



Attendance Policy

FEBRUARY 2017

1. Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

2. Parents/Carer responsibilities

- Make sure your children of compulsory school age (Reception to Year 6) are educated to the fullest extent and arrive to school on time
- Inform school on the first day of absence and secure prior authority for authorised absences (medical evidence if the attendance is below 90% will need to be provided)
- Co-operate with school and the Education Welfare Service if there are attendance problems
- Avoid booking holidays during term time. These will not be authorised unless special circumstances have been highlighted
- Where possible avoid booking medical appointments during school time. Evidence will need to be provided.
- SATs week in May is of great importance and should not be missed
- To make sure that your child has had a good night's sleep - children need to be wide-awake to learn.

- To ensure that staff complete registers accurately and efficiently in the morning and afternoon
- To ensure that attendance data is accurately entered on SIMS and to seek clarity from the attendance lead if needed
- To inform the Education Welfare Service at The Learning Trust about continued/regular absence or habitual lateness.
- Regularly report attendance levels and any particular problems to the governing body
- Report to parents/carers at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements. This will also be shared on the school website and newsletter
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events
- Liaise with outside agencies including Social Services and provide attendance updates/reports/concerns

4. Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding:- Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

5. The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that '*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

All children of compulsory school age (Reception to Year 6) are required to receive an education. As parents/carers you are responsible for ensuring your child receives an education. You risk criminal prosecution if your child fails to attend regularly, and punctually, at the school where s/he is registered. Prosecutions may result in fines of up to £2,500 and/or the possibility of a three months imprisonment. Courts may at their discretion impose a parenting order or direct the Local Educational Authority to apply for an Education Supervision Order which puts a child of compulsory school age, who is not being properly educated under LEA.

6. Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. 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, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to Hackney Learning Trust using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Attending weddings during term time
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

7. **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Hackney Learning Trust School Attendance Officer. On attendance/Punctuality - London Fields works closely with **Denise Howard** (School Attendance Officer) and she can be contacted on 0208 820 7270.

8. **Absence Procedures**

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us
- Provide medical evidence (medical appointment card/GP/hospital note/prescription) for lengthy absences (more than 3 days)

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text 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/Assistant Headteacher if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the Hackney Learning Trust Education Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

9. Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

10. The School Attendance Officer (Hackney Learning Trust)

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from Hackney Learning Trust. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as **Penalty Notices** or **prosecutions** in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Hackney Learning Trust. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the SAO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice.

11. Lateness/Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Please be advised that lateness is recorded and specific codes attached depending to how late the child is.

How we manage lateness at London Fields

The school day starts at **9am** and we expect your child to be in class/assembly at that time. The main gates are open from **8.45am**. If your child comes into the school via main

reception (after the main gates have been locked) – this indicates that your child is late and will be recorded as late on the register.

At **9.25am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a **Penalty Notice** if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

12. Holidays In Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance (form can be obtained from main reception) and at the discretion of the school (**Authorised by Mr Nedal Al-Chamaa – School Attendance/Punctuality Lead**) a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised – only for an exceptional reason. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. It is important that parents/carers fully understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS), or any other important assessments
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice/fine.

13. School targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. London Fields over the past few years has made steady progress on attendance and this has clearly benefited the children.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

14. Summary

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 a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.