



Attendance Policy

Introduction

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually and this policy sets out how we, together, will achieve this.

In order for any attendance and punctuality policy to be effective it must be consistently applied throughout the whole school, by its staff, pupils' and parents.

Why regular attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of your child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and achievement. When children miss vital key learning objectives, it can be impossible to catch up, placing them at a disadvantage to their peers.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal and parental responsibility. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued or Court action/prosecution.

Research has shown that regular attendance and good punctuality are key factors in children achieving well at school.

Attendance and Punctuality in the Early Years:

Establishing good habits from the start will help your child to settle more quickly and build good habits for later life. Coming to school on time, every day helps to develop confidence.

Research has shown that, even at the earliest age, children with poor attendance and punctuality are at a disadvantage later in life. They generally find it harder to make and maintain friendships, they achieve less and they often suffer from poor self-esteem.

The school keeps a register of attendance for every child. This is a legal document and record and classifies every half-day attendance and/or absence. Absences are classified as either authorised or unauthorised. For this reason, the school will ask parents/carers for the reason for each absence.

Every School Day Counts

Although being absent cannot always be helped as we all do become ill from time to time, please take a look at the table below to show you exactly how much time your child could be missing.

365 Days in a Year	School Days	Absence
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100% Attendance	190 Days	0
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95% Attendance	180 Days	2 Weeks
90% Attendance	171 Days	4 Weeks
85% Attendance	161 Days	6 Weeks
80% Attendance	152 Days	More than half a term
75% Attendance	143 Days	9+ Weeks

Promoting regular attendance:

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

To help us all to focus on this we will give you details on attendance in our newsletter and on our website.

Safeguarding:

Effective attendance procedures are integral to ensuring all children are kept safe. Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interest of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: - Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti-bullying.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. **The Law Relating to Attendance:**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable: -

- a. To age, ability and aptitude*
- b. To any special educational needs, they may have either by regular attendance to school or otherwise.*

If you wish to find out more information about the legislation around attendance, please visit:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564599/school_attendance.pdf

Understanding Types of Absence:

Every-half day absence from school has to be classified by the Head teacher (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 such as illness, medical/dental appointments which cannot be made outside of school time or unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

In order to enable the school to authorise an absence due to illness, parents/carers are requested to;

- **Provide medical evidence to the school. This can be in the form of GP/Hospital/Medical/Dental Appointment letters/cards, Copies of**

prescriptions/antibiotics issued (providing the child's name is indicated there on).

In order to enable the school to authorise an absence due to an emergency or unavoidable cause, parents/carers are requested to;

- **Speak to the Attendance Officer/Head Teacher, advise them of the issue requesting the absence.**
- **Complete and return the 'Leave of Absence' form available from the school office.**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "authorised leave of absence" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the use of sanctions and/or referring to the Local Authority for legal intervention.

Unauthorised absences are;

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Parents/carers not communicating the reason for absence to the school
- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced
- Parents not providing medical evidence to the school to support the absence as being due to ill health
- Child who arrive at school after the Registration period has ended
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips, holidays or overseas trips in term time

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, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Absence in Term Time:

Holidays or overseas trip absences in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking students away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday/overseas trip in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. Because of the damage to your child's learning caused by this, **we do not authorise any holidays/overseas trips in term time.**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday/overseas trip.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling from the beginning of the school year **for whatever reason** (this includes authorised and unauthorised absences). 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 threshold or is at risk of moving towards it is given priority and you will be informed of this

immediately.

Projected PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance system. All our PA children and their parents are subject to an Intervention Plan. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Advisory Officer and some cases may lead to a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service of the Local Authority, whereby legal action could be initiated.

Absence Procedure:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, advising of the reason and likely length of absence, either by calling the school office on 0208 856 6766 or emailing sao@cherryorchard.greenwich.sch.uk
(A phone call or text message will be sent to parents each time the child has been marked with an unauthorised absence code and no reason has been given for the absence).
- Contact the school on the subsequent days of absence as necessary.
- Provide evidence where possible, supporting the reason for absence.
- Prolonged absence will require Medical evidence as proof of absence.

What School will do if Attendance is a Concern:

- Letters will be sent to parents to alert them to the concerns school has about their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Invite you into the school to discuss the situation with the Attendance Officer / Head Teacher.
- Undertake interventions and offer support where possible/appropriate, through school resources and/or outside agencies.
- Use Royal Borough of Greenwich's Guidance to Improve Attendance.
- Undertake Home visits, as necessary.
- Hold Pre referral meetings to address irregular school attendance, in the presence of the Officer from the Attendance Advisory Service of the Local Authority.
- Undertake a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service if your child's **unauthorised** absence reaches 10% or more.

The Attendance Advisory Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff in resolving any problems related to attendance together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, and unauthorised absences continue, the school may refer to the Attendance Advisory Service. The Attendance Advisory Officer will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve your child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Attendance Advisory Service can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or Prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Parents may wish to contact the Attendance Advisory Service themselves to seek advice or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 020 8921 8510.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and is categorised as ‘irregular school attendance’. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss spending time with their peers, their class teacher and getting vital information/news for the day. The Late arrival of a child disrupts lessons, places the child at a disadvantage and can be embarrassing for them. All of which can contribute to a reluctance to attend school.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts between **8.45am and 8.55am**. We expect all children to be in class at that time. All children need to be in the playground by 8.45am, ready to go to class.

At **9.00am** the registers are taken. Anyone arriving at 9.25am will be marked as U and miss their morning attendance mark. 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.

Poor punctuality is classified as ‘irregular school attendance’ and action will be undertaken to address it, following the schools attendance procedure.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the School Attendance Officer/Head teacher, to address and hopefully resolve the problem.

*Please approach us at any time if you are experiencing problems getting your child to school on time.

Every Minute Counts

As well as being absent a lot from school effecting your child’s development, being late also has a big effect on their learning time, please look at the table below:

Lateness = Lost Learning (figures below are calculated over the school year)	
5 mins late each day	3 days lost
10 mins late each day	6.5 days lost
15 mins late each day	10 days lost
20 mins late each day	13 days lost
30 mins late each day	19 days lost

School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and punctuality and your child has an

important part to play in meeting targets.

The minimum level of attendance and punctuality for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance and punctuality compares. Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

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

Strategies the school uses to promote regular attendance.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The strategies below outline how we achieve the aim of regular and punctual attendance for all.

- We hold an induction interview/meeting before the child enters school if their previous school has reported poor attendance
- All new parents will be given a letter outlining that the school expectations with regard to attendance.
- At the end of each term those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a certificate and an Attendance Award.
- Each week the class in KS1/2 with closest to 100% attendance will be awarded the Attendance Cup and will get to keep this trophy in their classroom for that week · Each term the class in KS1/2 with the highest attendance receive a class prize. · Targets for the school for attendance and punctuality are displayed around the school, on newsletters and on the school website
- The class teacher, on the end of year report, will add comments on attendance and punctuality. They will also report on attendance and punctuality at Parents' Evenings · Where there has been a marked improvement in attendance of particular students, a certificate and award is given to the pupils at the 'end of term assembly' · The designated staff member with responsibility for attendance will work closely with parents, the school attendance officer for the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the child to improve poor performance, in line with borough and national policies

Child Missing Education (CME)

Any child, who ceases to attend a school, without notification as to their new address and/or the school they are transferring to, becomes a '**Child Missing in Education**'. Any child in this category is reported to the Child Missing in Education Officer at the Local Authority, who will follow up the matter under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 and Safeguarding legislation, as necessary. This can involve the police.

The attendance procedures are crucial to ensuring the safety of all children. If a child has been absent from school for 20 consecutive days without good reason and their whereabouts are unknown, the school has a legal obligation to report the child as missing education to the relevant local authority. In accordance with DFE regulations the child may be removed from the school roll.

Communication – What we need to know:

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 have always got up to date phone numbers for yourself and emergency contacts, for if you are unavailable.

Home Address:

Let us know when you move and where you are moving to.

Removing a Pupil from Our School:

If you make the decision to transfer your child to another school, for whatever reason and have given the relevant notice period to the school, as a matter of priority you need to provide the school with all of the necessary details.

We will provide you with a '[Leaving School for Parents' form](#), as we need to know your new address (if relevant) and the school your child is transferring to. If we do not receive this information and your child ceases to attend our school, they become a '**Child Missing in Education**'. *The procedure will be followed as detailed above.

Elective Home Education:

If you make the decision to educate your child at home, you are required to advise us of this in writing.

Once the letter/email is received, we will remove your child from the school roll and advise the Elective Home Education Officer of the Local Authority, who will make contact with you regarding this matter.

If a letter/email is not received, your child remains on roll at school and their absence is treated as unauthorised. *Action to address the unauthorised absence will be followed, as detailed above.

The people responsible for attendance matters in the school are:

[Executive Headteacher](#)

[Head of School](#)

[Deputy Head teacher](#)

[School Attendance Officer](#)

RBG Attendance Advisory Officer

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to ensure procedures are in place to support good attendance and punctuality. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

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 and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Appendix

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#) ·
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#) ·
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) ·
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#) ·
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.