

Canonbury Primary School

***School Attendance
and
Punctuality Policy***

July 2011

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1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

At Canonbury, we recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Equality Act 2010.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require all schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness

In most cases a telephone call followed up by a written note or email from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package. We request that parents give notice to the school by completing a request for authorised absence form.

Excluded (No alternative provision made)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher/senior teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Family Holidays and Extended Leave

Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. Canonbury School has agreed that to ensure consistency in this process, all requests for holiday during school time will be refused. In such instances, the absence will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice a £50-£100 fine or a summons to court issued by the Local Authority.

Religious Observance

Canonbury Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent by completing a request for authorised absence form. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of

the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Medical Conditions

At Canonbury we automatically treat illness as authorised absence and with the local authorities' help, support pupils' education throughout their illnesses. We also have an understanding and sensitive approach to children who may have periods of absence due to disability or long-term ill health. Please contact our inclusion manager if you wish to discuss your child's attendance and punctuality in this context and allowances will be made. Further information on the statutory duty for school and local authorities to provide this support is available in "Access to Education for children and young people with Medical needs" (DfES 0732/2001).

Late Arrival

Registration begins at 9.00am, pupils arriving after 9.05am will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.30am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken during term time (Canonbury has agreed that all such requests are to be refused to ensure consistency in the work to reduce the unacceptably high levels of holiday absence recorded between 2009 and 2011)

4. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence (before 9.25am) on: 0207 226 5020, or 07748115818. Alternatively, call into the school office and report the absence in person.
- Write a letter or email on the child's return, explaining the child's absence and give this to the admin team in the office.

If your child is absent the school Admin Officer will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with Senior Teachers and/or the Community Cohesion Leader if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 87%.

5. The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out this way, the school will discuss the absence with the Education Welfare Officer.

As it is the role of the EWO to support the school with individuals who are having difficulties with attendance or punctuality, together we will decide on what appropriate action should be taken e.g. meeting in school, phone call, letter or referral. The EWO will then be involved with monitoring the situation with the school until attendance or time keeping improves or the decision is taken for further action to be undertaken by the Local Authority. This includes Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders in the Family Proceedings Court or Prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

6. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. 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.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect our children to be in the playground before this time ready to line up when the whistle is blown.

Punctuality also applies to parents picking up children at the end of the day. The end of the school day is **3.30pm**. Children will be sent to After School Club if they are not collected by 3.40pm and parents will have to pay the full cost of a session. If a child is not collected by the end of extended provision (**6.30pm**) the EWO or Social Services may be contacted.

Registers are marked at **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At **9.30am**, the registers will be closed in the school office. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Community Cohesion Leader to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

7. Using Attendance Data

Pupil's attendance will be monitored regularly by the Admin Team and Community Cohesion Leader and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

The Admin Officer will provide weekly class attendance data and fortnightly individual attendance data for each pupil. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attenders at the top. This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action.

Attendance and punctuality data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment. These will be monitored and evaluated by the school's Governing Body at every meeting of the Pastoral and Community Committee.

We will share attendance data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the local authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

8. Support Systems

At Canonbury, we recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make us aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

We will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials
- Family learning

- Reward systems
 - Weekly class attendance rewards
 - Termly individual attendance rewards
- Islington Primary Schools Attendance Programme
 - Incentives provided by the Arsenal Football Club such as match tickets, Emirates Stadium tours, prizes and a sticker book reward system
- Additional learning support

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

9. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

Canonbury Primary School will follow Islington Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

At Canonbury we believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents

- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters – Chair/Vice Chair of the Pastoral and Community Committee
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
-

The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource – Community Cohesion Leader and Deputy Headteacher
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

The Community Cohesion Leader will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance

Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the Local Authority will consider the use of legal sanctions.

11. Legal Sanctions

Where poor attendance continues, even after the interventions outlined in this policy, the Local Authority will apply the following legal sanctions:

- **Penalty Notices** (Anti - Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time;
- A pupil has accumulated 15 sessions of unauthorised absence in any ten week period;
- A pupil has been late (after 9.30am) for 12 or more sessions in any six week period and further unauthorised absence/lateness has occurred following written warning to improve.

Each parent/carer receives a Penalty Notice for their child who has unauthorised absences, and/or persistent lateness after the registers close. A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £50 fine is paid within 28 days or £100 if paid within 42 days of the date the Notice was issued. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of 42 days the LA 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 S444 Education Act 2002.

- **Application to the Family court for an Education Supervision Order**

This can be granted up to 12 months. Parents will be legally obliged to comply with the directions/advice given by the Education Welfare Officer and if you do not, the matter may be referred to the Magistrates Court. The consequence of this could include a fine or in the aggravated offence imprisonment. In addition, if there is a persistent non compliance with directions/advice, then it is a legal requirement that the Local Authority Children's Social Care Department investigate.

- **Prosecution**

Where all other intervention, including Penalty notices and/or Education Supervision Orders, fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court.

This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education. Section 444 of the

Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. Fines are as follows:

- Education Act 196 s.444 (1) - Magistrates can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, plus prosecution costs and impose a Parenting Order.
- Education Act 1996 s.444 (1A) - Persistent Absence - Magistrates can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders/Community Rehabilitation Order and/or impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Appendix 1

Escalation of Attendance Interventions

GREEN pupils with attendance between 100% to 96%

Parents will receive a termly letter home congratulating them on their child's good/excellent attendance.

Pupils with this level of termly and annual attendance will receive a certificate of achievement and their names will be displayed on the school attendance display board.

The class teacher will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be copied to a Senior Teacher every four weeks.

The Senior Teacher will monitor the effectiveness of interventions, which will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

YELLOW pupils with attendance between 95% and 88%

Senior Teachers will speak to the parents and pupil to:

- Welcome the pupil back to school
- Confirm with the pupil the reason for absence and offer any support that may be required
- Update the pupil on other work they have missed and support any catch up required
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil using sessions rather than percentages that will see the pupil move to the band above
- Agree a review date

In addition, where unauthorised absence has occurred or attendance has not improved following the review with the pupil, the school Admin Officer will send a letter to parents advising of concern and outlining the parents' responsibilities.

Where improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting where the possible outcomes will be:

- All parties confident that issues have been resolved and the attendance will improve.
- Parenting contract agreed
- Penalty Notice 15 school day monitoring period commences
- Agree a review date

Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence.

The Senior Teacher will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be copied to the Community Cohesion Leader every three weeks.

The Community Cohesion Leader will monitor the effectiveness of interventions, which will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

ORANGE - pupils with attendance between 87% and 80%

The Senior Teacher and Community Cohesion Leader will speak to the parents and pupil to:

- Identify underlying home/school issues that may be causing the pupil's absence
- Review the pupil's academic progress and make links to the pupil's attendance e.g. If you attended all your classes you could achieve...
- Make arrangements for the pupil to catch up on work they have missed
- Implement a Pastoral Support Plan or review other existing pupil plan to include support to improve attendance
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil using sessions rather than percentages that will see the pupil move to the band above
- Agree a review date

Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence.

Where these interventions have already been implemented and have had unsatisfactory impact, the parent will be invited to an Attendance Panel where the possible outcomes will be:

- Complete a CAF leading to multi agency support
- Refer to the Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings

Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without providing a satisfactory reason, a minimum of two home visits with the purpose to engage with the parent will be carried out prior to referral to the Local Authority.

The Community Cohesion Leader will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be copied to the Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion and Access) every three weeks.

The Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion and Access) will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

RED pupils with attendance below 80%

Pupils who have attendance below 80% are considered to be persistently absent from school. To ensure that intervention is focused and meets the needs of individuals, pupils will be grouped in to one of the following categories:

- Looked After Children and Children on the Child Protection Register
- Special Educational Needs

- School age parents/expectant parents
- Long term non attendance
- Parental support/needs e.g. parental drug use, young carers, domestic violence
- School issues e.g. bullying, poor teacher/pupil relationship, curriculum issues
- Offended or have an Anti Social Behaviour Order
- English as an Additional Language
- Ethnic minority
- Mid Year Admissions
- Gifted and Talented
- Other

The Community Cohesion Leader will:

- Ensure that the pupil has already spoken to a member of staff at the stages preceding RED intervention (RED intervention will occur in cases where the pupil has immediately fallen from GREEN into RED)
- Obtain records of previous contact and interventions as set out in RED and escalate accordingly
- Ensure that weekly contact occurs with the pupil either individually or within a small group to address themed issues. This contact should also include the use of SEAL materials.
- Ensure that weekly contact with the parents to discuss any arising issues and to provide feedback on their child's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil that will see the pupil move to the band above.
- Review existing plans and co-ordinate school resources to support the pupil's attendance and any additional needs
- Be the key contact person for any external agency working with the pupil
- Input into whole school strategies to address the needs of pupils within their group

The Community Cohesion Leader will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be copied to the Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion and Access) and Head Teacher every three weeks.

Attendance will be a standing item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership Team meetings where the progress of these groups will be reported and the effectiveness of interventions measured. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

The Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion and Access) will report to the Chair of Governors/Governor for Attendance each half term and will report termly to the Governing Body via the Pastoral and Community Committee.

Adopted on: July 2011

Review date: July 2013