



Cavendish Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Spring Term 2020

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Cavendish Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school implements an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and challenges the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Cavendish Primary School works to maintain an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between underachievement 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 enjoyable and satisfying.
- Regular attenders settle into Secondary School more easily.

Aims:

- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To provide a systematic approach to gathering, monitoring and analysing attendance related data.
- To ensure positive and consistent communication between home and school.

In order to promote good attendance and punctuality to parents and pupils we:

- Hold induction evening for Reception parents
- Include a reference to attendance in the home-school agreement
- Highlight attendance and punctuality, e.g. in assemblies
- Produce attendance information in school newsletters
- Award 100% attendance certificates at the end of each term
- Involve parents from the earliest stage when attendance or punctuality is a concern

In order to provide positive and consistent communication between home and school we:

- Promote expectation of contact from parents to explain absence
- Initiate first day absence contact if parents have not explained absence
- Send absence letters to parents, generated by the Local Authority, when attendance falls below 95% over three terms (or less time for new pupils).
- Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships
- Provide information in a user-friendly way
- Encourage all parents into school
- Actively discourage parents from taking holidays in term-time

The Legal Framework

Parents are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education. They are responsible for ensuring that their children attend during the specified school hours and stay unless alternative arrangements for their education are made. It is also a parent's responsibility to inform the school of any absence.

Cavendish Primary School is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the Local Authority. The London Borough of Hounslow employs Education Welfare Officers to monitor school attendance and punctuality and advise parents how to meet their responsibility.

Under existing legislation, parents commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (absences without a valid reason).

Only the Head of School or Executive Headteacher can authorise absence.

Absence

Authorised Absence

The Head of School will only authorise absence from school for reasons she believes to be unavoidable and/or exceptional. (NB Absence for educational reasons e.g. secondary school open days or alternative provision is recorded as such and counts as attendance.)

Acceptable reasons include:

- Child's illness, medical or dental appointments
- Family bereavement
- Days of religious observance (the day being taken as absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong)
- Other circumstances which the Head of School believes to be reasonable e.g. attendance at family court

Absences other than illness will usually be authorised, provided that parents notify the School in good time and by completing a Request for Leave form (to be requested from the School Office).

Unauthorised Absence

The Head of School will not authorise absence from school for reasons she believes to be avoidable e.g. family holidays during term time. Children may be removed from the school roll if parents take extended leave for family holidays or other unacceptable reasons.

Absences not normally authorised include:

- Holidays during term time
- Weddings requiring travel abroad during term time
- Visits to relatives
- Relocation to foreign country visits during term time
- Shopping during school hours
- Lateness where no adequate explanation is provided
- Absences which the Head of School believes to be non-essential or where no reason is provided.

Even if a parent knows a requested absence will not be authorised, a 'Request for Leave' form must be completed by the parent so that the school has notice of potential absence and reasons for it.

Periods of unauthorised leave of absence are reported to the Local Authority who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to parents.

Persistent Absence

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a Persistent Absentee. Persistent absence causes serious difficulties for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career.

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the School will work in partnership with the parent to improve matters and will follow Local Authority Guidelines.

Children Missing Education and Safeguarding

Absences from school are closely monitored in line with London Borough of Hounslow 'Education Welfare Procedures' 2018 and as part of the School's Safeguarding Policy. A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Any patterns of absence e.g. absences either or both sides of a school holiday are particularly carefully monitored. The School always attempts to initiate contact on the first day when a child is absent, if no contact has been initiated by the parent, and notes any response or lack of response. Should a child be absent a second day without notification, the School repeats its attempts to contact the family and will visit the home address if this is practicable, especially in cases of known vulnerable pupils. Should a child be absent for more than three days without contact from the family to notify of the absence and reason for it, a safeguarding referral is made to the Education Welfare Service.

When a pupil first joins Cavendish, parents are asked for two additional emergency contacts (e.g. relatives or friends) and the School will telephone the emergency contacts if the parent cannot be contacted when a child is absent. These additional contact details will help the School to check that the absent pupil is safe.

'Walk to School' Register

A 'Walk to School' register will be kept for Year 5 and 6 children. Parents should advise the school if their children are travelling to school alone, in writing. If a pupil on the 'Walk to School' register is absent or late, and a reason has not been given, parents will be contacted by the Office. We do not permit Year 5 and 6 children to bring younger siblings to school or take them home.

Punctuality

Punctuality is an important life skill that we expect the children to learn. Children who arrive late feel isolated from their peers and miss important opportunities to learn and to feel a part of the class. Children should be 'on the line' at 8.50 a.m. Latecomers should sign in the book at the office. Lateness after the register has been taken is recorded. Registers close at 9.20 a.m. and lateness after this time is recorded as 'Unauthorised Lateness'. If a child is persistently late a letter is sent to parents notifying them of the seriousness of the situation. Should punctuality not improve, parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the Head of School to discuss difficulties and explore solutions. If lateness continues, the Education Welfare Service may be informed and targets set for improvement.

Responsibilities

Parents

It is a parent's responsibility to:

- ensure that children attend school regularly and on time
- inform the School of any absence and the reasons for it
- notify the School if an absence becomes extended, giving the likely date of return
- request any leave of absence from the Head of School

Teachers

It is the class teachers' responsibility to:

- Maintain an accurate attendance register
- Record known reasons for absence with an appropriate symbol on the register, or use N if the reason is not known
- Send letters regarding absence to the School Office
- Inform the Head of School immediately of any cause for concern regarding pupil attendance i.e. persistent lateness, prolonged or repeated absence etc.
- Send any requests for leave of absence to the Head of School even if they are addressed to the class teacher

The School Office

It is the responsibility of the School Office to:

- Ensure registers are correctly completed and accurate
- Follow up unexplained absences and keep a record of actions and response
- Record known reasons for absence with an appropriate symbol on the register, recording absence as unauthorised if no acceptable reason is given.

- Check registers every week and contact parents who have not given reasons for absence
- Monitor attendance below 95%
- Send letters to parents where attendance and/or punctuality are a cause for concern
- Notify the Education Welfare Service regarding any concerns including absence for three days without acceptable reason being given

Head of School

The Head of School:

- Monitors individual pupil attendance data
- Discusses attendance/lateness problems with parents
- Makes decisions about authorisation of absence
- Liaises with relevant outside agencies
- Reports to the Governing Body about school attendance

Parents are welcome to arrange an appointment at any time with the class teacher or Head of School should they have concerns about their child's attendance, health or general well-being.