

Attendance Policy

This policy reflects the vision of Purley Oaks Primary School:

At Purley Oaks we firmly believe that every child will be supported, valued and challenged. We are ambitious for our children and their families and are driven by our moral purpose to ensure that everything we do has a positive impact on the children's lives. We are determined that our children will take pride in their learning and themselves and that they will strive for excellence.

By working closely together and continuously improving our practice, there is no limit to what can be achieved.

Purley Oaks Primary School encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***'parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly.'*** (DEF 1999).

Responsibility of Parents and Carers

Regular attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Punctuality

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility:

- To ensure that children are not on the school premises before 8:30am
- To ensure that children are ready to be collected from the playground by their teachers at 8.40am
- To ensure children who are late report to the school office via the main entrance and to sign them in.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day
- To ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for their children's journey home.

Absences

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility:

- To notify the school on the morning of the first day of absence before 9:30am or as early as possible. Full details of reason for absence must be given i.e. 'stomach pains and headache' rather than 'ill'.
- To provide medical evidence, if possible, on their child's return.
- To ensure that all medical appointments re the child are arranged outside of school times as far as possible and, where this is not possible, children attend school before and after the appointment.
- To inform the office in advance of any medical or other appointments that the child has to attend providing evidence for the school's records
- To liaise with the school re specific problems that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick child or parent/carer.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am.

Absence for Medical Appointments

Parents must make every effort to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should attend school before the appointment and be returned to school directly after the appointment whenever possible.

Absence for Holidays

Parents must not withdraw a child for a holiday during term time. Parents are expected to take family holidays during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education. Therefore, absence for holidays will not be authorised. Fixed penalty notices will be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable per child, per parent (£60 currently).

Requests for leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Authorisation may be granted in very exceptional circumstances, at the Head Teacher's discretion only.

Parents requesting leave must complete the appropriate request form well in advance (at least 4 weeks). All authorisations for holiday absence are at the discretion of the Head Teacher who applies government recommendations in this area.

It is the parent's/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a holiday / leave of absence form from the office.
- To complete and submit a holiday form at least one month before the period of absence.

If parents decide to take a holiday without the Head Teacher's authorisation, their child's absences will be recorded as '**unauthorised**'. These absences remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer/Attendance Officer. Cases where there is a holiday taken are referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Holidays that are not requested will be unauthorised also and may incur a fine.

A fixed penalty fine may be imposed by the Local Authority for unauthorised holiday absence.

Absence for Other Reasons

Absences for reasons such as days of religious observance (up to 2 days per year), close family bereavements *may* also be authorised by the Head Teacher. These requests must be discussed with the school.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility:

- to inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance;
- to inform the school as soon as possible when sudden, serious circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

Unexplained Absence

When a child is absent and the parents/carers give no satisfactory reason for the absence, the parents/carers will be investigated and may be liable to prosecution/penalty fine by the Authority.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Regular, weekly monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer, the AO and the SAHT. If a child absent with no valid reason, a fixed penalty notice warning will be given to the child's parents/carers. Meetings may also be held with parents to discuss the absences and any appropriate support.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a child is absent for at least 5 consecutive days the EWO will be notified. An unannounced home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a CME case to the local authority.

Persistent Latecomers

Children are collected from the playground at 8.40am. In class, they will do 'Early Work' which reinforces their learning. The register closes at 8.55am, after which the children will be marked as late. The AO monitors lateness and issues warning letters to parents who are regularly bringing their children to school after the registers close. In addition, the Education Welfare Officer does **unannounced** gate checks and a fixed penalty notice warning is issued to persistent latecomers. Parents should note that children who arrive late after 9:25am are counted as absent and this will affect the individual child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notice warnings are given to parents whose children persistently arrive late.

Pre-School Children

The school focuses on promoting good attendance and punctuality in EYFS so that good habits are formed.

The School's Role

- Designated senior staff leading attendance: Mrs Ann Peters, Senior Assistant Head Teacher
- Designated attendance officer/first day of absence phone calls: Mrs C. Payne.
- Designated person for adding attendance information on SIMS: Mrs C. Payne.

The school has the responsibility to ensure that all children receive a minimum of 23½ hours teaching time per week. This does not include time for registration or break times.

The school's role is:

Daily Procedures

- To supervise children on the playground from 8:40am.
- To ensure that the children are safe by shutting the doors and locking gates by 9.00am.
- To register the children promptly. In the morning, at 8.40 in Nursery and 8.55 in all other year groups. In the afternoon, as follows: 12:20pm in Nursery; 12.30pm in Reception and year 1; 12.45pm in year 2; 1.00pm in year 3; 1.15pm in year 4; 1.30pm in year 5; 1.40pm in year 6.
- To ensure that registers are closed for 'late arrivals' by 9:25am.
- To maintain registers and record absence appropriately.
- To mark children who arrive in class after 8:55am as late.
- To mark children who arrive after 9:25am as '**Unauthorised Absence**'.
- To ensure Year 6 children who arrive at school late make up the lost minutes of learning at break time.
- To maintain a First Day Contact System, which includes:
 - Maintaining a system so that parents can report on absence;
 - Employing a member of staff available to take these calls, record late arrivals and investigate unexplained absences;
 - Checking registers daily for unexplained absences;
 - Telephoning/ texting parents who have not contacted the school with the reason for absence, after 9:30am on the first day of absence. During periods of high absence, e.g. flu epidemic, priority will be given to:
 - Children on the Child Protection Register or involved with Social Services;
 - Children where there is a particular concern, e.g. Children Looked After, family medical issues;
 - Children whose parents are normally fastidious in making first day contact.
- Sending letters home to parents who cannot be contacted, asking the parent to explain the reason for the child's absence.
- To discourage parents from taking children out of school for odd days and holidays.
- To not authorise holidays
- N.B. Holidays which are not authorised by the Head Teacher will be recorded as '**unauthorised absence**'.

Monitoring Procedures

- To write to parents regularly, raising the profile of attendance issues, reminding them of their responsibilities and requesting up to date information regarding contact numbers.

- To monitor absence and lateness, using SIMS Attendance manager, looking for patterns, analysing vulnerable groups and taking appropriate action. This might involve closer supervision of individual pupils, standard letters to parents, meetings with parents in school, referral to the School Attendance/Education Welfare Officer;
- To investigate and discuss with EWO, any unexplained absence which exceeds 5 days;
- To arrange home visits by EWO if no contact can be made with parents after 5 days;
- To hold a meeting with parents when any unexplained absence exceeds 10 days;
- To refer to CME after 10 days if there is no contact made
- To investigate and discuss with EWO absences which total more than 10%;
- To investigate late arrivals which total more than 5%
- To alert the School Attendance/Education Welfare Officer, to any concerns regarding absence, punctuality, or parents/carers repeated failure to contact the school; and to make referrals when appropriate.
- To regularly monitor pupils categorised as Persistently Absent (below 90%) and / or those at risk of becoming PAs.
- To liaise within the Inclusion team, Family Support Manager and Family Support Worker to target and offer support and early intervention to families via Early Help pathways and in-house support systems.
- Consider carefully which children may be offered 'pick-up' service in the mornings to ensure punctuality and attendance.
- To write to parents of children regularly arriving late with number of minutes learning child lost in previous month.
- To monitor attendance for children who make progress throughout the year so that this can be acknowledged with an award (book).
- SAHT meet with Y6 children whose attendance is dropping; sharing their registration certificates with them and discussing impact on learning.

Reporting Procedures

- To send details of 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' absences to the DfES as required.
- To publish individual 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' absence figures on each pupil's termly school reports.
- To publish attendance data in the School Prospectus and the School Profile.
- To publish attendance data in the Head Teacher's Report to the Governing Board and the School Progress Report for Governors
- To report accurate whole school annual attendance figures to the DfES, monitor attendance and set targets to reduce absence.
- To report and monitor attendance for children on Child Protection and Child in Need plans during Core groups and Case conferences.
- Class teachers to discuss attendance and punctuality with parents at Parents' Consultation meetings
- Year Group Leaders to report on attendance for previous half term in newsletters, highlighting any targets for their year group.
- Year Group Leaders to highlight importance of punctuality in newsletter including implications of arriving at school late.
- To share school leaflet on attendance with parents annually and especially on Open Days.

Rewards for Children

- To reward classes with the highest attendance and lowest number of lates each week. Trophies and school owl mascot are awarded.

- To reward children with 100% attendance in a week with a House Point, with another for being on time every day in a week.
- To reward children who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality each month by entering them in a Prize Draw for their phase (book prize)
- To award House Points in Assembly each month, to reward 100% attendance and punctuality – 40 points to the highest; 30 to 2nd place; 20 to 3rd; 10 to 4th
- To reward children who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality, for a term or year, with wrist bands and Attendance Certificates.

Continuous Development

- To devise an Action Plan annually to drive progress on attendance for the school

Review Date: October 2017

Next Review: October 2018