



St. Jérôme
Church of England
Bilingual School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

April 2016

Executive Headteacher:.....

(Reverend D Norris)

Chair of the Governing Body:.....

(Ian Fernandes)

Date:.....

Review Date:.....

The School Vision and aims:-

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Children's right to education is set out in the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda which comprises:

- ❖ Be healthy
- ❖ Stay safe
- ❖ Enjoy and achieve
- ❖ Make a positive contribution
- ❖ Achieve economic well being

The Human Rights act also identifies the following entitlements:

- ❖ 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.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

St. Jerome Church of England Bilingual Primary School works with the Participation Team and the Local Authority to support enforcing the legal framework as defined in The Education Act 1996 and The Children's Act 1989 (section 36).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents / Carers

- ❖ Will ensure the regular attendance and /punctuality of their child/ren
- ❖ Will work in partnership with the school
- ❖ Will ensure 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 parents and the school
- ❖ Will communicate with parents and the school about any worries or anxieties
- ❖ 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
- ❖ Will keep accurate and up to date records of children's punctuality and attendance and liaise with the LA regarding concerns over children's attendance.
- ❖ Operates an on-line, electronic attendance system which is compliant with government regulations.

The Governors

- ❖ Will ensure there is clear policy and guidance applied fairly by the Head Teacher
- ❖ Will work with the school towards complete implementation of OFSTED's SAFEGUARDING Framework
- ❖ Will set attendance targets and monitor attendance data.
- ❖ Will ensure that the Admissions Committee of the Governing Body rigorously monitors 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 DfE expect children to attend at least 96% of the time and this reflects the school's official target for pupil attendance.

The school monitors attendance and punctuality and works with parents to ensure all children achieve targets.

A member of staff from the school and the Local Authority Participation Officer meet regularly to monitor data, discuss individuals and agree action.

HOME SCHOOL LINKS

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

Parents are urged 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 may be invited to meet with a member of staff to discuss this. If considered helpful, the Participation Officer may be invited to attend the meeting.

FIRST DAY ABSENCE

Parents / carers are asked to telephone 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' policy. This means that the school office produces an absence report from our Schools' Information Management System (Scholarpack). If parents do not telephone, the school will contact with the parent / carer for an explanation; in the first instance by text messaging, followed by a telephone call if no response is received to the text.

A letter must be sent to the school for each and every absence within 7 days of the absence. Failing this, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

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 the Head of School.

In addition, the school must refer the information to the Participation Officer. Schools are required to by submitting to the Local Authority, a monthly record of attendance below 90%. Where a child's attendance falls below 90% (irrespective of the reason), the child's attendance is deemed to be "Persistent Absence" (PA). The Participation Officer could refer the matter to an attendance panel and irrespective of this, the School Administration Team will initiate an 'Attendance Plan'.

Persistent absence and parental failure to communicate is likely to be referred to the Participation Team.

FAST TRACK

St. Jerome Church of England Bilingual Primary School and the LA follow the DfE guidelines for Fast Track Panels and fixed penalty notices for parents of children who have continuing poor attendance.

Persistent Absence, good punctuality and exceptional leave are discussed with all parents who visit the school in consideration of applying for a place and those whose children are offered places.

The Attendance & Punctuality Policy forms part of the admissions pack given to parents.

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.
- ❖ Dealing with bullying immediately and firmly. (See Anti bullying section)
- ❖ Providing support and EHCs for those children who have special educational needs or medical needs **as appropriate**.
- ❖ Liaising with appropriate agencies where support for parents is needed.
- ❖ Providing curriculum advice to children and parents concerning health matters.
- ❖ Providing Pastoral Support Plans for those pupils at risk of exclusion.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE

DFE Guidance states that schools are not obliged to agree to exceptional leave during term time.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered by the Governing Body.

Exceptional Circumstances are deemed to be:~

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 make a request in writing to the Head Teacher 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.

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 Head of School, the school supports such action by the Participation Team who 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 Participation Team can be contacted at Harrow Borough Council Station Road Harrow Middlesex HA1 2UW ☎ 020 8901 2690 (option 2).

If children do not return by the agreed date, (to be contained in the letter of request and the Head of School's authorisation), then following a further 10 day period the **child can be removed from the school roll and referred to the school's Participation Team.**

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

SEPARATED PARENTS

Requests for Exceptional Leave impact upon a child's education. Therefore, 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 Head of School'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 parent(s) wish their child(ren) to be absent for religious observance, they must co-operate by ensuring that they give the school as much notice as possible of proposed minimal absence. Such absence must cause minimum educational disruption and a strategy must be put in place by parents 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

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

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

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

If the parent has provided a letter 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.

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

The cases of individuals who are persistently late are considered by the Head of School and PO in their regular monitoring meetings.

On a half termly basis, attendance and punctuality is reported to parents in the Newsletter and to the Admissions Committee of the Governing Body with other attendance data.

SCHOOL COLLECTIONS SCHEME

Parents are informed, that the child is their responsibility after the school day has finished and that if they fail to collect their child, or it has been impossible to contact a nominated person on their emergency contact list, the Participation Team and / or The Social Care Department will be contacted to arrange for temporary care.

Children MUST be collected at 3.15 p.m. or at the designated time if the child is attending an after school club. The Admissions Committee has adopted the suggestion made by the Childcare and Early Years Department that where possible, children not collected on time will be cared for at the "Cool Kids After School Club" until 6 pm. In this instance, parents must collect their child from the club and make the appropriate payment.

Parents 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 collections from "Cool Kids" After School Club are **NOT permissible under any circumstances**. Parents must have contingency cover to ensure that their child is ALWAYS collected on time.

If a child is not collected from Extended Services (Breakfast or After School Club) on time on more than one occasion, an appointment will be made for the parent(s) to meet with the Head of School and the Governing Body which reserves the right to refuse further attendance at Extended School facilities where parents arrive after 6 p.m. on more than one occasion.