




## Attendance and Absence Policy

Governing Board with Responsibility	Full Governing Board	
Reviewed/Revised	Spring 2022	
Date of Next Review	Spring 2024	
Agreed by Governors	16.03.2022	
Additional Notes	This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or before if requested by the Headteacher or the governing board.	

### Vision statement

**‘Belonging, learning and growth for life in all its fullness’**

### Mission Statement

At Princess Frederica we:

**Promote social, emotional, spiritual and educational growth in *all* our children**  
*(This is how we develop character)*

**Impart the gifts of self-confidence, determination and curiosity with a rich and creative curriculum**

*(This is the way we educate)*

**Create a positive impact on our local and global community and environment**

*(This is our footprint on the world and community)*

**Nurture friendship, kindness and respect**

*(This is how we treat each other)*

### RATIONALE

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential components of a child's education. Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's attainment in school, relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships, confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others. In order to make the most of the learning opportunities provided within school, children need to have the continuity of provision which consistent attendance allows.



This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children's Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from Brent Local Authority.

### AIMS

- To ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality
- To achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with serious health issues
- To ensure that routines are in place for monitoring attendance and for early identification of any difficulties
- To respect and appreciate that variation in lifestyle and religious background may place different demands upon children and their families
- For all school staff to promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- For all school staff to take an active role in promoting the importance of good attendance and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The following includes information on the responsibilities that individuals in the school community have to ensure that attendance and punctuality meets the aims of this policy.

#### **Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Impressing upon their children the importance of attending school regularly
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to poor attendance
- Ensuring they are aware of the attendance policy of the school
- Notifying the school regarding absence, preferably on the first day of absence. The explanation of this absence should be confirmed in writing when the child returns
- Where possible arranging dental and medical appointments outside school hours
- Ensuring that holidays are not taken during term time

What this means in practical terms is:

- Bringing their children to school every day and on time (between 8.30am and 8.50am).
- Children need to be lined up on the playground when the bell is rung at 8.50am
- Children who arrive at school after the registers are open (at 9.00am) will be deemed to be late as follows:
  - If they arrive between 9.00am and 9.15am, they will be deemed to be late while the register is still 'open'. This will be recorded as an authorised late
  - If they arrive after 9.15am when the register is 'closed', this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence
- Notifying the school office or the Welfare Officer of absences by 9.15am on the first and all subsequent mornings of absence
- Following up absences with a letter if requested by the school, and providing medical certificates where required



- Parents/carers need to contact class teacher to discuss concerns about children not wanting to be in school (eg. because of bullying, special educational needs, worries about school work or any other reasons) so that the class teacher and other staff can work with the pupil and parents to address this.

### **Requests for Absence**

- Parents/carers need to be aware that requests for leave of absence from school will be authorised in exceptional circumstances only. Exceptional circumstances are 'once in a lifetime experiences' such as celebrating the 100th birthday of a great grandmother or great grandfather, the wedding of the pupil's parents.
- Absences due to medical appointments, school entrance exams and music exams will be authorised
- Parents/carers need to be aware that time off for religious observance will be granted on an authorised basis for the day(s) of the religious ceremony only. Time taken outside of the religious day(s), whether in the UK or abroad, will be unauthorised.
- All other absences will be treated as unauthorised.
- The Headteacher or Head of school are responsible for authorising or not authorising Absence Request forms

Please refer to Appendix A for the Authorised Absence Request form. This outlines the legal requirements for parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed beforehand, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Authorised Absence Request forms must be completed and authorised before the leave is taken.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service (EWS), who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

## **STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall preparation and implementation of the attendance and punctuality policy
- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Promotion of attendance at all times
- Informing the Governing Board of attendance data and how the school is addressing issues
- Authorising or not authorising all absence requests

### **The Deputy Head**

- Acting as a point of contact for teaching and non-teaching staff where concerns need to be raised or advice sought
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- Reporting frequently to the Headteacher about attendance or punctuality concerns



- Generating warning letters to parents
- Making referrals to Local Authority Education Welfare Service (EWS) after consultation with the Headteacher
- Ensuring that the attendance and punctuality policy is followed and that the actions from EWS meetings are carried out
- Liaising and discussing with parents issues relating to attendance
- Making contact with the EWS when absence and/ or punctuality needs arise
- In consultation with the Headteacher, notifying the EWS of the need for a Fixed Penalty Notice and providing support with prosecution
- Feedback and discussions with the class teachers over individual cases
- Ensuring procedures for class and individual rewards for good attendance are followed
- Authorising or not authorising all absence requests

### **The Welfare Officer**

The Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- Following up absences with immediate requests (ie. on the first day) for explanations about any unexplained absences. (This will include subsequent daily phone calls home when the pupils are absent due to sickness and the parents have not contacted the school)
- Following up specific requests from the Headteacher and Deputy Head for information about individuals
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence
- Monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised including information about attendance trends and class percentages when requested
- Ensuring registers are accurate
- Collating attendance percentages
- Processing and following up leave of absence forms in conjunction with the office
- Monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence particularly for Monday and Friday absences/ lateness
- Reporting weekly to the Head of School on attendance issues

### **Class teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance and punctuality looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/guardians
- Informing the Welfare Officer or/and the Deputy Head where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring once actions have been taken to correct attendance and/ or punctuality concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation (but not necessarily taking this further – responsibility of office staff)
- Discussing attendance and punctuality issues at consultation evenings
- Setting an exemplary example by being punctual and having good attendance themselves



## **ATTENDANCE REGISTERS**

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration – amendments) Regulations 1997 we are required to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and at some time during the afternoon session pupils are marked present or absent.
- Attendance registers are legal documents which may be required as evidence in court cases.
- Registers must record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.
- When calling the register the appropriate mark and/symbol should be placed against each pupil's name – gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, staff need to follow the set of symbols contained in guidance found in registers. A copy of the symbols used can be found in Appendix B.
- Entries in registers should be made electronically on the SIMS system by class teachers. If it is not possible to access SIMS, a paper register should be requested from the school office.
- A pupil's name may not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been deleted from the admissions register.

### **Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register**

- In the case of a pupil who has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than four school weeks and both the school and the EWS have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil
- Notification has been given that the child is receiving education otherwise than at school
- If the child has been registered at another school.

### **Guidance for staff**

- Registers must be completed by 9.05am. Authorised lateness is between 9:05 and 9:15am.
- The cut off point for lateness is 9.15am. Lateness after this time is an unauthorised absence.
- Please use guide symbols, included in register for marking (Appendix B)
- An adult needs to authorise absence; please do not accept child's word.
- Every effort should be made to obtain a note from the parent if there has not been a phone message.
- Parents are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence and all subsequent days in the case of sickness
- Phone calls from the office for those families who have not contacted the school will be made on the first day of absence and all subsequent days in the case of sickness
- Please check reasons for absence. The Welfare Officer and the Head of School monitor absence and punctuality on a weekly basis so be prepared to discuss regular absences with them.
- The decision about authorising/ unauthorising all absence requests, of any duration, must be made by the Executive Headteacher or Head of school.

## **FOLLOWING UP ATTENDANCE ISSUES – PROCEDURES**

### **Meetings with the Educational Welfare Service (EWS)**

When attendance and/ or punctuality issues have been identified by staff at Princess Frederica Primary school, the EWS at Brent will be contacted. Prior to any meeting the following information is collected:

- o Attendance record for any child with less than 90% attendance



- o Attendance record for any child whose absence shows particular trends
- o Attendance record for any child who has been frequently arriving at school late
- o Class percentage totals

Information is shared about previous cases and decisions taken about the next stages of intervention where this is appropriate. Decisions taken are recorded on the attendance monitoring sheet. Following the meeting with the EWS, class teachers are notified of the outcome and agreed actions are discussed with the Deputy Head and followed up as appropriate.

#### School procedures in cases of intervention

Although a range of strategies and actions will be taken on an informal basis, a formal procedure is applied when an absence remains unexplained:

- First day of absence phone call made by office staff
- Discussion on an informal level with the child/parent and reminder about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality
- If attendance remains erratic, letters are sent from school drawing attention to the child's attendance
- Parents/Carers are invited to the school offering them the opportunity to meet with the Welfare Officer or Deputy Head or Headteacher to discuss the pattern of attendance
- If the Parents/Carers do not attend the meeting, the next stage is for an approach to be made to the EWS
- Further formal approaches might then be made according to the LA's attendance policy

At all times, we believe that a positive approach which aims for cooperation is essential if improvements in attendance are to be sustained.

### **MONITORING**

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Board in the 'Headteachers Report' the attendance percentage for the school and on any specific trends and/or difficulties with individual (but unnamed) families.

### **REVIEW**

This policy is due for review every two years. Its success should be judged by answers to the following questions:

- Have we reached our attendance target of 96%?
- Is everyone aware of the procedures to be followed?
- Do class teachers and children have high expectations of themselves and others?
- Are forms and records regularly completed?



**APPENDIX A**  
**Authorised Absence Request form**

Name of child ..... Class .....

Will be absent from school, please give dates, time and reason

Date: From ..... To .....

Total number of day(s) to be absent: ...../ Or Hours Time: From ..... To:.....

Reason for absence.....

Please attach your appointment letter or note. If you are not in receipt of one, please request one from your appointment to show as proof when your child returns to school

**Failure to read this important information may result in the loss of your child's place at school**  
**Children and Families Department Family Holidays during term time. Guidance for parents/carers**

By law, every child of compulsory school age must get a proper fulltime education. It is your legal duty to ensure that your child attends school regularly, arrives on time and keeps to the school rules.

1. Do not take your child on holiday when he/she should be at school
2. Leave of absence from school will be authorised in exceptional circumstances only. Exceptional circumstances are 'once in a lifetime experiences' such as celebrating the 100th birthday of a great grandmother or great grandfather, the wedding of the pupil's parents.
3. Taking your child on holiday in term time without the school's permission may result in legal action being taken against you by the Education Welfare Service.

\*I/we understand that only in exceptional circumstance may the amount of leave granted exceed more than two weeks in any year (**Regulation 12 of the Education – Schools and further Education – Regulations 1981**).

\*I/we also understand that if a pupil fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause his/her name shall be deleted from the admission register (**Regulation 9 of the Education – Pupil Registration – Regulation 1995**). **\*(Documented evidence required)**

Name of Parent/Carer .....Signature of Parent/Carer .....Date .....

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**For office use only**

Attendance to date	Attendance last year academic year
%	%

Leave is authorised between the dates of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Total days \_\_\_\_\_

It is important that your child returns to school by the date agreed. If any circumstance causes a delay it is vital that you contact the school. Please understand that your child's school place may be lost if he/she fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of leave.

**Head of School's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Leave is not authorised.**

**Reason:**

**Head of School's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_





## APPENDIX B

### Marking of Attendance Electronic Registers - Guide to Symbols

/am \pm	Present
N	Absent
L	Late during registration period

Suggested symbols for authorised absence:

B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by any other code)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school)
E	Excluded but not alternative provision made
F	Agreed extended family holiday
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
M	Medical or dental appointment
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience (not work based training)
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory schooling
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet

Symbols for unauthorised absence:

U	Late after register is closed
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of authorised holiday)
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes)

**NB: The Welfare Officer must obtain a reason for all child absences**





## **APPENDIX C**

### **Attendance Monitoring Procedures**

#### **Daily (Welfare Officer)**

First day call sent for unexplained/extended absences

Welfare Officer to alert DHT if no satisfactory response from parents on 3rd day of absence.

Unexplained absence letter sent to parents.

SENDCO and Head of School are informed if there is an absence of a vulnerable child (as per the Absence Protocol Sheet)

#### **Weekly (Welfare Officer and DHT)**

Blank codes in register replaced by appropriate attendance codes in consultation with DHT.

Attendance reports generated by welfare officer and reviewed with DHT for:

Persistent absentees

Persistent lates

Weekly class attendance

Attendance of groups

EWS referrals and any other concerns

Website updated with whole school attendance and bar chart of weekly class attendance

Interventions (see below)

#### **Half-termly (DHT and HT)**

Overall attendance, attendance by code & class, attendance of groups - DHT to brief HT

#### **Intervention – attendance**

Stage 1: Below 95% attendance (first time or occasional): letter 1 and attendance certificate sent to parents.

Stage 2: Below 95% (continued/no improvement): letter 2 and attendance certificate sent to parents.

Stage 3: Below 92% attendance: letter 3 and attendance certificate sent to parents and meeting with DHT.

Stage 4: Below 90% (continued persistent, with unauthorised absences): Referral to EWS.

#### **Intervention – punctuality**

Stage 1: trigger for persistent lates approaching/pattern on lates emerging: letter 1 and attendance certificate sent to parents

Stage 2: persistent lates (first time/occasional): letter 2 and attendance certificate sent to parents

Stage 3: exceeding of persistent lates: letter 3 and attendance certificate sent to parents and meeting with DHT

Stage 4: continued persistent lates/ no improvement: meeting with EWS

#### **Notes**

- All certificates, letters, notes of meetings with parents etc to be filed in welfare office and SIMS updated. Letters/notes for absence not needed if reasons recorded on SIMS and there are no professional certificates (such as doctor's notes or hospital appointments)
- Interventions may skip stages, repeat stages, etc. depending on the individual circumstances.
- Letters may be amended to reflect individual circumstances.