- Write/telephone to parents/carers requesting a reason for absence if it has not been provided.
- Record any absences as authorised or unauthorised according to current 'Department for Education' guidelines.

Staff Responsible for Attendance Matters

- Sarah Joyce (Headteacher)
- Luke Varney (Deputy Headteacher)
- Louise Dembowicz (SENCO)
- Admin assistant
- All class teachers
- Governing Body

Supporting Attendance Matters

- Attendance Improvement Officer

Records

- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately.
- When attendance falls below 96%, parents/carers will be contacted by telephone to discuss the issue. When it falls below 90%, parents/carers will be informed in writing and may be invited to a meeting. The pupil will be made known to the AIO and records will be kept in the child's file.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil is classed as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages any child's educational potential and we will try to work with parents/carers to improve attendance rates quickly. Persistent Absentees are monitored carefully through our pastoral system and this is combined with academic support where absence adversely affects attainment. All persistent absentees are automatically made known to the Attendance Improvement Officer. Please also refer to the Fixed Penalty Notice information.

Lateness

- The main gate is locked at 9.00am and **all** pupils who arrive after the gate is closed should report to the office **before** going to their class.
- Registration closes at 9.10am. Children who are late **BEFORE** 9.25am (i.e. between 9.10am and 9.25am) will be marked as an authorised late and the number of minutes late recorded. Children who are late **AFTER** 9.25am will be marked with an unauthorised late.
- Afternoon sessions begin at 1:15pm when the register is taken again.
- It is important that children are safe and therefore accounted for at all times during the day. Because of this, any unexplained absence is monitored very carefully.
- Parents/carers are expected to escort their child into school and report the reason for lateness with the school office.

Absence due to illness

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school and the school will always follow this up. Absences are authorised by the Headteacher only. In most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register
- The school operates a '1st day response' policy. This means that if we have not been notified by 10:30am to tell us why a child is not coming to school that day we will contact his/her parents/carers.
- Parents/carers must give specific reasons for absence – being 'ill' is not enough.

- Unless parents/carers have been given a particular time of absence through illness by a doctor they are expected to contact the school each day to let us know what is happening. The details of telephone calls are recorded and monitored.
- Registers are monitored on a regular basis by our Attendance Improvement Officer to look at patterns of absence, identify individuals or groups absences, attendance of siblings, etc. They may ask to see parents/carers if attendance is not satisfactory.
- If a child is persistently absent due to illness then medical evidence may be requested. Without this evidence being supplied then the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Absence due to Medical Appointments

- If a medical appointment is known in advance parents/carers must notify the school in writing or verbally. If an emergency appointment is made please phone the school before 9am.
- Notification must be given if a child needs to leave school during the day. The relevant book must be signed at the office and again on return.

Leave of Absence

- The school actively discourages parents/carers from taking children out of school during term time because children's attitude is often affected and children miss work that cannot otherwise be covered.
- Leave of absence is rarely given, only under very exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday etc.
- Requests for leave of absence: permission may only be given in exceptional circumstances and must be made at least 2 weeks in advance by meeting with the Headteacher. We advise that no travel arrangements should be made until permission has been given.
- Under no circumstances will permission be given for a leave of absence in the 2 weeks before or during Key Stage 2 SATs in May.
- Children will not be given work to do during a holiday.
- Parents/carers are expected to contact school if they cannot get back from a leave of absence on time and give a reason for the delay.
- If permission is refused for leave of absence a letter will be sent giving the reasons and the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- A child can be removed from the school's registers if they fail to return from an extended family leave of absence on the agreed date, after both school and LA have tried to locate the pupil(s) or if there are 20 days continuous unauthorised absences and both the local authority and school have failed to locate pupil.
- The school operates the Fixed Penalty Notice Policy. Please refer to this information.

Monitoring Attendance

- Registration details are transferred to an electronic database, which is the legal document.

- Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school (more than 5 late sessions in a half term) will be contacted in writing to request an improvement in punctuality.
- The school will follow up persistent lateness, all absences and pupils with low levels of attendance.
- The school will monitor attendance on a weekly basis.
- Each month, registers will be monitored and parents/carers of pupils with less than 96% attendance will be notified verbally.
- Letters are sent home termly to parents who have children with attendance under 90% to explain their attendance will be monitored closely for a month.
- If a pupil's attendance still remains a concern (under 95%) a further letter will be posted to

parents advising them of their child's attendance percentage, explaining that any further absence will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is produced, and that our Attendance Officer may be informed. Parents/Carers will be invited to meet with the Attendance Officer to discuss any family/medical issues and strategies to improve attendance.

- If a pupil's attendance remains a concern (under 85%) during a third analysis, and attendance is still a concern, another letter is sent to parents stating that a referral will be made to Attendance Officer who will contact them directly.
- All absences supported by medical evidence such as Doctor's note, prescription, medicine bottle will be authorised.

Fixed Penalty Notices

London Colney Primary and Nursery School operates the Fixed Penalty Notice system as follows:

- A child is given an authorised mark if they fail to give a satisfactory explanation as to why they were absent from school.
- If a child's attendance record reveals 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences then they are likely to be issued with a Fixed Penalty warning letter.
- If this continues and a child's attendance record reveals 21 sessions (10½ days) for unauthorised absences then they are likely to receive a Fixed Penalty Breach letter.
- If this still continues following the Fixed Penalty Breach letter then the school can apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice fine and this could result in the parents/carers either being fined or possibly prosecuted. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 21 days; or £120 if they pay within 28 days.
- If a child is persistently absent due to illness then medical evidence may be requested. Without this evidence being supplied then the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) formally Education Welfare Officer

- The AIO is employed by Hertfordshire Local Authority department for Children Services (CS).
- An AIO is allocated to every school to monitor attendance and support improvement where necessary.
- The AIO monitors the school's attendance registers and records every term.
- The AIO aims to work collaboratively with the school and parents/carers to improve pupil attendance.
- The AIO has a statutory responsibility and can initiate legal action such as Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court if a parent fails to ensure their child attends school without a legitimate reason.
- Parents/carers may also contact the AIO for impartial advice or information on 0300 123 4043

Children Not Collected at the end of the School Day

- It is important that children are collected promptly at 3.20pm as teachers regularly have meetings to attend after school and cannot supervise children who have not been collected. It can also be distressing for children when they are not collected on time.
- Parents should call the school in advance if they know they are going to be late and inform the school what time they will be arriving to collect their child.
- If the school has not been contacted by 3.45pm, a member of staff will contact the parent on the emergency contact numbers. Details of the conversation will be recorded. If the parent has not responded to the school's call and one hour has elapsed since the end of the school day, the school will make a referral to Children Services. This contact will alert the Service that a child may need to be accommodated to await collection by their parent.
- The school keeps records of children collected late. If parents persistently collect their children late from school, we will send a letter to them explaining our concerns and copy it to Children Services and Police Youth and Community Section.
- We hope that parents will work with us to ensure that ALL children are collected on time at 3.20pm.

Exceptional Circumstances

- The school will actively seek to work with parents/carers where there is a genuine difficulty with attendance.
- Support strategies will be put in place for individual pupils where appropriate, which should be agreed with parents.
- When a child has an illness that requires absence from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- If a pupil is absent due to a medical diagnosis that is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, and medical evidence is given, then the school will refer to the Education Support Team for Medical Absence to request

support for the child with additional tuition and to support a reintegration into school.

Monitoring & Review

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years or earlier if deemed necessary.

Rewards for Good Attendance

At London Colney Primary and Nursery School we have clear strategies and rewards to promote

and celebrate good attendance:

- We encourage open communication with parents through every day contact telephone calls and letters. We encourage parents to meet with us to enable us to clearly understand and support their concerns about family/health issues, which may affect their child's attendance.
- We meet with parents of new pupils to discuss our attendance policies and ensure they can access a copy of this policy
- We target the Early Years and Reception pupils. At home visits and open evenings we discuss and emphasise the importance of good attendance and hand out leaflets to this effect.
- A child with 100% over a week will receive a raffle ticket to be entered into a termly draw. Once a term, a raffle ticket is drawn and a child will win an Ipod.
- Annual certificates are awarded to pupils for 100% attendance at the end of Autumn, Spring and Summer Term.
- A weekly trophy will be awarded to the class with the best attendance and this will be celebrated each week in the newsletter to parents/carers.
- A child with 100% attendance for the entire year will be awarded a place at the 'Headteacher's Afternoon tea' at the end of the Summer Term.