

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. The Law

- 1.1. This policy was written in line with Redbridge's Attendance Policy
- 1.2. A child of compulsory school age who is registered at school must by law attend regularly. Regular attendance is an expectation.
- 1.3. Only the school can authorise the absence of a registered child.
- 1.4. In law, under the education Acts of 1996 and 2006, parents/carers have the prime responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly. They risk prosecution, a fine and/or removal from the school roll if they do not do this.

2. Absence

- 2.1. Parents agree to support full attendance when they sign the Home School Agreement, upon a child's admission to the school.
- 2.2. On the first day of a child's absence from school, the parents or carers have a responsibility to inform the school of the reason for absence. On the child's return to school it is also the parents/carers responsibility to provide the school in writing a record of this reason.
- 2.3. On the first day of a child's unexplained absence the school office will attempt to make contact with the child's parents/carers by telephone to ascertain his/her whereabouts.
- 2.4. The school will make every attempt to discuss reasons for a child's absence with the parents/carers. If there are continued problems of absence that cannot be resolved, such cases will be referred to the Education Welfare service.

3. Authorisation of absence

- 3.1. Authorised absence is defined as any absence that is authorised by the Head Teacher:
 - When a child is off sick and an acceptable explanation has been received
 - A medical appointment
 - A day of religious observance
 - Where a child has been temporarily excluded from school
 - Exceptional circumstances (by agreement with the Head Teacher)
 - School closure due to unforeseen circumstances
- 3.2. By law, only the school can approve absence, not parents. The school decides whether explanations given for absences are satisfactory.

4. Unauthorised absence

- 4.1. Unauthorised absence is defined as any absence that is not authorised by the Head Teacher.
- 4.2. All periods of unauthorised absence for a child of statutory school age will incur a fine of £60 per parent per child, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 d1 days, as well as a referral to the school's Educational Welfare Officer.

5. Lateness

- 5.1. A child will be recorded as late in the register if he/she is not present within 10 minutes of the start of the school session.
- 5.2. If a child arrives after 10 minutes this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

- 5.3 Legal proceedings can be initiated on behalf of the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, Section 444 (1) and (1a)
- 5.4 If a child arrives in school after the agreed start of the school day they will receive a late mark. If the child arrives after the close of registration (10 minutes later), they will be marked as absent. Gearies Primary School adheres to the Local Authority's policy on lateness. Therefore, if any child arrives substantially late to school on seven or more occasions in one half term you may be issued with a penalty notice of £120 per parent (reduced to £60 per parent if paid within 21 days). If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days the case will be referred to the Havering magistrates court.
- 5.5 Examples of Exceptional Circumstances and Special Consideration for Late Arrivals: severe weather and/or travel conditions

6. **Absence in term time.**

- 6.1. Schools have a discretionary power to grant limited leave to children during term time. This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and the amount of leave granted will not exceed (in total) more than 20 school days. The Governing Body authorise the Head Teacher to make decisions regarding authorisation.
- 6.2. Parents/carers must apply for permission to authorise a term-time absence in advance. Permission will not be granted after an absence has been taken. All requests must be made using the schools' standard form. The school will record decisions regarding authorisation.
- 6.3. It is school policy that requests for family holidays will not be authorised in term time. Any absence not authorised will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- 6.4. Each individual request will be considered separately and considered on its own merits.
- 6.5. In all instances of absence during term time a clear return date must be agreed beforehand.
- 6.6. If a child does not return on the agreed date, the resulting absences will be recorded as unauthorised.
- 6.7. If a child has been absent for more than 20 consecutive days in the school year for reasons other than sickness or medical treatment, unless the return to school is not possible due to an unavoidable cause e.g. sickness, that child will be removed from the school's register.
- 6.8. It is the parents/carers responsibility in such circumstances to inform the school of such a situation and to provide proof eg a medical certificate.
- 6.9. Removal from the school roll will only follow:
- A consecutive period of unauthorised absence of more than twenty days
 - A warning letter issued by the school to the parents/carers giving notice to return to school
 - Confirmation of the child's whereabouts and the reason for continued absence by the E.W.O.
- 6.10 Once a decision has been made to remove a child from the school roll, this will be communicated to the child's parents/carers in writing.
- 6.11 Any child absent from school for a period in excess of 20 consecutive school days will be removed from the school roll.

4. **Review**

- 5.1 This policy statement was successfully reviewed in 2019 and will be due for review again in three years, or sooner if necessary.