

**Attendance  
and  
Punctuality  
Policy  
January  
2021**

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Approved by:	Pastoral committee		04.02.201
Document Title:	Policy – Attendance and Punctuality Policy		
Version Number:	2	Date of Next Review:	January 2023

## **1. Introduction**

Regular school attendance is essential for children to achieve their full potential. Children cannot learn if they are absent or regularly attending school late.

We believe that regular school attendance is key to enabling children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in order to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults. We therefore aim to raise standards by promoting the regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils.

Canonbury takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; this policy is supported by our safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusion policies.

## **2. The law relating to attendance:**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable:

(a) to age, ability and aptitude

(b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age:

- a) at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday
- b) a child ceases to be compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

### **We aim to:**

- Achieve attendance levels of 96% and above across the whole school
- Reduce unauthorised absence
- Improve punctuality
- Reduce levels of persistent absentees
- Create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is expected
- Maintain effective communication regarding attendance and punctuality between home and school
- Develop partnerships with families to improve attendance

### **3. Categorising absence**

All schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the absence has been received and confirmation from the school has been given authorising the absence.

#### **Absence Procedures Parental responsibility:**

- Inform the school office on the first day of absence (before 9:25am) and provide an expected date of return (phone, text, email or in person)
- If a child is unable to return on expected date, parent to inform school office
- Provide copies of medical appointment letters or cards. A covering letter must also be provided by the Parent or Legal Guardian and handed into the office on the child's return to school, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

#### **If your child is absent the school Admin Officer will:**

- Telephone on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with Senior Teachers and/or the Attendance Lead if absences persist;

#### **Children missing school:**

- When a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, Canonbury Primary School will seek advice from our Access and Engagement Officer at Islington's pupil services within five days of no contact. The safeguarding and inclusion team use contextual safeguarding records to inform how soon we consult with Islington pupil services.
- We may be advised by Islington pupil services to conduct a home visit. In such events, two members of staff will undertake home visits at all times.
- We will inform Islington children services, if after a home visit, concerns regarding lack of contact remain a worry. This is to ensure the well-being of both the child and parent/guardian.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

### **Illness**

In most cases a telephone call followed up by a written note or email from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. These absences will be authorised on receipt of a medical letter stating the time and date of the appointment.

### **Other Authorised Circumstances**

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package. We request that parents give notice to the school by completing a request for authorised absence form.

### **Excluded (No alternative provision made)**

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

### **Family Holidays and Extended Leave**

Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. Canonbury School has agreed that to ensure consistency in this process, all requests for holiday during school time will be refused. In such instances, the absence will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice a £60-£120 fine or a summons to court issued by the Local Authority.

### **Religious Observance**

Canonbury Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

### **Medical Conditions**

At Canonbury we automatically treat illness as authorised absence and with the local

authorities' help, support pupils' education throughout their illnesses. We also have an understanding and sensitive approach to children who may have periods of absence due to disability or long-term ill health. Please contact our Pastoral manager if you wish to discuss your child's attendance and punctuality in this context and allowances will be made.

#### 4. **Unauthorised absence**

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after 9.30am
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school

#### 5. **Lateness**

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect our children to be in the playground before this so they are ready to line up when the bell rings. The first bell rings at 8:50am with the second at 8:55am. On the second bell the children are led up to their classes by their class teachers.

The register will close at 9.00am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late and those arriving after 9:30am will have an unauthorised late mark.

Pupils who arrive after registration period has ended should go straight to the school office to sign in. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for. The child will receive a small card to notify their teacher that they have been to the office and have been marked in on the register as late.

Punctuality also applies to parents picking children up at the end of the day. The end of the school day is 3.15pm for Nursery and Reception. Years 1 and 2 end their school day at 3:20pm with years 3 to 6 finishing at 3:30pm. Children will go to the school office if they are not collected on time.

## **6. Support Systems**

At Canonbury, we recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make us aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

We will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Friendship groups
- Pastoral support and 'check ins'
- Reward systems
- Weekly class attendance rewards
- Termly individual attendance rewards
- Additional learning support

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion, agreement and consultation with both parents and pupils.

## **8. Roles and Responsibilities**

At Canonbury we believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

### **The Governing Body will:**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings

- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

**The Leadership Team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource – Attendance Lead
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the department for Children, Schools and Families when required and on time
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

### **The Attendance Lead will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Analyse registration data half-termly to identify any other factors that may be preventing the achievement of 96% attendance across the whole school.
- Meet with the Headteacher half termly to check recent pupil absences and identify any new attendance concerns and follow up those previously identified
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body
- Share attendance data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the local authority as required in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

### **Parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences, wherever possible make appointments outside of school hours



- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.

**-CANONBURY ATTENDANCE- A GUIDE FOR PARENTS-**

**1. When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school by 8:50 a.m. to be ready to go into class at 8:55. The first bell is at 8: 50am with the second at 8:55a.m. By 8:55am the children are expected to be lined up and ready to go into their classes.

**2. What happens if my child is late?**

Registration finishes at 9.00 in the morning and 1.30 in the afternoon. Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office. A series of 12 unauthorised late marks will result in a letter being sent home regarding your child's punctuality in the first instance and then a meeting will be arranged for persistent late marks.

**3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. We will telephone you if your child has not arrived in school by 9:30 a.m. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

An accumulation of unauthorised absences will result in a letter being sent home and/or meeting with Attendance Lead.

**4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment where evidence is given.  
(Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Immediate family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you will be asked to produce medical evidence.

**5. What is unacceptable absence?**

The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

## **6. Can we take family holidays during term-time?**

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays only. Family Holidays **will not** be authorised by the school. Taking a family holiday during term time can lead to the local authority issuing a penalty notice to parents starting from £60 per parent per child.

## **7. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his /her education.

## **8. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?**

Contact the schools Attendance Lead immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons such as difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

Please refer to the Attendance Policy for more information which can be found on the school website at [www.canonburyprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.canonburyprimaryschool.co.uk).





