



Princess May
Primary School

Attendance Policy

Name of Governing Body Representative (GBR): Kristofer McGhee

Next review due by: September 2020

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Good attendance is important because it not only helps your child to achieve academically; it also contributes to their social and emotional well-being. Persistent absence and lateness may be seen as a safeguarding issue and will be dealt with accordingly. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. 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 prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Home – School newsletter;
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Reward good or improving attendance through whole school assemblies, class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, hospital appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is not good practice to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us on the morning of the first day of absence to give us the reason for the absence and the expected return date.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.
- On your child's return to school you should provide evidence supporting the reason for the absence.

If your child is absent:

- We will telephone you on the first morning of absence if we have not heard from you;
- If we are unable to contact you by telephone on the first morning of absence, a home visit will be conducted by the School Attendance Officer, Pastoral Team or a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- If after a home visit has been carried out, we are still unable to make contact with you, a referral may be made to social care and/or the police based on a risk assessment by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Senior Leadership Team
- if absences persist; invite you in to discuss the situation with the School Attendance Officer and/or the school Senior Leadership Team
- We will refer to the Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 96% in any case

Telephone numbers:

It is vital that the school has your up to date contact details including your correct address and **at least two** telephone contact numbers. It is important that we are able to contact you immediately if any health or safety issues arise, or if your child is ill or has an accident.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee (PA)' when they miss 10% (5 days each term) or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Hackney Learning Trust Attendance Officer.

The School Attendance 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 in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Fines or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Hackney Learning Trust.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the School Attendance Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Hackney Learning Trust.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they will be missing work and this will have a detrimental effect on their achievement. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Any parent or carer arriving after 8:55am will be directed to sign-in as late at the school office.

At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. 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 Fine if the problem persists.

If your child is failing to attend regularly and punctually you will be invited to meet with our attendance panel which will consist of our Administrator and/or Attendance Officer, a Senior Leadership member and a school governor when available, to resolve the problem. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time:

We do not authorise any holidays in term time. Holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as

much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education and a possible fine. **There is NO automatic entitlement in law to time off in term time to go on holiday.**

Special Leave in Term Time:

All applications for special leave must be made in advance and **supporting evidence will be required**. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. **Special leave is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and in exceptional circumstances.** It is exceptionally rare for requests to be granted and evidence will always be required.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Fine. A child may also be removed from the school roll and referred to the Missing Children Education Service.

The penalty notice fine for persistent unauthorised holiday in term time is £60 moving to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days of receiving the fine.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Hackney.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Home – School newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mr K Reynolds - Headteacher
Mrs C Bangura- Deputy Head/SENCO
Ms T Adegabi – School Attendance Officer
Ms K Butt –Attendance Officer

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible which is linked to a high level of achievement.