



# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **Whitehall Infant School**

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>September 2013</b>
<b>Policy reviewed on</b>	<b>April 2016</b>
<b>Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (DCPC)</b>	<b>Manjit Bringan</b>
<b>Deputy DCPC</b>	<b>Rachel McDaid</b>
<b>Safeguarding Governor</b>	<b>Andrew Wilson</b>
<b>Attendance Officer</b>	<b>Baldeep Chana</b>

**Introduction:**

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and that you do not take your child out of school for term time holidays or leave. This Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

**Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

**To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and rewards
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

**Understanding Types of Absence:**

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. As well as unauthorised absence this type of absence can lead to the Local Authority Participation Team service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school please come into school to talk to school staff.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times;
- Helping with homework;
- Having uniform and equipment ready the night before;
- Providing a healthy breakfast;
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly;
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school;
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive);
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates;

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an LSA, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Participation Team.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance and Local Authority Participation Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **The Participation Officer:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Participation Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices per parent/carer per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice) or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A). Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may be summonsed to Court.

"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 is guilty of an offence."

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Participation Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858 or [participationteam@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:participationteam@hillington.gov.uk)

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. At Whitehall Infant School the first lesson of the morning is focussed on the teaching of reading and writing skills. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

For Key Stage 1 the school opens at **8.40 am** and we expect your child to be in class no later than **8.50 am**. For Early Years Foundation Stage the school opens at **8.45 am** and we expect your child to be in class no later than **8.55 am**. If your child is not in by that time they will receive a late mark.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Exceptional Leave:**

Taking exceptional leave in term time will affect your child's schooling and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out of school in term time.

There is **no** entitlement in law to take children out of school to go on holiday.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

1. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment.
3. All Hillingdon schools are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave. Outstanding cases remain in the personal gift of the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. They will determine the number of school days a child can be away if exceptional leave is granted.

4. The Head Teacher will meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
5. Exceptional Leave will always be refused in Year 2.
6. Exceptional leave will always be refused when a student's attendance is less than 95% (Primary).
7. Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
8. Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
9. Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the student's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.
10. The Local Authority Participation Team can issue Fixed Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence. The amount of each Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid between within 28 days. If the notice(s) remains unpaid each parent will be summoned to the Magistrates Court and could be fined up to £1000 for each matter.

**The Participation Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave' Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be 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 each 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.**

#### **School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **95%** attendance. We will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this, however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling, and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Hillingdon.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletters and we ask for your full support.

#### **Attendance Incentive Schemes:**

- Well-being Officer Support for those children who are experiencing difficulties coming to school.
- Awarding the Evie Everyday Bear and attendance certificate in weekly assemblies to the class with the best attendance.
- Prizes are awarded to pupils with 100% attendance at the end of each term, along with a certificate. A special prize to pupils with 100% attendance for the whole school year is also awarded.
- Special Headteacher Award Certificates are presented half-termly, to those children with 100% attendance at each half-term, and those with significantly improved attendance.
- When leaving Year 2 the pupil(s) with the highest attendance over the past two years receive(s) an award.
- Prize to reward classes with the highest attendance patterns throughout the year.

- Attendance and Achievement noticeboard to promote/reward attendance.
- Inform parents of 100% attendees in Newsletter.
- Inform parents by using displays of attendance percentages on Parents Evening.
- Involve parents in the development and close monitoring of pupils with attendance below 90%.
- Passing the names of children with persistent lateness to the Participation Officer, to offer support and advice.
- Inform parents of attendance and punctuality through annual reports and termly Registration Certificates.
- Attendance figures monitored termly and letters sent to improved and poor attenders.
- Early opening at 8.40am, before school commences at 8.50am, to encourage children to arrive early, and to start the day in a calm fashion.

**Those People Responsible for Attendance Matters in this School are:**

Mrs McDaid - Assistant Headteacher

Mrs Bringan - Headteacher

Baldeep Chana - Attendance Officer

There is a Governor with responsibility for attendance and safeguarding: Andrew Wilson

**Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the DCSF. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment. It is also a fundamental part of the Every Child Matters intentions to:

- Being Healthy
- Being Safe
- Enjoying & Achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

Review date: April 2017