

Primrose Hill Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

September 2020

Review date: July 2021

At Primrose Hill, ensuring high attendance and punctuality for all is a priority. We want to make sure that all children receive a full-time education that will maximise all learning opportunities. Research both locally and Nationally show that there is a clear link between high attendance and good progress and attainment.

Attendance & Punctuality Targets for 2020-2021 (some targets are continued from 2019-20 due to school closure)

- Improve overall KS1-KS2 Yearly Attendance to be over 96% (including those who will have to remain at home due to clinical / health advice).
- Continue to track and improve overall attendance for key groups and children who are identified as persistent absentees in 2019-20 data and children identified as having low engagement during lockdown (online learning).
- Monitor and promote attendance in year groups / classes that have persistently low attendance (below 95%) as a class,
- Continue to promote and instill good attendance habits in EYFS, with a focus on KS1 transition from EYFS.
- Continue to embed and tighten policy and procedures to ensure overall authorised absence is reduced, therefore increasing our overall attendance (as above).

Please also see Addendum Attendance Policy below.

Addendum Attendance Policy- September 2020

Government advice and guidance released states that all children should return to school in September 2020.

There will be a small number of pupils who will still be unable to attend school due to clinical and public health advice:

- Because they are self isolating and have symptoms or because they have been in close contact with someone who has the coronavirus;
- They have been advised to shield due to medical conditions;
- If rates of the disease rise in our local area and children (or family members) will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because of the above, we will immediately offer them access to remote education (via Evidence Me or Google Classroom or send daily work home). We will monitor their engagement in online learning and offer them weekly Google Meet sessions with their class teacher or another member of staff. For children who are unable to attend school who have an ECHP, they will have access to a daily phone or Google Meet session with an adult from their class.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents and carers are following clinical or public health advice, for example, self-isolation or family isolation, the absence will not be penalised.

Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school:

We understand that some pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus, including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as diabetes.

As a school we are committed to supporting these families and ensuring their child/ren and family are given the support they need to feel reassured in returning to school. Some reassurance measures the school will take include:

- Whole school Risk Assessment shared with parents and carers
- Individual Risk Assessments carried out for clinically vulnerable with the family and a member of SLT
- Transition books for vulnerable children
- Generic advice and guidance materials to support anxious children
- Targeted and specialist support for anxiety (see SEN Offer)
- Settling in inductions before school reopens
- Offering a reduced timetable or shorter day
- Identified member of staff to liaise with the family and child regularly
- Working closely with outside agencies to support transition
- Whole school trauma and attachment training September

Please also see the school's website for further information and leaflets on supporting your child with anxiety, building resilience and sleep routines.

It is the parents responsibility to get in touch with the school and speak to us about reasons for their child/ren's absence so we can plan any support or home learning accordingly.

Please contact the school on:

0207 722 8500 or email the Admin team on admin@primrosehill.camden.sch.uk

You may also contact the Head Teacher directly: head@primrosehill.camden.sch.uk

Monitoring Absences:

As a school, we will continue to monitor attendance and punctuality (see below for policies and procedures). The following will also take place from September:

Absence - with no contact or communication with school or any reason given to explain absences	School's Response & Action
Day 1 - absence with no contact / reason for absence	A text will be sent home to the parent asking them to contact the school and explain their child/ren's absence.
Day 2 - if no contact has been made	Attendance Officer, Lyra Semsedini, will call the family and plan any necessary reassurance measures- this may involve Attendance Lead, Amanda Aplicano or another member of SLT. If no contact is made, another urgent text will be sent asking a family member to contact the school.
Day 3 - if no contact has been made	Attendance Lead, Amanda Aplicano, will contact the family. If no contact is made, another urgent text will be sent attaching an attendance letter.
Day 4 - if no contact has been made	The Head or Acting Head Teacher will contact the family. If no contact is made, a text will be sent informing the family that a home visit will be made the following day.
Day 5- if no contact has been made	Two members of the Attendance Team will make a home visit. A happiness hamper will be prepared and taken with them to offer to the family. If no contact is made, then our Safeguarding Lead, Elizabeth Ghamar, will contact Early Help.

For further guidance, please read the following (Attendance section):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

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1.0. Attendance & Punctuality Targets and Outcomes from 2018-2019

As outlined on the front page

1.1. Governors Statement on Attendance

Our Governing Board believes that Excellent Attendance at school is the first step towards children's progress and achievement. Excellent Punctuality shows respect for teachers and peers and ensures that children are ready and willing to learn.

1.1a. Responsibility of the Governing Body

- To request from the Head Teacher regular reports on attendance and punctuality as part of the Full Governing Body.

1.2. Responsibility of the School

The school has a legal duty to mark the register and record the attendance of every child on its roll and to enter codes which explain why children are absent or late. There is now a statutory requirement that schools publish statistics about their attendance rates. We fully support all initiatives from our Local Authority and comply with all Camden's guidance and expectations. We have challenging targets set each year against both local and national averages, as listed above. Absences fall into two groups, authorised and unauthorised.

2.0. Attendance Guidelines:

2.1. Authorised Absences

Authorised absences involve children having time out of school for approved reasons, for example: illness, medical appointments, religious observance, visits to a new school or exceptional circumstances like attending a funeral.

2.1.1a. Illness:

When reporting a child's absence for illness, we ask parents to call the absence line on 0207 722 8500 or to send an email to attendance@primrosehill.camden.sch.uk. A specific reason should be given regarding the absence and if a child is absent for more than three days with illness, the parent may be asked to provide medical evidence from the Doctor or GP. This can be an appointment card or a prescription stating the child's name.

2.1b. Medical Appointments:

Every effort should be made to arrange medical/dentist appointments outside of school hours. However we understand that specialist hospitals or clinic appointments can sometimes take priority, but a letter from the hospital or clinic should be provided to the school.

2.1c. Religious Observance:

At Primrose Hill we recognise the different cultures and faith communities that reside within our school. We acknowledge that different faiths and cultures have different celebrations throughout the year. We treat religious observances as an authorised absence and in most cases, this is the day of the religious event. If more than one day absence is required per religious event, the parent should request a leave of absence for their child from the Head Teacher.

2.1d. Exceptional Circumstances:

Parents who wish to take their child out of school for any other reason during term time are asked to make this request to the Head Teacher at least two weeks before the requested date by filling out a 'Request for Absence' form, which is available from the office and it is not acceptable to tell the school after the return date. Only the Head Teacher can make a decision on whether to authorise a request and will respond by letter.

Each request for exceptional leave will be considered as a separate case and the Head Teacher's decision will take into account the following, as contained in the DCSF Circular 10/99:

- The reason for the leave and why it could not be taken in school holidays;
- The number of days requested;
- Previous requests for leave during term-time;
- The child's attendance and punctuality record (broadly speaking we would expect a pattern of attendance consistently at or above 95%);
- The time of year proposed for the trip;
- The age of the child and stage of education, any additional needs they may have, their current attainment and level of progress and any impact the leave will have on their learning.

We are not unsympathetic to difficult or special circumstances and will always consider requests for absence that, if then authorised, are recorded as 'other circumstances'. Examples of this might be urgent trips to see ill relatives, or special opportunities in sport or music. Parents are informed that although these are all authorised absences, they will still affect a child's attendance percentage and will show up in their end of year report.

2.2. Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences involves children having time out of school without explanation, or where the reason for absence is one that the school cannot authorise. This can include:

- Holidays during term time;
- Shopping;
- Absence for birthdays;

- Too tired;
- Late night due to a celebration;
- Not realising term had started;
- Other members of the family are ill.

Holidays during term time and persistent absences throughout the academic year may lead to Penal Action or Educational Welfare Service involvement.

2.2a. Persistent Absentees:

If a child has under 90% attendance, they are classed as a 'Persistent Absentee' and will be monitored closely by the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer may call the parent and have a conversation over the telephone about their child's attendance or, they may invite the parent for a meeting if necessary. The attendance meetings are designed to support the parent in any way to help improve the child's attendance. If the targets set in the meeting are not met, it may result in EWS involvement. It is our legal duty as a school to inform the parent if their child's attendance drops below 90%.

At Primrose Hill, we understand that there are children who may have a long-term medical condition and as a result will affect their attendance. In this case, an agreement is put in place between the school and the parent to ensure the child is receiving support where needed.

3.0. Punctuality Guidelines:

3.1. Punctuality at Primrose Hill School

It is extremely important that children arrive promptly at school ready to begin the day's lessons with the rest of the child's class. Arriving late can be very distressing for the child who is late and disruptive for both the teacher and the rest of the class. When children arrive late they miss vital teaching time and the main introduction to the learning for the day. This has a detrimental effect on a child's learning.

3.1a. Lates:

Children should arrive at school at 8:45am everyday to settle and are ready for lessons to begin at 9:00am. The register is taken and completed by the class teacher by 9:05am. If a child arrives at school after 9:05am, they are late and will need to be signed in by the Attendance Officer who will be waiting by the entrance. Late children are monitored regularly by the Attendance Officer and if a child is frequently late then a letter will be sent home informing the parents.

3.1b. Unauthorised Lates:

An unauthorised late is when a child arrives to school after 9:15am. Unauthorised lates affect a

child's attendance and will show in the child's end of year report. If a child has a minimum of eight unauthorised lates within a consecutive eight week period, it will trigger an Unauthorised Absence Penalty Notice from the school. This period does not include holidays periods. For example, the last two weeks of term and the first two weeks of the next term count as four consecutive weeks.

3.1c. Educational Welfare Service:

Our attendance is monitored remotely by the Education Welfare Service. Our Education Welfare Officer has given the following guide for expected attendance:

100%	Perfect
98 - 99%	Excellent
95 - 97%	Good
90 -94%	Needs to improve and will be monitored closely within school
89% or less	Poor - this will lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, a subsequent meeting and potential legal action from the local authority.

They scrutinise all records and registers and, with the Head Teacher's agreement, contacts all those with attendance figures below 90%, as listed above. Attendance is monitored daily, weekly, monthly and half-termly by the Attendance Officer and Assistant Head Teacher and they will then report all attendance concerns to the EWO.

4.0. Final Penalty Notices and Legal Advisory Meetings:

4.1. The difference between a Final Penalty Notices (FPNs) and a Legal Advisory Meetings (LAMs):
When a parent takes a child out of school they may be asked to attend a LAM or pay a FPN. This depends on the duration in which the child has been away for,

4.1a. Legal Advisory Meeting:

The Camden Local Authority may call in a parent to discuss the child's attendance. The EWS will primarily focus on the time taken away from school and explain the implications of missing school. When a parent makes a request and it is denied, the parent will then receive a letter from the Head Teacher explaining the reasons as to why it has not been authorised. The Attendance Officer then makes a referral to the EWS who will be in contact with the parent. Parents usually get an invitation from the EWS if a child has been away between 3 to 4 school days.

4.1b. Final Penalty Notice:

Camden Local Authority penalise families who take too much time from school. Parents can receive a FPN for:

1. Any Unauthorised Absences;

2. Exceptional Leave (extended absences);
3. Persistent Absence

The school has a legal right to refer any families to the EWS who fall into any of these sections. Parents can be penalised if a child has been away from school for more than 5 school days.

5.0. Promoting Positive Punctuality and Attendance at Primrose Hill

We use the following ways to promote positive attendance and punctuality and to prevent attendance and punctuality issues arising:

- Setting targets for the whole school (specific by Key Stage) and making them public through our assemblies and Newsletter.
- Daily announcement of classes who have 100% attendance, with a weekly 'Mystery Day' prize of 5 minutes extra play.
- Giving half-termly and termly Attendance and Punctuality Awards, such as trips and attendance prizes.
- Individual awards by the EWO and Attendance Lead for 100% attendance over a term and a year. 100% attendance can be interpreted differently for children who have long term medical issues and for whom 100% attendance is not possible due to medical conditions.
- Individual letters home for children who have improved their overall attendance.
- Keep attendance as a high profile issue in correspondence to parents during parent meetings and SEN parent meetings.
- Head Teacher, members of SLT, Attendance Officer and school staff being welcoming while on Gate Duty and Early Morning Duty.
- 'Soft Start' to the day, which allows children to come in when they are ready and gives them 15 minutes to settle before the register is taken.
- A clear Punctuality Pyramid that clearly outlines procedures and routines.
- A clear and consistent message and approach is given at all times by all members of staff about the importance of excellent punctuation and attendance.
- Updating the attendance board weekly displaying classes with the highest attendance.
- Including the attendance brochure into our admissions packs to new families.
- Clear communication with parents about attendance and punctuality via telephone conversations, letters or meetings and offering any support they may need.
- Liaising with teachers about any concerns they may have and contacting parents.

See also Attendance Brochure

Lyra Semsedini & Mireille Alwan
September 2020

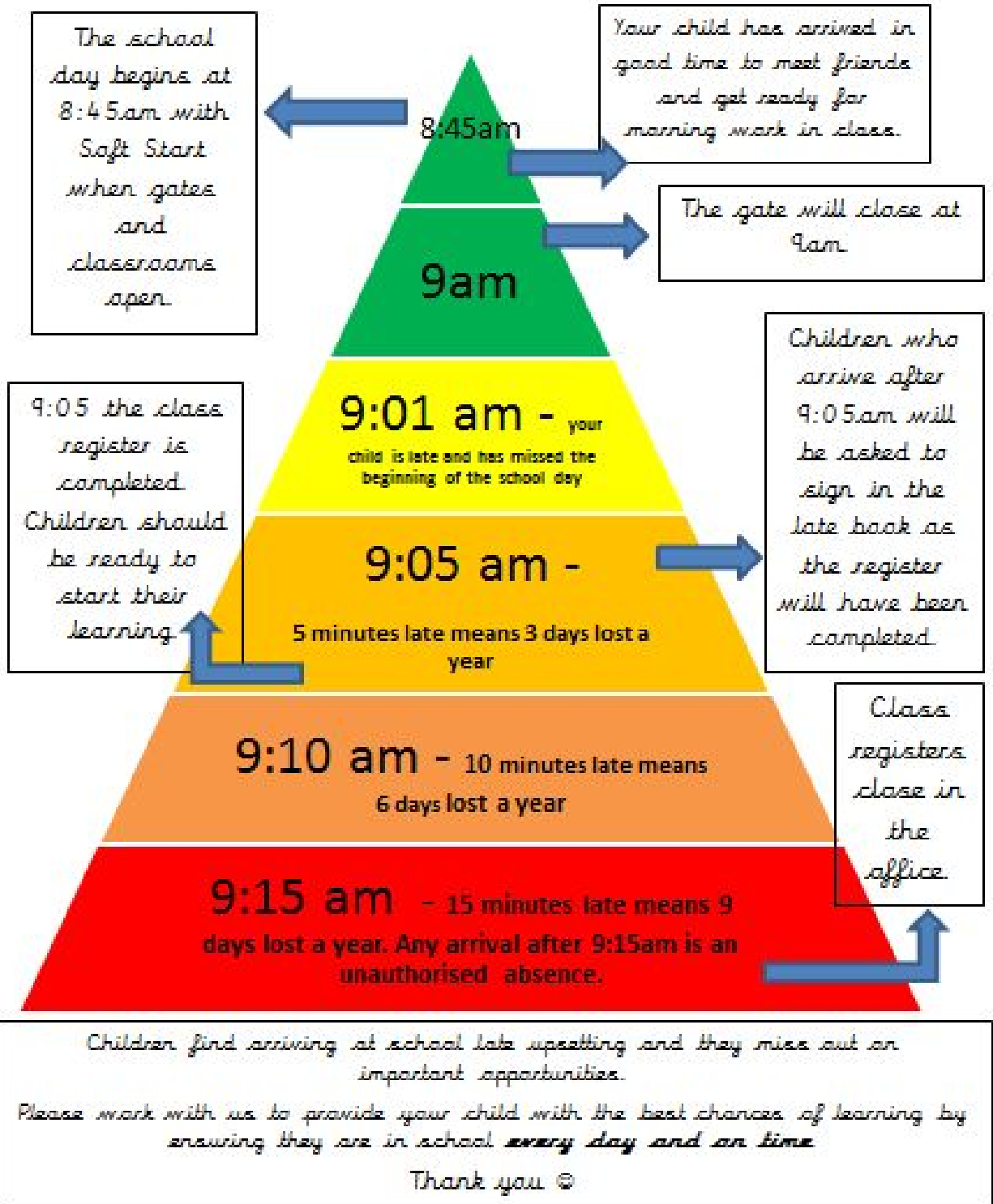
6.0. Punctuality Pyramid



Primrose Hill Primary School



Every minute of learning counts!



DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY

The policy will be given to all members of staff and copies will be available for parents.

PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Head Teacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will monitor the policy.