



# Attendance Policy

## Overview

At Richard Cobden we believe that good and punctual attendance at school is vital for every child as it is essential for good learning and progress, and prepares them for adulthood by giving them a positive work ethos early in life. If a child attends school regularly and on time, this helps them to become organised and reliable, two qualities which are valued by employers.

We provide high quality teaching and learning experiences to help all pupils reach their full potential. Our curriculum is planned on the basis that children will be at school every day and on time, so that they are able to get the most out of what is on offer and make the most progress possible.

## Parental Requests for Leave during Term Time

The school will not grant permission for any ordinary family holidays during term time. However, Exceptional Leave during term time may possibly be granted at the discretion of the head teacher in only the most exceptional circumstances where for example:

- The leave is important for the well-being and cohesion of the family following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events within the family.
- There is an exceptional circumstance that requires a family to be away for an emergency that cannot be managed otherwise and alternative child care arrangements cannot be made.

In deciding whether to authorise any periods of Exceptional Leave, the school will consider the nature of the emergency, whether there are already any concerns regarding the child's attendance or concerns about their learning and progress.

Where unauthorised holidays or leave are taken without permission from the school, because a request has not been made or has been denied, these will be recorded as "unauthorised absence" or "unauthorised holiday" and the school may refer you to the Education Welfare Service for a Penalty Notice to be issued. Parents may lose their child's place at the school if they have taken excessive unauthorised leave during term time.

If a parent/carer is granted Exceptional Leave and the child does not return on the specified return date, any further absences will be marked as unauthorised and the school may refer you to the Education Welfare Service for a Penalty Notice to be issued. If leave is authorised and the child does not return within 10 days of the expected date, they may be taken off the school roll and the parent will have to reapply for a new place

Thirteen weeks of school holidays a year is deemed more than sufficient time for family holidays to be taken in. There is no justification for children to leave before term ends and a cheaper fare is not a reason to miss any school.

## The School's Expectations

All children of compulsory school age between 5 and 16 are required by law to attend school every day on time, to receive an education and it is the parents legal obligation to ensure that this takes place.

The school expects that all children will attend school every day during term time, unless there is a good reason not to and will arrive on time, appropriately dressed, well rested and fed for the school day. Our minimum expectations for each child's attendance is: **96%**.

If a child is unable to attend school, parents/carers must contact the school office each day between 8.30-9.30am. If this is not possible, a letter explaining the absence must be provided to the school. If the reason provided is acceptable, then the school will authorise the absence.

Parents/carers should ensure that their child is appropriately dressed in school uniform and that they arrive in school well prepared for the school day with homework completed and PE/swimming kit, reading or Library books as appropriate to the timetable.

As a school we will do the following:

- ensure that there are efficient and accurate systems to record attendance and time keeping.
- contact parents/carers direct if their child fails to attend school and they have not told the school why.
- contact parent/carers if there is a pattern of authorised/unauthorised absences or lateness.
- take immediate confidential action on any problems related to attendance notified to us by parents
- take positive measures to encourage good attendance
- work with Camden Safeguarding and Educational Welfare Service regarding welfare concerns
- ensure that when pupils are at school they receive a high quality education

### Expected attendance level

Camden borough expects all students to achieve an attendance level of at least **95%** in every school year. The school encourages pupils to have attendance as close to 100% as possible, taking into consideration occasions when a child is too ill and unfit to come to school.

Attendance %	How well are you doing?
99% & 100%	Excellent
96% - 98%	Good
Below 95%	Poor
Below 90%	Persistent Absentee

## Positive Measures to Encourage Good Attendance

It is the school's aim to work with our families to ensure that pupils have very good attendance and that if there are any issues that may be a barrier to this happening, they are dealt with swiftly, sensitively and in a supportive manner. We work in partnership with our Home School Link Officer and Education Welfare Officer to meet these aims to ensure that the best interests of the children is always achieved and pupils do not lose out on their education.

To achieve this we will use the following measures:

- Ensure that Registers are completed accurately at the start of each day so we are aware of children who are not at school and find out why.
- Class teachers will monitor attendance in their class daily and raise concerns where appropriate.
- Senior leader for attendance will monitor attendance and punctuality, identify concerns and action.
- Classes will be rewarded with certificates or prizes for high attendance.
- Pupils with 100% annual attendance will be rewarded with certificates and prizes.
- Meetings will be held between parents/carers and Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher and the Education Welfare Officer where attendance falls below 90%, without good reason.
- Where issues specific to a family cannot be resolved by normal school intervention, the Home School Link Officer and/or Education Welfare Officer will provide individual support where appropriate.
- Vulnerable pupils are provided with additional support and interventions are monitored particularly closely to ensure that any potential negative impact on their learning is prevented or managed.

## Punctuality/ Lateness

It is very important that pupils arrive to school on time. This ensures children have a good start to the day. It also shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids disruption to their learning. All children who arrive in school after the bell rings are to be marked late. Before 9.30am, your child will be marked as late and after 9.30am, they will be marked as unauthorised absence.

If your child is persistently late after the register is closed, the Education Welfare Officer may require parents to attend a Meeting with a view to advising how to avoid legal incurring action against them.

## Medical Appointments

If a child misses more than half the morning or afternoon session because of a medical appointment this will be recorded in the register as 'M' - authorised absence. Parents will be required to provide some form of evidence to the school office for these appointments. If your child is absent on the day/s just before or after a school holiday period, you will be required to provide medical evidence to prove they were ill. If your child is persistently absent due to illness, following a meeting with the school/Education Welfare Officer, you will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences due to illness or your child's absence may not be authorised.

## Responding to Non-Attendance

- If no letter or telephone call is received from parents/carers on the day of absence, the school will make contact. If there is still no response, then a letter will be sent from the school. Where attendance is causing concern, a letter will be sent informing the parent of the current level of attendance and requesting improvement.
- In continued non-attendance, where attendance falls below 85%, parents/carers will be required to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to agree ways in which attendance should be improved. These cases will be closely monitored to ensure improvement occurs.
- If there is a serious concern, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare officer and home visits will be carried out. Legal action is a possible outcome if there is no improvement.

## Penalty Notices

As a part of the government's drive to tackle poor school attendance, Ministers introduced Fixed Penalty notices - parents/carers commit an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are unauthorised. A penalty notice aims to improve a child's attendance at school and will be requested for the following reasons:

- Your child's attendance drops to 90% or below
- Your child takes a holiday/exceptional leave during term time without permission
- Your child has 8 unauthorised late arrivals to school within a 8 week period
- Your child is stopped by the truancy patrol within the first 5 days of any exclusion period.

A fixed penalty notice is payable at £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days and but rises to £120 inclusive if paid between days 21-28. If the fixed penalty notice is not paid, depending on circumstances parents/carers may be prosecuted in the local magistrate's court; this can attract a fine of up to £1,000.

Effective From	September 2017
Review Date	July 2019