

Mayespark Primary School

Attendance Policy 2023



“Dream, Explore, Discover”

At Mayespark we believe that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. The school has adopted the Local Authority Attendance Strategy which can be viewed on ‘Redbridge i’. This policy clarifies our internal roles, responsibilities and procedures.

We aim to:

- Our attendance target is to achieve **95.8% or above in line with the national average.**
- Promote children’s welfare and keep them safe
- Safeguard children’s rights to learn
- Maintain parents’/carers’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Give our pupils the best chance of succeeding whilst at school

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attendance means better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attendance means it is easier to cope with routines and school work
- Regular attendance means learning is more satisfying
- Regular attendance means an easier transition to secondary school, and ultimately, the world of work, having developed positive habits in attending school every day

Creating a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility; parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff have a part to play.

Rewards:

- An attendance cup is presented to the best attended class in KS1 and KS2 each week and is presented during our Achievement Assemblies;
- £2 coins are given to classes with the highest weekly attendance. This can be accumulated and ‘spent’ on resources for that class chosen by the children in collaboration with their teacher;
- In the Autumn term Reception children receive individual certificates and attendance stickers if they have attended school all week;
- Children throughout the school are awarded with a medal for excellent attendance as follows: bronze for 1 term, silver for 2 terms and gold for 3 terms;

- A class attendance 'league table' will appear in the half termly newsletter and sent to parents and carers as well as the best class per year group sent out each week via the school's app.

Punctuality:

Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world. Good punctuality needs to be started from the earliest age (from Nursery and Reception).

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Pupils arriving late disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for children and can also encourage absence.

- All children are encouraged to come straight into school at 8.40am and all doors will be closed promptly at 8.45am to ensure the safety and security of every child and adult in the school
- On days when the weather is wet the doors will open at 8.35am and will be closed promptly at 8.45am
- It is essential to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance
- All pupils that arrive late will be marked in the register with either an 'L' (late) or 'U' (unauthorised absence) code
- The time of arrival is recorded and this could be used in evidence in the event of court action and/or for issuing fixed penalty notices
- If you bring your child to school late you must take them to the main entrance, **they must not enter the school via the outside classroom door for safety reasons**
- In cases of persistent lateness a Headteacher can apply to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice, though a notice will not normally be issued unless the child concerned has had 7 or more lates in a half term (this would normally be over a 6 week period)

Late collection at the end of the day:

- Children must be collected each day by 3:15pm. Parents who are regularly late picking up their children will be monitored and may be fined or referred to social services
- Children attending after school clubs must be collected at the specified time, otherwise the child is at risk of losing their privilege to attend the club
- Uncollected children will be referred to a place of safety

Pupils can help by:

- Going to bed when their parents/carers tell them and ensuring that they have had a good night's sleep
- Doing their best to get up in the mornings and get ready quickly for school
- Getting their book bags, uniform, shoes, PE kits etc ready the night before
- Presenting at school ready to learn having eaten breakfast

Parents and Carers can help by:

- Telephoning the school on your child's first day of absence and every day thereafter of absence before 9.00am
- Bringing your child to school every day and on time unless there is an unavoidable reason for absence e.g. illness or a one-off family emergency (day trips, birthday celebrations, meeting family members are not reasonable reasons to miss school)
- Arranging medical/dental appointments out of school hours or in school holidays
- Discussing any problems with regular attendance (or if your child is reluctant to come to school for any reason), with the class teacher or Headteacher
- Sending in a written note explaining your child's absence on their return (please note that this does not constitute as medical evidence)
- Keeping the school informed by phone during prolonged absence due to illness
- Providing medical evidence for absences caused by sickness from the 3rd day onwards
- Not keeping children at home for minor coughs and colds – these absences will be closely monitored and medical evidence may be required if absence is deemed excessive

The class teacher will:

- Greet all children positively in the morning, speaking to them by name, ensuring they feel welcome
- Foster a caring and considerate environment where your children feel safe and valued irrespective of their attainment
- Develop positive partnerships with parents
- Mark the register at the start of each school session, recording absence with the correct code
- Ask the child why they have been absent and check how they are feeling on returning from an absence
- Ask the parent of a child who has been absent for an explanation

- Share any concerns about progress and attainment that could be linked with poor attendance and punctuality
- Encourage and explain the reasons why excellent attendance is important
- Encourage good punctuality by being a good role model to the children and by celebrating good class punctuality

The school will:

- Follow up unexplained absences on the 1st day with a Group Call Text in morning and this will continue on a daily basis
- Make a telephone call home if there is no response to the text
- Conduct or request welfare checks through the Educational Welfare Service
- Provide a form which will be sent home for completion if no response is received from parents/carers so we can find out why your child was absent
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, school website and on Facebook
- Arrange for the Attendance Officer to meet with parents to discuss concerns and offer support when needed
- Report whole school attendance data to governors termly
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his bi-annual school reports
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance, through letters and school based meetings
- Provide Parent Forums focused on attendance and punctuality
- Refer your child's attendance to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance drops to **93%** or below.

Persistent Absence:

A child is deemed as Persistently Absent (PA) if they have 10% absence or more - this includes authorised absences. Absence at this level considerably affects children's education and parents' and carers' full support and co-operation is needed to address this.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will:

- Make contact with our parents/carers where there is concern regarding the attendance of a child.
- Welcome parents/carers contacting him or her themselves to ask for help or information.

- Give independent and impartial advice. (Contact details are available from the school office)
- Try to resolve any situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Educational Welfare Service can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the name of the London Borough of Redbridge in the Magistrates Court (which will result in a criminal record for the parent/carer).

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school (not by you the parent) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why we must have a letter or a phone call from the parent/carer to inform us about any absence.

Authorised Absence:

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if your child is ill (backed up with medical evidence). Religious observance absences will NOT be authorised for more than 3 days annually and these must be recognised festivals or celebrations rather than family tradition. Family bereavement absences will be considered on an individual basis.

For medical absences (from the 3rd day of sickness onwards) we will request a letter from your doctor or we may ask you to bring in a prescription or the bottle or packet from prescribed medication.

Leave of Absence:

The school has a **zero tolerance policy** towards term time leave in line with the Local Authority, the government and the Governing Body of Mayespark. The Headteacher will only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance and where she is satisfied that there are **exceptional circumstances to justify the request**. In these cases no more than 3 days will be granted per school year for any pupil. **Term time visits abroad to see relatives will not be authorised under any circumstances.**

Please be aware at Mayespark Primary there are over 100 applications for term time leave made every year. While parents and carers may feel their own circumstances are exceptional, the request will be considered in line with other requests for leave of a similar nature.

Sanctions for an Unauthorised Leave of Absence without Permission:

Redbridge LA will issue penalty notices for leave of absence taken without the permission of the Headteacher as a supplement to the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 Education Act 1996 or section 36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school. This may be for:

- A) 12 unauthorised sessions in any half term
- B) Leave of Absence taken without the permission of the Headteacher

After 12 unauthorised sessions you will receive a penalty notice currently set at £120 per child, per parent, and will risk losing your child's school place. Subsequently, consideration will be given for the matter to be investigated by the Education Welfare Service and possible legal action.

Whilst your child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they may be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance must be discussed between the school,

parents/carers and the child. If you think your child is reluctant to attend school for any reason then please contact the school so we can support you and your child to improve attendance.

Responding to Continued Non-Attendance: (Extract from Redbridge Attendance Strategy (Reviewed September 2017))

- *The Education Welfare Service will consider the use of “Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)” when it is deemed that legal intervention is needed. The purpose of ESO’s is very clear, that of improving school attendance through supporting parents to exercise their parental authority. An ESO places a child or young person under the supervision of the Local Authority for a prolonged period and empowers the supervising officer to direct parents and children in matters relating to school attendance. These are implemented under the Children Act 1989.*
- *Further investigation into the causes of the non-attendance must be carried out in cases of continued absence. Consideration should be given to those factors, which may influence attendance at school. Bullying, school refusal, parentally condoned absence, disaffection and learning difficulties are just a few of the many reasons children have given for continued absence from school.*
- *Once the investigation has discovered the cause of the pupil’s absence from school, it is important to negotiate a return to school programme that everyone is committed to, including the pupil, their parents, class teacher(s) and any support agencies. Without an agreed, well structured programme the pupil is likely to feel insecure about their return. Particular support in language, literacy numeracy or for special education needs should be identified and a plan made for their inclusion in the return to school programme.*

All programmes named above can be targets used in a ‘Parenting Contract’ overseen by the Local Authority.

- *In very exceptional circumstances the ‘return to school programme’ might consider whether it is appropriate for the head teacher to apply modification or disapplication from the National Curriculum for individual students. Arrangements to modify or disapply from the National Curriculum must comply with regulations made under The Education Act 2002 and for the purposes of the strategy must comply with the relevant legal framework in force at the time.*

Returning to school after an absence can be difficult for some pupils. A great deal of persuasion by parents, EWO or teacher may have taken place to get the child to agree their return to school programme. Often considerable courage is being shown by the pupil. Therefore pupils need to feel secure in the knowledge that their return will be handled sensitively by staff.

In these circumstances considerations will be given in supporting the young person for example; work being sent home for a fixed period.

- *Governors have a valuable role to play in establishing the importance of attendance at individual schools. They help schools to focus upon the need for a clear policy on attendance. The LA recommends that governors receive termly reports on attendance for this purpose. Governors should support the initiatives, which are taken by a school, to promote good attendance by monitoring the relative success of such measures.*

Leavers:

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, you are asked to:

- Inform the school's admissions administrator when your child will be leaving Mayespark Primary School
- Complete a Mayespark school transfer form, so we know which school your child is transferring to and where to forward educational information, to ensure a smooth transition.

Children Missing Education:

If your child leaves our school and you have not given us the above information, and we cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education (CME)**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services and the CME Officer.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary 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 Department for Education and the Local Authority. The Schools Education Welfare 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 penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

"Every lesson counts"