



New City Primary School

Attendance Policy and Procedures

Policy Creation and Review

Author(s)	Ms C Stone
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Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. New City Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 98% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Reduce the persistent absence of children across the school to 5%
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that Nursery and Reception aged children are aware of the expectations of our policy in order to promote good habits at an early age.

- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Persistent absence

If a child takes too much time off school they will become categorised as PA or persistently absent. (Attendance below 90% = persistent absence). Missing school will make a child fall behind in lessons and will impact on their academic progress and achievement.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To record concerns and letters home regarding attendance on Safeguard
- To refer to the Attendance Service for any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Newham LA, Governors and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at the school gates and at consultation evenings where necessary

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the LA Attendance Service

- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Attendance Officer
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Reporting to the Local Governing Body

Governors

The Governors are responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Challenging the school leadership to improve attendance

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance
- Ensuring that all parents have the StudyBugs App on their devices

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Downloading the StudyBugs app onto their device
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence via StudyBugs
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Not taking any time out during term time as this will not be authorised

Registration

All children should be lining up (KS2 and Y2) or at the classroom door (Reception and Y1) by 8:20 am.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and

afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 8:40am. All attendance records are documented using SIMs software and StudyBugs

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 8.30am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.30am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 8.30am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Attendance Strategy:

Whole School

Attendance is promoted by all staff at New City. Every day attendance an attendance monitoring sheet is completed so that every class teacher can see how well their class attendance is against the rest of the school. The class teacher can target parents at the gates to encourage attendance and identify barriers to attendance. Any issues are recorded on Safeguard.

Attendance is celebrated at a class level in the weekly newsletter and in weekly assemblies. At individual levels attendance is celebrated every 4 weeks in assembly and at the end of terms via certificates and medals at the end of the year.

A termly whole school letter is issued to parents regarding the importance of attendance to school.

ABSENCES

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence via StudyBugs. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence the school office will contact you via telephone and then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 8.30am to 8:40am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. Remote learning can be set up for extended periods of absence due to illness.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school or access to remote learning.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 98%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the LA Attendance service.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Attendance Officer checks and monitors attendance. Children with attendance below 90% are followed up by a meeting being set up with the Attendance Officer and the Head Teacher.

Concerns Process:

1. Attendance falls below 95% a letter is issued to the parents -see template 1
2. Attendance does not improve a second letter is issued - see template 2
3. If no improvement after this point, a meeting is set up with the Attendance Officer and the Headteacher. Referrals are then made to the LA.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff, has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher and the Safeguarding team to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Punctuality

All children are expected to be in the playground lining up at 8:20am. The bell goes at 8:25 and children start their learning at 8:30. Being punctual to school ensures that all children have a successful start to their day. Punctuality is closely monitored by the pastoral team. Parents of children who are persistently late are contacted by the school and meetings are set up with team leaders and the head teacher to provide support to ensure that all parties work together to ensure children arrive to school on time.

Late Collection of Children

It is important that children are collected from school at the end of the day on time at 2.50pm. If a child has a club or tuition then they need to be collected on time. It is very distressing for children who are not collected on time. If children are persistently late (3 times) being collected then the school will impose a £10 fine.

Template 1

Dear Parent / Carer, of

RE: ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

I'm writing to express my concern at _____'s recent high levels of absence from school.

His(her) current attendance has fallen to ____%. Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on her academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support _____'s education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help her to address gaps in learning due to absence.

We will be monitoring his/her attendance closely and hope to see an improvement soon.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Stone
Headteacher

Template 2

Date

Dear parents/carers

RE: (first name) surname) Attendance class

I am writing to you to make you aware that (first name) has missed (x) sessions of learning this academic year. As a result, (first name) is currently classed as 'persistent absent' by the Department of Education. Missing out on lessons makes learning difficult and leaves your child vulnerable for falling behind.

Insert graph

The average number of sessions missed by your child's classmates is (x) sessions. This puts your child at a disadvantage and I am writing to ask if there is anything that the school can do to help improve (first name)'s future attendance. Like you, we want to give (first name) the very best chance of doing well.

We are aware that absence due to illness cannot be avoided. However, if there are other difficulties that are making attendance a challenge, please do not hesitate to get in touch so that the school can offer support.

Yours sincerely

Template 3

Dear Parent / Carer of

RE: ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

I'm writing to express our concern at -----'s continued high levels of absence from school.

His/her current attendance has fallen to ____%. Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on his/her academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support -----'s education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help him to address gaps in learning due to absence.

If we do not see an improvement in -----'s attendance we have the power to request that the local authority issue a penalty notice for unauthorised absence.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Stone
Headteacher

Template 4

Dear

Re: Persistent Lateness Meeting

Since sending you our last letters on we regret to inform you that your child is still arriving late to school.

As such we are inviting you into meet with us to discuss ways in which we can help your child improve their punctuality to school.

The meeting will take place on:

Date:

Time:

If you are unable to attend please don't hesitate to contact the attendance team to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

Punctuality is an essential requirement for effective schooling. When a child arrives late to school it means that they are missing valuable learning time and spend the rest of the day catching up. This can be very disruptive for your child and for the class. All children need to arrive on time to school so they can settle into their learning for the day.

Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

The Attendance Team

Links to other policies:

- Safeguarding policy