

# *Primrose Hill Primary School*



## *Attendance and Punctuality Policy*

September 2023  
Review date: July 2023

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 maximises all learning opportunities. Research both locally and nationally show a clear link between high attendance and good progress and attainment.

### **Attendance & Punctuality Targets for 2022-2023**

Improve overall KS1-KS2 Yearly Attendance to be over 96%.

- Continue to track and improve overall attendance for key groups and children who are identified as persistent absentees in 2022
- Monitor and promote attendance in year groups / classes that have persistently low attendance (below 95%) as a class,
- Continue to promote and instil 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 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 Attendance team on [attendance@primrosehill.camden.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@primrosehill.camden.sch.uk)

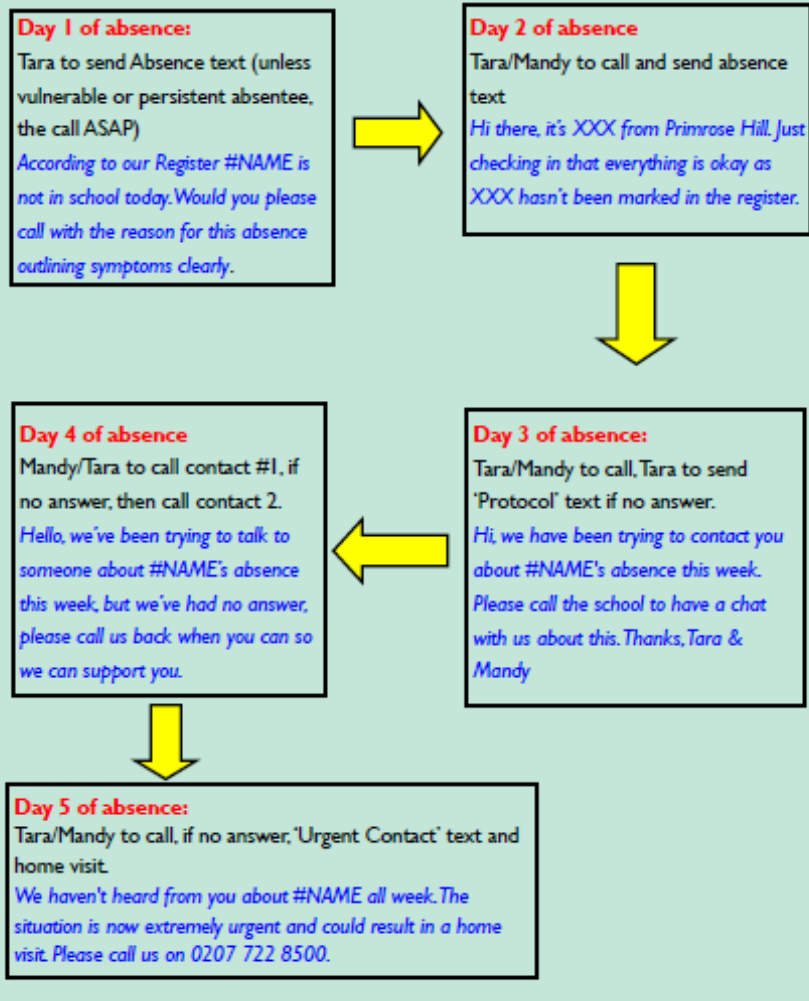
You may also contact the Head Teacher directly: [head@primrosehill.camden.sch.uk](mailto:head@primrosehill.camden.sch.uk)

#### **Monitoring Absences:**

Please see below or click the [link](#) for our protocol in monitoring daily absence:



## Attendance Protocol Flowchart



Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

### 1.0. Governors Statement on Attendance

Our Governing Body 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.

#### 1.0a. Responsibility of the Governing Body

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

the Full Governing Body.

### **1.1. 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 The Law relating to attendance and safeguarding**

Section 7 of the Education act 1996 states that:

*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:*

*(a) to age, ability, and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have either at school or otherwise*

Compulsory School Age: A child is compulsory school age from the beginning of the next term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday until the last Friday of June in the academic year of their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

This policy is written in relation to the following acts of Parliament and guidance relating to attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- We will also take account of all new legislation and initiatives.

### **3.0. Attendance Guidelines:**

#### **3.1. 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.

### *3.1a. 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](mailto: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, text from GP or a prescription stating the child's name.

### *3.1b. 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.

### *3.1c. 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.

### *3.1d. 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 or email.

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 96%);
- 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.

### 3.2. Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences involve 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.

#### 3.2a. *Persistent Absentees:*

If a child has under 90% attendance, for whatever reason, 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 PAS (Pupil Attendance Service) 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.

## 4.0 Safeguarding:

At Primrose Hill, we believe that every pupil should be able to learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Safeguarding is about offering early help and support to children and families and difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may be considered a safeguarding matter if this places your child at risk of harm.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school; safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses: Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti-bullying, protecting children from abuse and neglect, online safety, radicalisation and extremism, awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

To allow us to safeguard the children in our care it is important that parents and carers provide the school with their current contact details and provide at least three other contact numbers in case of emergency.

It is also important for parents to let school know of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances. If you are uncertain about what would be considered a vulnerability, please speak with Amanda Aplicano (Pastoral Lead) or Elizabeth Ghamar (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

## 4.0. Punctuality Guidelines:

### 4.1. 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.

#### 4.1a. Lates:

Children should arrive at school from 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 9:00am. If a child arrives at school after 9:00am, 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.

#### 4.1b. 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.

## 5.0. Pupil Attendance Service (PAS):

The PAS 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 PAS, a subsequent meeting and potential legal action from the local authority.

They scrutinise all records and registers and, with the Head Teacher's agreement, contact all those with attendance figures below 90%, as listed above. Attendance is monitored daily, weekly, monthly and half-termly by the Attendance Officer and Pastoral Lead.



## **6.0 Legal sanctions and actions**

The school will make every attempt to contact the parent or carer by telephone and in writing. In the first instance we would invite them to discuss the problem. If this is unsuccessful the school may give warning of referral to the Local Authority. A referral may be made to the LA under the following circumstances:

- 10 days of continuous unauthorised absence
- More than 10 days of authorised leave
- A term time holiday taken without permission
- A pupil who has been more than 30 minutes late (after the close of registers) on a minimum of eight occasions in a rolling eight-week period.
- 95% or less attendance and with 10% or more unauthorised absences

Penalty notices are issued to each parent or carer for each of their children for example two parents with three children would receive a total of six penalty notices, one parent with two children will receive a total of two penalty notices. Each penalty notice is £60 if paid in the first 21 days, from days 22 to 28 the fine doubles to £120 for each penalty notice. The Pupil Attendance Service has asked us to point out that it is not possible to pay these fines by instalments or lower the cost when they have increased, or to just fine one parent. Payment can be made online and instructions on how to pay are included on the penalty notice. Any problems with paying online should be discussed as early as possible with the Pupil Attendance Service by ringing 020 7974 7161.

If a penalty notice is not paid or the Pupil Attendance Service feels that that the level of absence warrants court action the local authority will arrange for a court hearing. There are a range of sentencing options available to the magistrate including the maximum penalty of a fine of up to £2500 per parent for each offence as well as the possibility of up to three months in prison.

## **7.0. 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 and making them public through our assemblies and Newsletter.
- 'Score on the Door' poster in each class for children to see their weekly attendance percentage.
- Presenting the weekly attendance stars in assemblies and awarding the class with 100% attendance the Attendance Trophy (KS2) for the week and a Teddy bear for KS1.

- Individual letters home for children who have improved their overall attendance at the end of each term.
- 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 poster that clearly outlines procedures and routines which is promoted in the newsletter and displayed around the school.
- 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.
- 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.

## 8.0. Punctuality poster



Primrose Hill  
Primary School

### Punctuality Poster—Every minute of learning counts!

**8:45am**

The school day begins at 8:45am with Soft Start when gates and classrooms open. Your child has arrived in good time to meet friends and get ready for morning work in class.

**9:00am**

The gate will close at 9:00am

**9:00am**

Children who arrive after 9:00am will be asked to sign in the late book as the register will have been completed. Children should be ready to start their learning.

***5 minutes late means 3 days lost a year.***

**9:15am**

Registers will close in the office at 9:15am. If your child arrives after 9:15am then it will be marked as unauthorised late and will affect your child's attendance record.



**Children find arriving at school late upsetting and they miss out on important opportunities.**

**Please work with us to provide your child with the best chances of learning by ensuring they are in school every day and on time.**

**Thank you**

## **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 the Pastoral Lead will monitor the policy.**