

The aim of this policy is to (a) demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is crucial for pupil's achievement and better life chances, and (b) maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.

Introduction

Attendance and punctuality is crucial to children's learning and achievement at school. When a child is absent from school they miss a great deal which affects their subsequent learning, well-being and achievement over time. If pupils are not at school, they miss out both academically and socially. Pupils who attend late or are absent have great difficulty catching up with learning. They also develop habits which can affect their life chances and achievement in the future. Furthermore, pupils who are late or absent can cause disruptions to the education and learning of pupils who are regular and punctual.

Bigland Green wants to ensure that all its pupils achieve their full potential. To achieve this the school needs parental support and co-operation. If pupils are not at school, then they cannot be taught. There will be significant gaps in their learning and they will not achieve as well as they can.

Parents are requested to help the school achieve the best possible standards in attendance and punctuality by following the procedures in this policy so that the school is able to provide them with good education and improve children's life chances.

The school should be provided with reasons for all absences. The school will decide if the absence can be authorised or would it be categorised as unauthorised in accordance with national and local guidance. Below are some examples of authorised and unauthorised absences (the list is not exhaustive).

Examples of authorised absences

- Sickness
- Bereavement in the family
- Emergency medical appointments
- Hospital appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours

Examples of unauthorised absences

- Not 'feeling well...'
- Adults are not able to bring the child to school
- Might get ill – weather is cold
- Visiting family members or attending routine appointments
- Taking a family holiday

Pupils should not miss school frequently for minor illnesses, such as headache, cold or cough. It is important that parents seek medical advice on such cases as a matter of urgency. If parents are not sure if their child is well to attend school, then they can bring the child to the school office for an assessment and a temperature check between 8:40 and 8:50 AM.

The school has a number of systems to encourage and promote good attendance. Pupils with 100% attendance are given yearly certificates. Pupils who put in efforts and improve their attendance have their achievement celebrated in school assemblies, provided with Praise-Pads, given *star of the week* or an *Ask Me* badge and other rewards.

Pupils should not have any unauthorised absences as it will result in the issuing of fixed penalty notices by the Local Authority to both parents. For more information about fixed penalty notices please visit <http://www.biglandgreen.towerhamlets.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Penalty-Notices.pdf>.

Authorised absences should be kept to a minimum. Pupils with attendance which is below 90% are categorised as 'persistent absence' by the Department for Education. Pupils who are on the persistent absence list are reported to the national and local government through the school census each half-term. The school will arrange meetings with parents of pupils who are on the persistent absence list to prepare and submit an action plan for improvement – which is a legal requirement.

Applications for leave during term time should be discussed with the school at the earliest opportunity – please see the school's policy for 'Leave during term time' for further information.

This link <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview> will provide more information about the laws surrounding school attendance.

Punctuality and lateness

The school gates are opened from 8:45 AM. Pupils should be in their class at 9:00 AM. Pupils are marked as late after 9:02 AM when the classroom doors are locked. Parents of pupils arriving late (e.g. after 9:02 AM) must report to the school office and explain the reason for their child's lateness to the staff on duty. Please do not be offended if you are asked to explain the lateness, however, if you want to discuss something confidential then kindly inform the staff members.

Duties of...	Parents and carers	School and teachers
When the child is late	Take the child to the school office and explain the reason for being late. Be patient as it may take a few minutes to collect late pupils.	Record the reason for lateness in the register. The Attendance Officer to talk to parents who are persistently late.
On the first day of absence	Do one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Telephone the school ▪ Complete Google form – available on ParentHub ▪ Inform in person at school office 	Telephone home on the first day of absence if the school has not been informed. Arrange home visit depending on circumstances.
When the child returns to school	Parent to take child to the school office if the absence was for 5 or more days.	Meet with parents to make sure that the child is safe to return to the school.

Further information about parental responsibilities and the school's actions to deal with attendance and punctuality are detailed below in Appendix A. The template letters (which may be adjusted as needed) are included in Appendix B.

Date agreed	Signature	Review Date
May 2022	B. A. Pailloa	May 2024

Appendix A: Agreed actions for attendance and punctuality

These procedures are based on the guidance contained in Keeping children safe in education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges, DfE¹, September 2021; and Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities, DfE, September 2016

Actions for attendance

Incident	Actions to be taken by parents/carers	Actions to be taken by the school
Day 1: Child is absent	Notify the school office of reason for absence and predict date of return.	If no reason provided Attendance Officer will telephone parents for reason. (School office to inform Attendance Officer of all messages received).
Day 1: Child is absent	(If no notification is received from parents/carers after telephone attempt).	Attendance Officer to send ParentHub message alerting parent to make contact and provide reason for absence otherwise left unauthorised.
Day 2: Child is absent without reason	(If no notification is received from parents/carers).	Attendance Officer to make a second attempt by telephone to parents/carers and to telephone emergency contacts listed.
Day 3: Child is absent	(If no notification is received from parents/carers).	Attendance Officer to inform Headteacher and organise for a home visit, letter will be given to parents and meeting will be held to discuss child's absence. Inform the Local Authority; consider a concern for missing children if home visit could not be made.
Child returns after 5 or more consecutive days absence	Attend meeting at the school to discuss absence and if necessary to draw up an action plan.	Attendance Officer meets parents to discuss absence and ensure it is safe for child to return. The team leader or headteacher is involved when necessary.
Child's attendance below 91%		School sends Attendance Letter 1: Informs parents of the number of absences and invites parents to work with the school to improve their child's school attendance.
Child's attendance below 85%		School to carry out Home Visit: Attendance Officer to arrange a home visit to understand why absence is so frequent. Carried out on a case by case basis.
No response/ no improvement in absence rate	Attend meeting with the team leader or the headteacher to avoid court action.	School sends Attendance Letter 2 and refers the matter to the Local Authority for action.
Absence continues to be a problem		Court action – Local Authority to issue fixed penalty notice as deemed necessary and take the necessary legal actions.

¹ DfE = Department for Education; General information <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

Actions for punctuality

Incident	Actions to be taken by parents/carers	Actions to be taken by the school
Child is late for school	<p>9:02 AM Children enter school through main school reception door and explain reason for lateness in the office.</p> <p>Kindly be patient as it may take to a few minutes for a staff member to collect the late children.</p>	<p>8:45 to 9:00 AM Gates for playground opened for parents and their children.</p> <p>8:58 – 9:01 AM Classroom doors open – children settle in class quickly and start learning.</p> <p>Pupils arriving after 9:02 AM are marked as late in the registers.</p>
Late on more than 5 occasions		Attendance Officer to monitor lateness rate. Send Punctuality Letter 1 informing the parents of the number of lateness and reminding them on the importance of punctuality.
Lateness increases to 10 occasions or no response to first letter	Parents attend meeting at the school to discuss and agree an action plan and other possible support.	Attendance Officer sends Punctuality Letter 2 inviting parents to discuss their child's lateness. School involves the learning mentor to provide necessary support if needed.
No response/ increase in number of lateness to 15 or more		Attendance Officer makes a referral to the Local Authority for fixed penalty notice and notifies parents informing them of the actions taken.
No compliance with agreed action plan		Referral to the Local Authority (social inclusion panel) requesting court proceedings.

Appendix B: Template letters for attendance and punctuality

Attendance Letter 1 on school headed paper

Date:

Dear Parent(s) of

Class:

RE: Improving Pupil Attendance

I am writing to share the school's concerns about your child's attendance.

I am sorry to inform you that your child is on the school's persistent absence register with an attendance of ____%. You may be aware that attendance below 90% is categorised as *persistent absence* by the government. Schools are required by law to report this to the Department of Education every half-term and have agreed plans for improving overall attendance.

I would like to emphasise the importance of regular attendance and timeliness for children to achieve their full potential. I am aware that there are legitimate reasons for absences however these persistent absences are affecting your child's learning. Children with poor attendance are at a greater risk of underachieving throughout their education.

The school is asking for your cooperation and support in ensuring that your child arrives to school on time consistently, in the best interest of your child's education. We hope you take the necessary actions to improve your child's attendance.

If you have any questions or you would like more information, please speak to a member of staff at the school office who will be happy to help.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

Attendance Letter 2 on school headed paper

Date:

Dear Parent(s) of

Class:

RE: Improving Pupil Attendance

I am writing to share the school's continued and serious concern about your child's attendance.

I am sorry to inform you that your child continues to be on the school's persistent absence register for this half-term with an attendance of ____%.

This means that your child has missed more than 10% of education although the absence may have been authorised. It is a legal requirement that children attend school regularly and on time.

Any underlying issues for children missing their education must be addressed by the parents and the school in partnership. The school has met with you previously to discuss ways to improve your child's attendance. Actions were agreed and the expectation was that attendance will improve. It seems that the actions taken have not been effective as your child's attendance has not improved.

You have already been reminded of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality which forms part of the '*home-school agreement*' which you signed when your child was admitted to the Bigland Green. The school has tried its best to work with you and to support you so that you can improve your child's attendance.

As a final attempt and before seeking support from external agencies, the school would like to know if there is anything that we can do to help you to improve your child's attendance at school. Therefore, kindly complete and return the attached form by _____. The school will then decide what further actions to take and may escalate this to the next level and seek support from an external agency as appropriate.

If you have any questions or you would like more information, please speak to a member of staff at the school office who will be happy to help.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

Parents' response to attendance concerns

To be returned to the school office by

Full name of child:

Class:

The reasons for my child's attendance being low this half term are....

These are the steps I am taking to improve my child's attendance at school next half-term

I would appreciate the following support by the school

Completed by:

Date:

Punctuality letter 1 on school headed paper

Date:

Dear Parent(s) of

Class:

RE: Improving Pupil Punctuality

I am writing to share the school's concerns about your child's punctuality. According to our records, your child has had ____ lates since the beginning of the academic year.

I would like to remind you of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality which was discussed at the admissions meeting and forms part of the '*home-school agreement*' which you signed.

Please note that poor punctuality can affect your child's education and learning. The lack of good punctuality means that your child is unlikely to achieve their full potential. Children who are persistently late make slow progress and develop habits that affects them in later years, in secondary schools and beyond. Pupil punctuality is also disruptive to the education and learning of other children in the class and in the school.

As parents it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly and punctually. Pupils who are continuously absent or late are automatically referred to the Attendance & Welfare Service in line with Tower Hamlets procedures.

Your support in ensuring that your child arrives at school on time and regularly in the future will be in your best interest and appreciated. The school needs your support in this matter so that it can provide your child with the best possible education.

If you have any questions or you would like more information, please speak to a member of staff at the school office who will be happy to help.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

Punctuality letter 2 on school headed paper

Date:

Dear Parent(s) of

Class:

RE: Improving Pupil Punctuality

I am writing to share the school's concerns about your child's punctuality. According to our records, your child has had ____ lates since the beginning of the academic year. This has increased since our last correspondence and actions taken have not been effective as your child's punctuality has not improved.

I would like to remind you of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality which was discussed at the admissions meeting and which forms part of the '*home-school agreement*' which you signed.

Please note that poor punctuality is currently affecting your child's education and learning. The lack of good punctuality means that your child is highly unlikely to achieve their full potential. Children who are persistently late make slow progress and develop habits that affects them in later years, in secondary schools and beyond. Pupil punctuality is also very disruptive to the education and learning of other children in the class and in the school.

As parents it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly and punctually. Pupils who are continuously absent or late are automatically referred to the Attendance & Welfare Service in line with Tower Hamlets procedures. In cases of persistent absence and lateness the Local Education Authority may consider serving a Fixed Penalty Notice where you could be fined up to £60 each.

As there has been no improvement in your child's punctuality, I would like to invite you to a meeting on ____ to discuss and form an action plan that we can put in place to help you to improve your child's punctuality at school. Therefore, kindly complete and return the attached form and bring this with you to the meeting. The school will then decide what further actions to take and may escalate this to the next level and seek support from an external agency as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

Parents' response to punctuality concerns

To be returned to the school office by

Full name of child:

Class:

The reasons for my child's punctuality being low this half term are...

These are the steps I am taking to improve my child's punctuality at school next half-term

I would appreciate the following support by the school

Completed by:

Date:

School Attendance ~ Everyday matters, every minute counts!

Each year, children attend school
190 days

Your child's education is their future. Good attendance at Bigland Green will increase your child's life chances. They will get good results for GCSEs and be able to get a degree.

175 days
Non-school days each year

To spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household and other appointments.



				£s wasted
Very good Increased life chances. A flying start to good results for GCSE and higher education.	100% = 190 days [0 days lost]	No lost education		
	97% = 185 days [5 days lost]	37 hours of lost education		
Worrying Reduced life chances. May not achieve full potential in GCSE or be in higher education.	95% = 180 days [10 days lost]	75 hours of lost education		
	90% = 171 days [19 days lost]	142 hours of lost education		
Serious concerns Life chances negatively affected. Likely to seriously underachieve and drop out from education. Not fair on your child. Court action likely.	85% = 161 day [29 days lost]	217 hours of lost education		
	80% = 152 days [38 days lost]	285 hours of lost education		
	75% = 143 day [47 days lost]	352 hours of lost education		
				£665
				£1,015
				£1,330
				£1,645

Persistent absence is defined by DfE as missing 19 days of school a year for any reason, including sickness and/or medical appointments.

Children with **persistent absence** are likely to be 2 years behind in their reading compared to their peers and 4 times more likely to get poor GCSE results.

Persistent absence in primary school means the child is 7 times more likely to get poor GCSE results in secondary school and not attend university.

Women with degrees earn 51% more than those without, across their lifetime in the UK.

FE News 2020

Our Mission ~ Increase children's life chances.

