



St. Jérôme  
Church of England  
Bilingual School

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

May 2021

Executive Headteacher:.....

*(Reverend D Norris)*

Chair of the Governing Body:.....

*(Ian Fernandes)*

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Review Date: May 2024

The School Vision and aims:-

## **The Right to Education**

The school supports legislation that reinforces that every child has the right to:

- ❖ Be healthy
- ❖ Stay safe
- ❖ Enjoy and achieve
- ❖ Make a positive contribution
- ❖ Achieve economic well being
- ❖ The right to education, play, leisure and cultural activity.
- ❖ The right to protection from work exploitation.
- ❖ The right to special care and social integration for children and young people with disabilities.
- ❖ The right to have a say in issues that affect them and equal opportunities

## **Legal Framework**

St. Jérôme Church of England Bilingual Primary School works with the Education Services Team at the Local Authority to support enforcing the legal framework as defined in The Education Act 1996 and The Children's Act 1989.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Parents / Carers**

- ❖ Will ensure the regular attendance and / punctuality of their child/ren
- ❖ Will work in partnership with the school
- ❖ Will promote a good attitude to learning
- ❖ Will meet the social and emotional needs of the child/ren.
- ❖ Will ensure they have contingency in place to bring their child(ren) to school in the event of personal circumstances which might prevent the child(ren)'s attendance.

### **Pupils**

- ❖ Will listen to their parents / carers and the school
- ❖ Will communicate with parents / carers and the school about any worries or anxieties they may have
- ❖ Will go to bed at an appropriate time and come to school on time and ready to learn.

### **The School**

- ❖ Will work with the Governing Body towards complete implementation of Ofsted's Safeguarding Framework
- ❖ Will provide a welcome and safe environment
- ❖ Will communicate with parents and carers

- ❖ Will provide education appropriate to the child
- ❖ Will promote good attendance for all and fully support the framework for Persistent Absence (attendance below 90%)
- ❖ Will keep accurate and up to date records of children's punctuality and attendance and liaise with the Local Authority regarding concerns over children's attendance.
- ❖ Will operate an on-line, electronic attendance system be compliant with government regulations.

### The Governors

- ❖ Will ensure there is clear policy and guidance applied fairly by the Senior Leaders
- ❖ Will work with the school towards complete implementation of Ofsted's Safeguarding Framework
- ❖ Will set attendance targets
- ❖ Will monitor attendance and punctuality.

### Attendance Targets

The link between attendance and attainment is irrefutable and good attendance has a direct impact on education and friendships.

Attendance at school is a critical pre-requisite for a successful and fulfilling school career. The Department for Education expects children to attend at least 96% of the time and this reflects the school's official target for pupil attendance.

The school regularly monitors attendance and punctuality and will work with parents / carers to ensure all children achieve targets.

A member of staff from the school and the Local Authority Education Services will discuss individuals and agree an action plan where there is cause for concern.

### Home School Links

The school will contact parents / carers if there are concerns about a child's attendance. To ensure good communication parents /carers must be responsible for updating contact details whenever there are any changes.

Parents / carers are encouraged to contact the school if they need support to resolve difficulties with attendance and punctuality.

When there is a general concern about a child's attendance parents / carers may be invited to meet with a member of staff to discuss this. If considered helpful, a Local Authority representative may be invited to attend the meeting.

## First Day Absence

Parents / carers are asked to telephone or email by **9am** on the first day of absence to give a reason and if possible, a return date.

Under our commitment to safeguarding children, the school operates a 'first day calling' system. This means that the school office produces an absence report from our Schools' Information Management System (Scholarpack). If parents / carers do not contact the school with an explanation for their child's absence the school will take the following action:

- ❖ Send a text message requesting details of the absence
- ❖ If no response is forthcoming, a phone call will be made to all known contacts
- ❖ If we are still unable to verify the whereabouts of your child by midday a home visit will be considered
- ❖ As a last resort the appropriate authorities i.e. local authority, police will be notified if your child is considered missing from education

## Persistent Absence

Where a child's attendance falls below 90% (irrespective of the reason), the school must take action by writing to the parent(s) and if deemed necessary, invite them in to speak with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

In addition, the school will refer the information to the School Attendance Liaison Officer (SALO) at the Local Authority. Schools are required to identify where a child's attendance falls below 90% (irrespective of the reason), and liaise with the child's parents / carers and the Local Authority to develop an action plan to support the child's attendance.

**Persistent absence not authorised by the School and failure of the parent/carer to communicate with the School about this absence may lead to a Fixed Penalty Fine being issued to the parent/carer.**

Persistent Absence, good punctuality and exceptional leave are discussed with all parents / carers as part of the school's induction process.

The Attendance & Punctuality Policy forms part of the admissions pack given to new families and is available on our website.

## The School positively reinforces good attendance and punctuality by:

- ❖ Awarding certificates at the end each term to children who have attended 100% of the time.
- ❖ Recognising classes with the highest attendance levels
- ❖ Dealing with bullying immediately and firmly. (See Anti Bullying Policy)
- ❖ Providing support and EHCPs for those children who have special educational needs or IHPs for those with medical needs **as appropriate**.
- ❖ Liaising with appropriate agencies where support for parents / carers is needed.
- ❖ Providing curriculum advice to children and parents / carers concerning health matters.
- ❖ Providing Pastoral Support Plans for those pupils at risk of exclusion.

## Exceptional Leave

Department for Education guidance states that schools are not obliged to agree to exceptional leave during term time.

Exceptional circumstances will only be considered by the Governing Body for: the marriage of a either parent / grandparent or either parents' siblings or the death of a close family member; parent / grandparent / aunt / uncle or cousin.

Statutory regulations demand that parents / carers make a request in writing to the Executive Headteacher prior to the proposed absence. This letter must contain the reason for the request and the dates, including the return date, evidenced by a copy of travel tickets, if appropriate.

Each request will be considered individually and various factors will be taken into account, such as:

- ❖ The child's attendance history
- ❖ Efforts made to minimise the number of school days taken.
- ❖ Under no circumstances will leave be considered during periods of school assessment and other important school events even if it is of an urgent nature.

Exceptional leave will **NOT** be granted for:

- ❖ Requests that are made on a regular or annual basis or a pattern is evident.
- ❖ Those with poor attendance
- ❖ During school examination and assessment periods.

Where exceptional leave is taken which has not been authorised by the School, the Local Authority may impose a fixed penalty notice of £60 per child, per parent. In the event of non-payment within 21 days the fine will increase to £120 per child, per parent. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days a summons will be issued from the magistrate's court which could result in prosecution.

**If a further period of unauthorised holiday is taken, an immediate court summons is issued (i.e., without a penalty fine first being issued) which then results in a criminal record.**

The Education Services Team can be contacted at Harrow Borough Council Station Road Harrow Middlesex HA1 2UW ☎ 020 8736 6461.

If children do not return by the agreed date, (to be contained in the letter of request and the Executive Headteacher's response), then following a further 10 day period the **child can be removed from the school roll and referred to the Education Services Team as missing in education**

If there are extenuating circumstances which prevent return on the planned date it is essential that parents / carers make every effort to contact the school and explain the reason for the continued absence.

### **Separated Parents**

In cases of parental estrangement, where one parent requests exceptional leave, the school has a duty to inform both persons having parental responsibility of the outcome. The Executive Headteacher's response will be communicated to both parents. If a penalty is imposed, both parents are liable.

### **Religious Observance**

The school will look sympathetically upon requests for religious observance. Where parents / carers wish their child(ren) to be absent for religious observance, they must cooperate by ensuring that they give the school as much notice as possible of a proposed absence. Such absence must cause minimal educational disruption and a strategy must be put in place by parents / carers to ensure that any missed work is made up in a reasonable period of time. Absence for Religious Observance will be recorded in the school register as code 'R', reflecting promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Punctuality**

Lateness can have a detrimental effect on:

- ❖ The child's developing standards for responsible adulthood
- ❖ The child's learning
- ❖ The learning of others
- ❖ The child's sense of belonging
- ❖ The child's behaviour

The school operates a soft start and children can arrive at school from 8.30am – 8.55am

If a child is not present at 9am for registration, this will be recorded on the electronic register.

If the child arrives after the register has been taken but before 9.30am a symbol of an **L** will be recorded and the lateness will be **Authorised**.

The register is closed at 9.30am and if the child arrives after this time the school office will record it as **Unauthorised Lateness with the symbol U.**

If the parent / carer has notified the school in advance for an appointment such as a doctor's appointment or educational assessment or examination, the teacher will code the register as 'N' (no reason given) and the school office will apply the appropriate code retrospectively.

In the case of persistent absentees the school will request copies of appointment letters.

A late book is kept in the foyer which parents /carers must sign when arriving late or collecting their child(ren) belatedly at home time, giving a reason. The School Office and the Senior Leadership team will monitor and review this regularly.

The cases of individuals who are persistently late are considered by the Senior Leadership Team and School Attendance Officer in their regular half termly monitoring meetings.

Attendance and punctuality is reported to the Governing Body with other attendance data.

### **School Collections**

Parents / Carers are responsible for their child(ren) after the school day has finished and if they fail to collect their child(ren) and it has been impossible to contact a nominated person on their emergency contact list, the Local Authority and / or The Social Care Department will be contacted to arrange for temporary care.

Children **MUST** be collected at the end of the school day or activity club at the designated year group collection time or before 6pm if the child(ren) is attending after school club. Children not collected on time will be cared for at the After School Club until 6 pm. In this instance, parents carers must collect their child from the After School Club entrance and make the appropriate payment.

Currently (as at May 2021) due to global pandemic the collection times for each class are:

Reception – 3 pm  
Year 1 – 3.10 pm  
Year 2 – 3.20 pm  
Year 3 – 3.30 pm  
Year 4 – 3.40 pm  
Year 5 – TBC  
Year 6 – TBC

Any change to these staggered collections times will be notified to all parents / carers via email.

Parents / carers must telephone the school if they are running late and must always inform us if their child(ren) is / are being collected by another responsible adult who must be known to the child(ren).

Late collection from After School Club is **NOT permissible under any circumstances**. Parents / Carers must have contingency cover to ensure that their child is ALWAYS collected on time.

If a child is not collected from After School Club on time an appointment will be made for the parent / carer to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body reserves the right to refuse further attendance at Extended School facilities where this occurs on more than one occasion.



# Parent / Carer Guide to Good Attendance

Good attendance is a contributing factor in determining your child's future opportunities and well-being. The link between attainment and attendance is irrefutable and children who are regularly absent do less well in achieving their academic potential and have fewer career choices. Your child's primary education is the foundation of their future.

St. Jérôme Church of England Bilingual School aims for all children to attend school for at least 96%.

## Children who have below average attendance at primary school:

- ❖ Can have difficulty maintaining reliable friendship groups
- ❖ May have difficulty with school work and school routines
- ❖ Can develop behavioural problems in and out of school
- ❖ Are more likely to be truant or drop out in secondary school
- ❖ Have fewer opportunities for further education and employment
- ❖ May have difficulty to find and keep employment
- ❖ Under achieve at National Tests and Examinations

## What parents / carers can do to support good attendance

- ❖ Avoid leave during term time for any reason
- ❖ Arrange medical / dental appointments for after the school day or during school holidays – if this is not possible arrange early or late appointments so your child attend half a day
- ❖ Notify the school on the first day of any absence in line with this policy
- ❖ If you believe your child is unhappy, complains of feeling unwell frequently or being bullied at school contact their teacher via the school office immediately
- ❖ If you have concerns following a long period of absence contact their teacher to discuss your concerns

## How you can help

- ❖ Ensure good evening and morning routines at home to enable your child to arrive at school alert and ready to learn
- ❖ Ensure your child arrives at school on time every day. Late arrivals are disruptive for your child, their peers and school staff. Punctuality is a life skill to be taught from an early age
- ❖ Take an active interest in the school and your child's homework
- ❖ Take an active role in the community and support the school including fundraising events
- ❖ Attend Parent Consultation and Curriculum meetings