



Attendance Policy

2024 – 2025

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Aims of this policy

- Explain why good attendance is important.
- Set out strategies used to promote attendance and punctuality.
- Explain roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Establish a set of procedures to be followed when managing issues of attendance so ensuring consistency of practice.
- Enable the school to effectively monitor, evaluate and review its practice to ensure it is striving to improve attendance.
- Meet the Education laws and guidance produced by the DfE for school attendance

Good attendance is important because:

Statistics show that pupils with good attendance have better achievement in school.

Children with attendance above 95% make better progress socially and academically.

Children who attend regularly find their learning more satisfying and have fewer gaps in their knowledge.

At Ursuline Preparatory School the following attendance benchmarks are used: 98% and above outstanding attendance, 97% good attendance, 96% satisfactory attendance and below 95% unsatisfactory attendance.

Roles and responsibilities

Governors

- Monitor attendance usually through termly reports at Governors meetings
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
- Agree annual targets to ensure the school is in line with National measures for overall attendance and persistent absence levels.

Headteacher

- Ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately monitor and reflect individual, group and whole school attendance patterns.
- Provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of the policy and practice.
- Meet with parents and carers to discuss applications for leave or attendance concerns.
- Work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality is an issue.
- A summary of each child's attendance record is reported to parents in the child's summer report.

Teaching Staff and Support Staff

- Acknowledge good attendance and explain to children the benefits of good attendance.
- Provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- Where irregular attendance and/or punctuality is a concern it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer/Attendance Officer



- If parents/carers or pupils have informed you they will be travelling abroad, you must inform the EWO/Attendance Officer immediately.

Office Staff/Attendance Team

- Attendance registers must show whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Morning registration starts at 8.50am and registers remain open for 30 minutes.
- Any child arriving late after 9.30am will be marked with the U code (Late after registration closes.)
- Record the reasons for absence using the correct code.
- Contact parents/carers on the first day of a child's unexplained absence to establish the reason and record in registers.
- Ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
- Make a judgement in conjunction with the Office Staff/Head whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- A late register is kept in the office providing information about the time of arrival and reason for lateness.

Office Staff/Head

- Enforces the law regarding school attendance.
- Support the school through meetings and monitoring children's attendance.
- Home visits to engage hard to reach families.
- Where irregular attendance and/or punctuality causes concern, SLT will refer the matter to the Office Staff/Head
- Providing direct intervention with pupils who fall below target levels of attendance and devising strategies to improve their attendance in partnership with the school.
- Ensuring that borough and school policies on attendance are implemented appropriately in each individual case including the use of legal action against parents where they are failing to fulfil their child's regular school attendance.
- Working closely with schools at transition stages to ensure that identified vulnerable children are provided with all possible support to reduce the likelihood of increased non-attendance, where necessary working and liaising with partner agencies.
- Meet with parents and carers to discuss applications for leave or attendance concerns.
- Write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.

Parents:

- Ensure their child arrives at school on time to be ready for registration.
- Contact the school on the first morning of all absences; giving a reason and explaining when the child will return.
- Keep the school updated and after 5 days of absence providing medical evidence.
- Not book routine medical or dental appointments during school time. Medical appointments are counted as absence on a child's record. Parents must ensure they provide the school with copies of all medical appointments prior to taking children out of school.



- Fulfil their legal duty to ensure their child attends school every day.
- Inform the school in writing if you need to travel abroad during term time (leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Office Staff/Head)

Completion of the register

- All Registers are completed using Pass
- Registers should be marked as soon as the child has arrived in the classroom. Mark “/” for each child present and “N” for each child absent.
- If there is a technical issue, the office will use paper versions to complete the register. The office will then update Pass as soon as the issue is rectified.

Lateness Procedures

- If a child arrives in class after the rest of the class, whether or not the register has been completed, ensure both the “N” and “L” boxes are marked as this indicates lateness.
- Children who arrive after school starts should report to the school office so that their lateness can be recorded in the late book by the office staff as well as in the register.
- A letter will be sent to the parent/carer of any child who is recorded in the late book 5 times and will be referred to the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD.
- Children who arrive after 9.30 a.m. will be marked with a ‘U’ code (late after register is closed) which counts as an unauthorised absence. However, in the event of an emergency evacuation of the school the late book must be brought out of the building along with the registers so that the presence of such pupils may be checked.
- Continued patterns of lateness affects a child’s full school attendance. Any child who has a continued pattern of lateness should be brought to the attention of the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD who will send a letter of warning to the parent/carer. If there is no improvement, after the allocated review period, the parent/carer will be asked to come into school to discuss the issue with the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD. If there is still no improvement, the parents may be referred to the LA to advise issuing a fixed penalty notice.

Absence Procedures

- Parents/carers must provide a reason for a child’s absence. This may be in the form of a letter, a phone call or oral explanation to the school office. Phone or oral explanations should be recorded on to Pass. Explanations by the child are not acceptable. Parents are asked to inform the school office on the first day of the child’s absence.
- If the child is absent for more than 3 days, parents are expected to call the school every other day with an update.
- The only acceptable reasons for absence are illness, attendance at a medical appointment, exclusion, family bereavement for which the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD has given permission. Absence to go shopping, to visit relatives, to go on a holiday or because a parent is unwell are not acceptable. Any staff who is unsure about how to mark an absence should seek the advice of the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD.
- Any absence relating to illness of 5 days or more should be supported by medical evidence.



- Medical evidence can be copies of prescription, NHS Minor ailments service, hospital letters and appointments cards.
- Once the school office receives an acceptable reason for absence, the absence should be marked as authorised. If after a period of time of 5 days, no explanation has been received, or if the explanation received is judged to be unacceptable, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- Class teachers, pastoral workers and administration staff should be alert for patterns of absence, e.g. mostly Mondays or Fridays. If such a pattern is spotted, it should be brought to the attention of the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD immediately.
- Taking into account the age of our pupils, in most cases of poor patterns of attendance or persistent lateness is the fault of the parent/carer and not the child. All staff should be aware of this fact when dealing with the child.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

- The school will not grant any leave of absence during school time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Holidays are not regarded as exceptional circumstances. All requests for leave must be made in writing in advance by the parent to the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD, both departure and return dates are clearly stated. You will also need to provide the school with copies of your travel tickets. The parent needs to be aware that absence beyond the agreed date will be marked as unauthorised and will result in a fixed penalty notice being issued. For leave to be authorised there must be exceptional circumstances (authorised term time leave is at the discretion of the HT)

Exceptional Circumstances and Special Considerations

- Authorisation varies depending on the family circumstances – number of days will be agreed
- between the parent and the school. These reasons could include;
 1. Funeral of parent or sibling.
 2. Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence.
 3. Religious observance.

Specific circumstances not included on the list

- Serious illness of a close relative. In principle, leave should not be granted for the illness of a relative unless the attendance lead is convinced that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Pilgrimages, these are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time and we would not regard them as unavoidable absences.
- Weddings can be arranged at weekends or during holidays and are not included on the list of exceptions. If, however the attendance lead is convinced that there is a persuasive reason as to why a wedding cannot be held out of school time it is recommended to allow 1 day's leave.
- The length of time authorised for leave will be determined by the HT and/or EWO but must be kept to a minimum number in all cases. Failure to return from leave on the agreed date will be referred for further investigation to the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD. With permission from the Local Authority, schools may remove a pupil from the school roll if a pupil fails to return to school within 20 school days of the agreed return date.



- All parents/carers that request leave in writing will receive a written response from the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD on whether the leave has been granted or denied and the reasons for this.
- The attendance officer will code the absence as authorised for the agreed period. Absence after the agreed return date should be marked as unauthorised until the child is taken off roll.

The Importance of Accurate Information

- The Office Administrator will contact the parent/carer of any child about whom there are concerns with regard to attendance or punctuality, so it is of the utmost importance that the information we have available is up to date and accurate. School attendance information can ultimately provide evidence in court proceedings and therefore accuracy is essential.
- It is a legal responsibility to include information regarding attendance in the child's annual report. This information includes the numbers of authorised and unauthorised absences out of the maximum number of possible attendances, together with the number of lateness. It is of vital importance that this information is accurate.

Data

- The Office Administrator will monitor trends and patterns of attendance across the school. This will be for individuals, classes, year groups and other groups including SEND, ethnicity, gender and pupil premium. Where there is a pattern then action will be taken to address this. Targets are set at the start of the year for attendance and this will be monitored to ensure the school is doing all it can to achieve this target. The attendance lead will ensure that pupils whose names appear on the Persistent Absence list are monitored and action taken to ensure attendance improves. Governors will be provided with termly reports on attendance and actions being taken to improve attendance across the school.

Information

- Parents are informed of current issues in relation to attendance and reminded of school policy through regular newsletters and information on the school website.

Strategies to improve attendance

At Ursuline Preparatory School Federation, we work with parents to ensure to improve their child's attendance.

- Parental engagement is key to successfully improving attendance. Class teachers and pastoral workers have daily contact with parents and are key to having early conversations with parents to ensure their children attend school on time each day. We would much rather work to improve attendance at this early stage however there may be times when the process needs to be formalised to ensure advice is acted upon and attendance improves. We invite parents in for Attendance parent surgery meetings to look at how attendance can be improved this is with the OFFICE STAFF/HEAD. If necessary, an Attendance agreement may be suggested - this is a voluntary offer to the parent to work together with the school to improve attendance at times, Fixed Penalty notices (FPN) may be requested from the Redbridge Attendance Management Service in cases that are appropriate such as unauthorised holiday or persistent lateness. If these fail to have any impact, then the school will refer to the



Attendance Management Service for further action, which could lead to a referral to the Magistrates Court and possible prosecution.

Children Missing Education (CME)

- If families move away from the area, abroad or wish to transfer to another school, the school must be informed in writing. Parents/carers must ensure they provide the school with their new contact information. Children cannot be taken off- roll until the school has received notification from another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending school and who cannot be traced must not be removed from the school roll. These children are reported to Redbridge Schools Attendance Management Service using the CME form. Where a child is missing from education, LA guidance will be followed. Children on the at-risk register may not be taken off roll without permission from social services.

Safeguarding

There may be times that due to family issues e.g. domestic violence that children are unable to attend school for safety reasons. This will be marked with a C code. Children of families who are unable to attend due to the safety of the family e.g. police protection then this will be marked as C code. Children will not be removed from the register without the agreement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and only if the child has a place in another school.

Where there is suspicion of a family going missing because of leaving to go to a country linked to terrorism then it must be reported in line with the school's safeguarding procedures and reported under the Prevent Agenda in consultation with the DSL.

Where there is a suspicion that a child (female) is being taken away to a country linked to FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) then it must be investigated sensitively. If there is a suspicion that a child is at risk of FGM then it must be immediately reported in line with the school's safeguarding procedures. Countries that pose a high risk of exposure to FGM are Burkino Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan. If a child returns from these countries and there is suspicion or confirmation that FGM has taken place, then it must be reported as a safeguarding issue and to the police.

Sanctions

- A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for unauthorised leave of absence (holiday) taken without permission after the first day of absence. It will be issued by the Attendance Management Service following discussions with the school's attendance lead. The fine is £0.00 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days. Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the penalty notice.
- This rises to £160.00 per child, per parent if paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid in full by the end of the 28 days, the Local Authority must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice.
- This prosecution is for the offence of failing to secure attendance at school not for non-payment of the fine. Prosecutions are brought under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Where unauthorised leave of absence has been taken without permission which exceeds 20 days or more, the school should advise Attendance Management Service in order that steps can be implemented with a view to removing the child from roll.



Striving for excellence

Headteacher: Ms. N. Boyce

Recognition of Achievement

- Our Behaviour Policy describes a comprehensive system for the recognition and reward of children's achievements. Attendance and punctuality are included in the system as follows:
- At the end of each week the attendance for each class is worked out. The class with the best attendance in each phase receives the Attendance cup and certificate.
- Personal targets for improvement in attendance and/or punctuality may be agreed between the child, the attendance officer, the pastoral workers and the education welfare officer.
- Achievement of these targets will be recognised with a certificate.