



**Federation of  
Westminster  
Special Schools**  
Training & Outreach

# **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

Approved by Governors: 26 September 2016

Next review: September 2019

## **Information for Parents**

### **As a federation we aim to:**

Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 95% although we recognise that some pupils with significant medical needs may not achieve this level of attendance

Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance

Maintain good time keeping

### **Good attendance is important because:**

Statistics show a direct link between pupil's progress and achievement and poor attendance

Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically

Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with

Regular attenders find learning more satisfying

Regular attenders more readily adapt to routines in adult life

### **As a parent you can help us by:**

- Ensuring your child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school, or if there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty/period of difficulty
- Ring your child's school on the first morning of any absence to give us the reason and tell us when the child is likely to return to school
- Trying to arrange all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Frequent absences claimed as illness must be supported by medical evidence unless your son or daughter has a known medical difficulty allied to their learning difficulties
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has any extended period of absence
- Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, child minders and emergency contact details

### **We shall:**

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as necessary
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our letters,
- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly by highlighting good attendance, and rewarding with certificates and the use of class based reward systems
- We will monitor attendance at our schools on a weekly, monthly and termly basis,

- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance and punctuality
- If we continue to have concerns following letters and meetings with yourself about your child's attendance, we will make a referral to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer, who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance and punctuality issues

### **Authorised Absence**

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, there is a family bereavement, or for religious observance.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Meeting a relative
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Term time holiday/Cheap flights
- Parent's illness or other appointments

Where there is no explanation for an absence, or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority.

The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem.

**Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action.**

### **Punctuality**

- It is equally as important to be on time as it is to be in school. The first part of the school day is used to prepare pupils for the day ahead and organise schoolwork for the rest that day. It is also a time for pupils to settle down to a quiet activity so they are ready for lessons immediately after registration.

- Morning registration is at 8.45am at College Park and 9am at QE2 This is the time your child must be in school. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate at least 5 minutes before this.
- Pupils who travel independently to College Park may come to school at any time after 8.00am and they may attend Breakfast Club. Parents and carers are also welcome.( Unfortunately we do not have a Breakfast Club facility at QE2 School)
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- Arrival (particularly if the lateness is frequent/persistent) after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance. This is effectively an absence.
- All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness if known will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report, should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.

*The curriculum is designed to be progressive, each day's learning builds on the day before.*

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns with other agencies.

### **Exceptional Leave - Term Time Leave of Absence**

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of term time leave. There is **no entitlement** to time off during term time. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. It is our policy:

- Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be allowed. Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form well in advance, before booking tickets or making travel arrangements.
- If a child is not present at the beginning of a school term, we cannot guarantee that a place will remain available on their return to school
- If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and you may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action and in certain instances the child may also lose their school place.

Please remember that absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning.

## **Leavers**

If your child is leaving our school

- Give the school comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing

When pupils leave and we do not have information, about where they have gone, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try and locate your child.

By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

## **Legal Note**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DCSF and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if these absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain the high standards to which we always aspire.

Approved by Governors: September 2016

Review Due: September 2019