



Fleet Primary School

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Attendance Policy – October 2018

MISSION STATEMENT

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2018

Fleet Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. Research both locally and nationally demonstrates a clear link between good attainment and good attendance.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Fleet Primary School will establish an effective and efficient system of:

- communication with pupils
- parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information
- advice and support

STATUTORY DUTIES

This policy is written in relation to the following acts of parliament and guidance relating to attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments (most recent 2016)
- Social Inclusion: Student Support, DfES Circular 10/99.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- LB Camden Attendance Strategy 2007 and Enforcement Strategy 2018
- We will also take regard to new legislation and initiatives.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Exceptional Leave:

Exceptional Leave should not be taken during term time except in exceptional circumstances, when authority should be requested from the Headteacher. There is no automatic right to a request being agreed. Where unauthorised absence is taken the school will take relevant action and this may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service. This could lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice/s to parents if a child is taken out of school during term time without written permission from the Headteacher. Penalty Notices are used as an alternative to taking legal action through the courts, but court action may also be used. Payment is £60, per parent per child, if paid within 21 days. If the Notice is not paid within 21 days, the amount will increase to £120 between days 21- 28. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid the LA may then take the matter to court.

Punctuality:

This policy also seeks to encourage punctuality. Children can arrive at school from 8.30am (8am for breakfast club or before school clubs). The junior playground is open from 8.30am for all children with a member of staff on duty. A bell is rung at 8.45am at which point classrooms are open. Children can either go up to class or continue to play in the playground. Parents are free to go up to class to chat with the class teacher at 8.45am too but should leave at 9.00am so the teacher can take the register and start the day. At 9.00am the bell is rung again to signal to all the children they now need to go up to class. All children must then go up to class and the register is taken. At this point the gate to the playground is locked and entry to school is via the office. Children arriving in school after 9.00am are recorded as being late and they need to be signed in the late book as they pass through the office. Where children repeatedly arrive late the school will work with the family to help overcome barriers to good punctuality. If a pupil arrives at school after 9.30am they will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence. If a pupil has more than eight unauthorised lates within an eight week period a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service to issue a Penalty Notice. Payment is £60, to be paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid within 21 days, the amount will increase to £120. **The Notice will also apply per parent per child.**

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A LONG ABSENCE?

The school is sensitive to the needs and circumstances of pupils returning after significant periods of absence and will support the smooth reintegration of pupils both academically and socially. In such circumstances the school works with parents, carers and pupil towards an agreed reintegration plan which may include opportunities for counselling and feedback, peer support and mentoring and an agreed review period.

THE TIMETABLE

School starts at 9.00 am. Children can arrive at school from 8.30 am (Breakfast club and some before school clubs start at 8am). From 8.30am the children can either play in the playground under supervision of a staff member or go up to class. The bell is rung at 9am at which point all children are expected to go up to class for the register and to start lessons.

School ends at 3.30pm (3.20pm for Nursery). Parent and carers should meet children at 3.30pm unless extended hours arrangements are in place such as clubs or collection by 3 Acres Play Service.

Each parent/carer must complete a form with contact telephone number details and address of anybody who is designated to pick up your child from school. Should parents wish to change this list of names the school will need written consent from the parent in advance. If children are repeatedly not collected on time then, following discussion with the parent, a referral to appropriate support services will be made.

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – AIMS

1. To improve the overall percentage of pupils at school. National target is 96%. At Fleet, 2017-18 was 95.34%
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To facilitate a system of rewards and sanctions.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
9. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Procedure

Fleet Primary School intends to improve attendance each year; our current target is for students to achieve a minimum attendance level of 96%, through meeting the aims as set out below.

AIM NO 1

To Improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at School

1. Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
2. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
3. Relate attendance issues directly to the school's vision and values.
4. Monitor progress in attendance and achieve measurable outcomes
5. Conduct an annual school attendance audit.

AIM No 2

To Make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for All Those Associated with the School Including Pupils, Parents, Teachers and Governors

1. Produce termly attendance reports to parents/governors.
2. Promote the school attendance policy and to make it accessible to all.
3. Celebrate good attendance in the school newsletters.
4. To ensure all parents/governors are aware of information pertaining to the start and end times of the school day and close of register times.
5. Provide INSET training for appointed/promoted staff.
6. Display materials at focal points – entrance area etc.
7. Discuss attendance issues in pupil progress reviews and staff evaluation meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings.
8. Fleet points awarded to classes for best attendance each week in sharing assembly.
9. End of term celebration of individual attendance and punctuality.

AIM NO 3

To Develop a Framework Which Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in Carrying Out Designated Tasks

1. Maintain procedures for statutory registration.
2. Make phone/letter contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.

4. Have clear punctuality procedures to develop the whole school and respond to post-registration truancy.
5. Initiatives – after each attendance review period arrange to meet with families where attendance is <90%.
6. Initiatives - Letters to parents whose children have attendance below 96% at end of each term. Re-iterate importance of attendance and offer to meet to discuss.
7. Appoint a Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance and procedures.
8. Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure.
9. Timetable staff to meet with Education Welfare Officer/Attendance Officer, making best use of Education Welfare Officer's time.
10. Have clear procedures prior to referral to Education Welfare Officers
11. Review attendance regularly.
12. Regularly review and, where necessary, update the school attendance policy.

AIMS NO 4

To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils

1. Highlight attendance in:
 - Curriculum - SEAL/ PSHE/Citizenship
 - Assemblies
 - Governors meetings
 - Staff available to talk to pupils
 - School counsellor/CAMHS
 - Mentors' system
 - Making use of available resources
 - Breakfast clubs
 - After school clubs
 - Displays
2. Seek improved communication with parents.
3. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
4. Involve parents from earliest stage
5. Inform parents of new initiatives/legislation.

AIM NO 5

To Develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data

1. To have an efficient data gathering system.
2. Standardised use of registration codes in line with DCSF guidance issued in 2018.
3. Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.
4. Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance, persistent absences and lateness and ensure appropriate intervention and support is provided.
5. Decide what information, if any, is provided for:
 - Governors
 - Pastoral staff
 - Other school staff
 - Parents
 - Pupils (individual or groups)
 - Education Welfare Service

AIM NO 6**To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication between Home and School**

1. Initiate first day absence contact.
2. Make full use of computer generated letters /leaflets/information.
3. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents
4. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships.
5. Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written).
6. Provide opportunities for parents to be discuss concerns with staff.

AIM NO 7**To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions**

1. Identify finance for a system of rewards.
2. Actively promote attendance and associated reward and effective sanctions.
3. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
4. Make use of imaginative and immediate sanctions.
5. Take action which accords with objectives agreed between school and others, eg. Education Welfare Officer, parent, Early Help, Social Services.
6. Have displays in key areas publicising reward procedures links to attainment, benefits of good attendance and punctuality.

AIM NO 8**To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other Services and Agencies**

1. Designated key staff for liaison with Education Welfare Service and other agencies.
2. Give priority to timetabled meetings with Education Welfare Service.
3. Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
4. Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Education Welfare Service.
5. Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community e.g. safer schools police contact officer.
6. Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.
7. Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.

AIM NO 9**To Recognise the Needs of the Individual Pupil When Planning Reintegration following Significant Periods of Absence**

1. Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
2. Involve/inform all staff in/or reintegration process.
3. Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
4. Consider peer support and mentoring. Involve parents as far as possible.
5. Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
6. Include Education Welfare Officers, parents and pupil in reintegration plan.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The aims above require people from the school community to action. Below is a breakdown of what the different roles and responsibilities are across the school community.

HEAD TEACHER

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave – these will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and decisions made after reflection in terms of child's usual pattern of attendance and punctuality, as well as the reason requested and impact of missing school on the individual child's learning
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Local Authority policies and procedures.

HEAD & DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER & SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Administrator to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

ADMIN/OFFICE STAFF

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for each year groups and give to class teacher.
- To ensure correct codes are inputted for absences and lateness – children are coded a late after 9am, with a further code of late after register closes (and classified as unauthorised absence) if later than 9.30am.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the HT/DHT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for DHT/SMT/SLT to analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To contact parents/carers by letter in line with the aims previously mentioned
- To maintain MIS attendance records in line with this policy.
- To liaise with, and report to, outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- To maintain clear communications with the staff regarding attendance and punctuality within their year groups.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To support HT/DHT with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives

TEACHING STAFF

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the online register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's MIS system at 9.00 am and 1.30 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the HT/DHT, of pupils who persist with poor attendance/punctuality.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

PARENTS

- Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing and on each subsequent day of illness.
- **If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches, cold etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents, to collect them.**
- If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know and provide the appointment letter for school to record. Pupils' should be brought into school before and/or back to school after appointments. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible.**
- **Therefore, parents are expected to:**
 - Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day – soft start, playground and classrooms are open before school with registers closing at 9am. Any child arriving in class after this time is considered late.
 - Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school with the basic equipment required for lessons.
 - Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
 - Not book holidays in term time.
 - Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child and any subsequent days they are off.
 - Provide an explanation of any absence, supported by evidence of medical help sought if absence extends to 5 days or more. Where there are issues with attendance school, in collaboration with the Education Welfare Service, may request evidence of illness for shorter illnesses.
 - Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning or attendance.

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY THROUGH THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is responsible for:

- monitoring, supporting and assisting good school attendance in all Camden schools.
- The EWO monitors school attendance registers and holds consultation meetings with the Headteacher and obtains referrals from the school.
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- The EWO may meet a parent/carer and child in school, write to parents/carers, arrange a home visit and refer to other professional agencies. The results of these interventions are reported to the school. Failure to comply with the interventions of the EWO can lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or magistrate court proceedings. This policy brings your attention to the right of the school to refer a child to EWS for persistent unauthorised leave who can issue a Penalty Notice which is charged at £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid within 28 days. If payment is not paid within 28 days the Education Welfare Service may seek proceedings against the parent in the Magistrates Court. If the case is proven in Court this can attract a fine up to £2500 and/or or up to three months in prison, and a potential criminal record.
- Upholding and enforcing the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD THE SCHOOL BRING IN THE EDUCATIONAL WELFARE OFFICER (EWO)?

Before contacting the EWO the school will make every attempt to make contact with the parent or carer by telephone and in writing. In the first instance we would invite them to discuss the problem. If this is unsuccessful the school gives warning of referral to a EWO. A referral may be made to the EWO under the following circumstances:

- 10 days of continuous unauthorised absence
- More than 10 days of authorised leave
- A holiday taken without permission
- A pupil who has been more than 30 minutes late more than eight occasions within an eight week period.
- 90% or less attendance

A Penalty Notice/s is issued per parent per child based on the school contact details. If a parent moves out of the family home they will need to produce proof of their new address dated with the last 12 months or they may still receive a Penalty Notice. Acceptable documents for this would be a tenancy agreement, Council Tax statement, Housing Benefit form or a driver's license, all stating that the parent lives at the claimed new address.

Head Teacher: Don McGibbon

Chair of Governors Signature: Kim Issroff

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