



Where learning's an adventure

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Attendance Lead: Head Teacher: Ms Harsha Patel

### **Aims:**

#### **Our attendance policy aims to:**

- **Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality**
- **Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer to increase learning**
- **Enable pupils to transition smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school**
- **Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities**
- **Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets**

### **Legal Framework**

#### **The Education Act 1996 states that:**

#### **The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable —**

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

#### **A person begins to be of compulsory school age —**

- a) when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and
- b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.

#### **A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year —**

- a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- b) if they attain that age on that day, or
- c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Governing body**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff;
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents/carers, and children to implement the policy effectively;
- Nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance;

- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents/carers, children, and staff;
- Take time at governor's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year;
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff;
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

### **School leadership team**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues;
- Ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job;
- Report to the governing body *each term* and the lead governor for attendance *half-termly* on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

### **Teachers and support staff**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily;
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed;
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

### **Parents and carers**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school;
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home;
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations;
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (see section 4), and include an expected date for return;
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours;
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises;
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance;
- Do not take their children out of school during term time. If parents/carers would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher (see section 4.6);
- Sign a home-school agreement.

## **Pupils**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents/carers, and the school timetable;
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance;
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable;
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen;
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (see section 4.9). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is by their class teachers/form tutors. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation;

## **Introduction**

School Education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to the academic and social developments that will improve the life chances of children and young people. Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to optimise their learning and achieve the best they can.

Copenhagen Primary School is committed to working closely with parents and carers to achieve the maximum levels of regular and punctual attendance as possible and will seek the support of the Access and Engagement Team to do so.

In the case that you are finding it difficult to bring your child to school/on time to school you must request our support in solving these issues.

## **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Creating a learning environment where all pupils can achieve their maximum potential is everyone's responsibility. Establishing positive patterns of regular attendance is vital and everyone has a responsibility to help. This includes parents, children, and all members of staff. Also, promoted through whole school displays and certificates.

## **Expectations**

### **We expect that all pupils will**

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day

- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect school attendance.

### **We expect that all parents/carers will**

- Ensure regular attendance and punctuality be aware of their legal responsibility
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the day
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of absence or, if known in advance, whether child is unable to attend school.

### **What we will do**

- Keep you up to date with attendance levels in the school bulletin or letters
- Celebrate good attendance and punctuality by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance and punctuality through certificates;
- Organise promotional events when parents, pupils, and staff can work together on raising attendance and punctuality levels across the school.

### **Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded and classified with a code by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

**Only the Headteacher** can make this decision and record it.

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- High temperature/vomiting and diarrhea, emergency medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time;
- Major religious observances - no more than one day in any term and no more than three in any academic year;
- Visits to prospective new schools, external exams or educational assessments and in other exceptional circumstances, (e.g. a family bereavement).

**UNAUTHORISED** absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which "leave of absence" has not been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Some examples of this include:

- Parents/carers keeping their child away from school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences that have not been properly explained;
- Shopping trips, looking after other children or adults, or birthdays;

- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed.

### **Illness**

Whilst it is understood that any child can have an illness and be away from school for a given period, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are always best dealt with by the parents/carers contacting school immediately to discuss the issues.

If your child is reluctant to attend:

- Please do not cover up the absence;
- Please do not give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.

If you do either of these things, the situation will only worsen and become a habit and the causes will be harder to find and the resolution difficult.

The school needs to give careful consideration to the authorisation of absence for some pupils.

Pupils will be asked for evidence such as a medical certificate, appointment card, or a label from prescription medication.

Additionally the school may wish to refer to the school nursing service where there are health concerns or if there is a view that illness is being used as an excuse to cover other reasons for absence.

The school may also wish to seek the advice of the family GP having first discussed the matter with parents/carer to seek their permission to do this.

### **Dental/Medical Appointments**

Parents/carers should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or at the beginning or end of the school day. An appointment at the beginning of the school day should not result in a whole day's absence from school.

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

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they are absent from school for 10% or more across the school year for whatever reason. The reasons can be both authorised and unauthorised.

Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational achievement and future prospects. We will need the full support and co-operation of all parents to tackle this.

- We will monitor all absence thoroughly;
- If your child's attendance has reached or is in danger of reaching the PA level we will inform you immediately and make the case a priority

Pupils who have reached the PA level will be tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we will combine this with academic mentoring where absence is seen to affect progress and attainment

- The parents of PA pupils will be invited to a meeting with the

Headteacher and School Attendance Lead (Home Liaison Officer) to discuss their child's attendance;

## **Absence Procedures**

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

- Contact us via telephone or in person on the morning of the **first day** of absence; However, please note that this does mean that the absence has been authorised, simply that the school is aware that your child is absent;
- Complete a pink absence form the **first day** your child returns, with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already informed us;

### **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 (Home Liaison Officer) /Deputy Headteacher / if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Access and Engagement Team Service if attendance falls below 85%.

## **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of every day they can miss important learning and the opportunity of hearing vital information and news, and sharing class time with their friends.

Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons for everybody. Arriving late may also embarrass your child and unsettle them for the rest of the day.

### **What we will do:**

- The school gates open at **9:00 am** and we expect your child to make their way to their classroom.
- The school day begins at **9:10 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.
- Registers are marked at **9:10 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time;
- At **9.40 am** the registers will be closed; any child arriving after this time will then be marked as an unauthorised absence, (until we receive an acceptable reason explaining why they were so late).
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1:00 - Reception and Nursery, Y1 & 2 1:15pm, Yr 3,4,5 &6 -1:30pm

If the problem persists this may mean that you could face the possibility of a £60 penalty notice. As stated in Islington's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, this may be issued when a registered pupil has been late, (after the close of registration) for 12 or more sessions in any 6 week period.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Attendance Officer (Home Liaison Officer) to resolve the

problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school.

### **Leave during term time (Exceptional leave of absence)**

Taking leave 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 their child away in school time.

**The LA actively discourages holidays in term time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.**

If a holiday or leave of absence is taken during term time your child's absence will be marked as **unauthorised** and you may be served with a **Penalty Notice**.

### **The Attendance Service**

Parents are expected and encouraged to contact the school at an early stage and work together with school staff in resolving problems together. This approach is nearly always successful.

If this does not resolve the problem, the school will refer your child to the Attendance Leader (Home Liaison Officer).

To ensure that we promote early intervention and prevent absence from becoming chronic, this school together with the LA will make use of the **Fast Track to Attendance** process. This means that you and your child will work together with the Attendance Leader (Home Liaison Officer) over a 12-week programme of strategies and support in order to improve attendance.

It is important to note that once your child has been accepted on the Fast Track to Attendance Programme **no further absence will be authorised without medical evidence**.

If, after all efforts have been tried, the unauthorised absences persist; the matter will be referred to the Access and Engagement Service, whose officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Full details and information leaflets are available from the school and from the Local Authority.

### **Penalty Notices for Holidays**

In accordance with guidance from the London Borough of Islington, holidays during SATs will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

In line with the amendments to The Education (Penalty Notices England regulations 2007) please note the following:

- The headteacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to the parent/s of any pupil out of school for 5 or more day's (10 school sessions) holiday or leave of absence without authorisation from the school.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.

If there is no significant improvement in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued again, the Penalty Notice fines are as follows:  
£60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. If the Penalty notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

### **Religious observance**

**Copenhagen Primary School** recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. However, we still require parents to put these requests in writing to the headteacher.

### **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

To encourage excellent attendance above national averages at Copenhagen, robust school action plans are in place to initiate a consistent response to 3 attendance bands; For example:

Pupils with 100% termly attendance will be entered into a prize draw.  
Between 96% - 100% - a letter of congratulations will be sent from school  
Between 92% and 95% - a letter from school  
Between 85% and 91% - a letter from school and an Individual Attendance Action Plan / individual targets and possible referral to outside intervention.  
90% and below - a letter from school, Individual Attendance Plan / individual targets and referral to outside intervention.

### **School targets, projects, and initiatives**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in helping us to meet these targets and to aim higher in all aspects of their education.

The **minimum level of attendance** for this school is **96%** and the **school target** is **96.5%** we will keep you updated regularly about the progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our aim is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year we will 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 regular school bulletin or newsletter and we would ask for your full support.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. 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 level of attendance as possible.

**Copenhagen Primary School** recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

### **School Action: following up absences**

#### **Telephone Numbers/Contact Details**

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers in an emergency and about other things including absence from school. We must have contact telephone numbers and parental/carer details.

We need your help in ensuring that you have provided us with up to date telephone numbers and contact details – if we don't then something important may be missed.

We will make regular checks on telephone numbers and contact details throughout the year.

**The member of Leadership responsible for Attendance matters in this school is the Headteacher. Supported by Attendance Team: Admin Officer: Britta Eke and Attendance Leader: Silas Kidner (Home Liaison Officer)**

## **Early Years Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

*(adapted from Islington Council's model policy)*

***'Even when you're very small good attendance makes a BIG difference'***

### **Aim**

To promote good attendance and punctuality in partnership with parents and carers in Early Years, ensuring that good habits are formed early, so that children are school ready.

### **Rationale**

Regular early years attendance is important for all children, even babies, as it is only through regular, consistent routines that children build up the secure attachments they need for healthy development.

Research shows that regular part-time attendance from the age of 2 in a good quality early years setting has a lasting impact on children's social development and intellectual attainment throughout school. (Research Brief RBF15-03 The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education Project: Findings from the Pre-school Period. Sylva et al, IOE, 2003).

Islington's Early Years Foundation Stage profile results (2014) showed a clear correlation between children's attendance and their attainment of the 'good level of development' national standard.

Although education is not compulsory until the age of five, figures on attendance in reception classes are now published by the Department for Education. Ofsted take reception year attendance into account when a school is inspected.

Regular attendance has a positive impact on all aspects of a young child's learning and development. A regular routine supports the young child to feel settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which, in turn, prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available.

Once children are five, their attendance in school is statutory and Islington schools all have an attendance target of at least 96%. Establishing good habits of attendance in the early years will help to ensure that all children have at least 96% attendance by the time they enter reception class.

### **Procedures**

At Copenhagen Primary School we promote good attendance and punctuality by:

- Ensuring children attend for the expected hours
- Requiring parents to call the setting if they are going to be late or absent
- Requiring parents to report sickness
- Communicating with parents and following up on non-notification of absences as part of promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Encouraging parents of nursery age children to consider taking their children on holiday outside of term time, so that they are 'school ready' and get into good habits
- Monitoring children's attendance
- Consistently following up poor attendance and punctuality

### **Supporting Families**

We recognise that sometimes families may need extra support with attendance and punctuality, therefore good communication is essential between you and your key person. We will work with you to support your child's good attendance and punctuality. Where children's attendance is poor and not improving, we will talk to you about the available support from your local children's centre, for example, implementing bedtime routines, parenting classes.

### **Safeguarding**

We all have a duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm and very poor attendance can be an indication of neglect and be seen as a safeguarding issue. Children with below 85% attendance are regarded in school as persistent absentees and those with attendance of less than 60% are likely to be referred to Children's Social Care for neglect.

### **Withdrawing a place**

Clearly we will make every effort to support good attendance and punctuality, as suggested above. However, if there are no other indicators of concern or vulnerability and your child has failed to attend for 4-6 consecutive weeks or more, without a justifiable reason, we may withdraw your child's place. We can only do this once all other routes have been exhausted and the setting has provided evidence of this to and sought the approval of the Early Years Service.

The process for formally withdrawing a child's place is as follows:

- We will attempt to contact the family twice weekly to meet with them to seek a justifiable explanation (by telephone or home visit and followed up by email), including, of course, first day calling.
- The setting sends a recorded delivery letter during the fourth week to invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the situation and warning them of the action that will be taken after 6 weeks.
- We will continue to attempt twice weekly contact through phone and email
- We will send a recorded delivery letter in the final week, explaining that the place will be withdrawn on a specific date.

### **Transition**

If you decide to move your child to another setting then please inform us so that we can take them off of our register and send on records to the next setting to ensure smooth transition.

At Copenhagen Primary School we believe that:

- Regular attendance and good punctuality are important for maximising achievement and obtaining the greatest benefit from education
- Good relationships with children and their families are vital in encouraging regular attendance and punctuality
- Children settle well and want to attend settings when they feel valued and have a sense of belonging
- Good habits of attendance and punctuality are key skills for adult life

<b>Agreement of Parent/Carer</b>	
Signature:	Date:
Print name:	
Name of child:	

## APPENDIX 1

### Actions to be taken by School

	Attendance is 100%	Attendance is 92% to 95%	Attendance is 85% to 91%	Punctuality *3 or more lates in any 6 week period	Punctuality *3 or more lates in subsequent 6 week period
Step 1	Congratulations letter and entered into a prize draw	Will trigger a letter home.	A letter home. To attend a meeting with HSLO Class teacher and Headteacher	Will trigger a letter home. Breakfast club offered.	Parents/Carers called into school for a meeting to put support plan in place.
Step 2		School will closely monitor this and if it dips below 92% a letter will be sent home.	Attendance support plan put in place : Attendance Home school Agreement set targets	Punctuality monitored for next 6 weeks.	If poor punctuality continues liaise with Access and engagement team. Fine possible depending on circumstances. HT discretion.
Step 3			School will closely monitor the targets and meet with the family at a mid-point review and at end of the plan		

## APPENDIX 2



### REQUEST FOR AUTHORISATION OF ABSENCE

CHILD'S NAME .....CLASS.....

DATE(S) OF ABSENCE .....

REASON FOR ABSENCE:

**Illness** ..... (give proof to the school office e.g. prescription)

**Hospital** appointment (give copy of appointment letter to the school office)

**GP/dentist** appointment (give proof to the school office e.g. appointment card)

Term-time **holiday** or extended visit overseas (see below)

**Other** circumstances

.....  
..... (be specific)

We can only authorise absences when we are given a valid reason. In exceptional circumstances we may authorise absences when a child's attendance is 96% or above if you can provide proof of the event and travel documents.

I believe my child's absence should be authorised/unauthorised (please delete)

SIGNED .....

DATE:

#### OFFICE USE

If this form was not signed by the parent, please indicate how the message was received.

PHONE

VERBAL

OTHER