DOG KENNEL HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date of issue	December 2019	Date of next review	December 2021
Person responsible for updating this plan	Linda Hillier		
Ratified by governors on:	10.12.19		
Signature of governor			

Contents

1. Aims

We expect good attendance and punctuality.   Our aim is for all children to have 96% attendance or better and 100% punctuality.

Each school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- ✓ Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence (children who have 10% or more absence).
- ✓ Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- ✓ Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

<u>We believe that:</u>

- Good attendance gives children every opportunity to influence their future quality of life and reach their full potential.
- Attendance is closely linked to achievement.
- Good attendance helps children develop friendships.
- Punctuality is important. It is habit forming and shows commitment to the importance of working and learning.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the <u>school attendance guidance</u> from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on <u>school attendance parental responsibility measures</u>. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- <u>The Education Act 1996</u>
- <u>The Education Act 2002</u>
- <u>The Education and Inspections Act 2006</u>
- <u>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006</u>
- <u>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010</u>
- <u>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011</u>
- <u>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013</u>
- <u>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016</u>
- <u>The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013</u>

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the <u>school census</u>, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- ✓ Present
- ✓ Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- ✓ Absent
- ✓ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- ✓ The original entry
- ✓ The amended entry
- ✓ The reason for the amendment
- ✓ The date on which the amendment was made
- ✓ The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We use a computerised register system which records absences and lateness.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:05 am and will remain open until 9:30 am. The register for the second session will be taken straight after lunch time.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9 am or as soon as practically possible. They should update the school if the absence is likely to continue.

Parents should contact the school by telephone to inform the school of their child's absence or in person at the school office, where parents can complete a school absence form. Alternatively,

parents can send an email relating the reason for absence to the school office (please indicate in the subject heading that it is related to child absence.)

Absence due to illness will be an authorised absence unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please bring a copy of the child's appointment letter or show a copy of a text message indicating that a medical appointment is scheduled into school and show this to the office staff or attendance officer.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

It is very important to get your child to school on time for 9.00 am when teaching begins. School gates open at 8:50 am to ensure there is time for children to arrive and line up for class

Lateness causes

       *disruption to classes

       *your child to miss valuable learning time

       *unhappiness and leads to social problems with making friends

The entrances to the school on Dog Kennel Hill and Grove Hill Road shut at 9.00 am.

If you arrive after this time you will need to use the main visitor's entrance and your child will be recorded as late, you will need to leave your child at the front office to minimise disruption to teaching. You must provide the reason for the lateness.

Lateness is recorded in the registers which are checked by the Local Authority.

If a child is late on 5 or more separate occasions within a half term period, a late letter is sent home. When a child is persistently late for a longer period a letter will be sent home requesting you attend a punctuality meeting with the attendance officer.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not, ensure the child is safe and identify the correct attendance code to use.

First day of absence: From 11 am onwards parents will be contacted by text, or telephone message to ascertain the reason for absence. If we do not receive accountability from a parent, we will make additional phone calls and emails to the primary guardians. If we still do not receive a response **Emergency contacts** will also be called to ensure the child and family are safe. If we are still unable to make contact, we may conduct a home visit if there are additional reasons to be concerned regarding a child's safety.

If the child returns after the first day of absence but no accountability has been provided a student absence form is sent home to be completed by the parent.

Second day of absence: If there has not been any accountability for a child's absence on day two texts, phone calls and emails will be sent to the primary guardians and emergency contacts. A home visit may be conducted if this has not already occurred to ascertain the safety and well-being of the child.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will receive information related to a child's attendance annually in the written end-of-year report, they will also receive reminders and a call if their child's attendance is under 93%. Text messages to parents and letters to parents if their child is late on 5 occasions.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Head of School may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be **'exceptional circumstances'**.

Examples of what may be considered an 'exceptional circumstance' are: immediate family bereavement, significant trauma in the home leading to interventions from police or social services, domestic abuse leading to the family being moved for safety reasons.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head of School's discretion. (This is still an absence)

Authorised Absence

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** at the discretion of the Head of School also include:

- ✓ Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- ✓ Religious observance – One day for religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- ✓ Educated off site at another school abroad during a period of stay out of the country due to exceptional circumstances
- ✓ Interview at another or school or to take an examination (e.g. music)

Unauthorised absence

A child's absence will be noted as unauthorised when:
- A note or phone call is not received explaining the absence.
- Holidays will be noted as unauthorised.

- The reason provided for the absence is not considered to be an adequate reason e.g. going to buy shoes, washing machine broke down, sibling ill, birthday arrangements and visiting friend.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 (per child absent) within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority, who will issue the penalty notice.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This takes into account:

- ✓ A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- ✓ One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- ✓ Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

- ✓ Promotes good attendance weekly by rewarding the class with the best attendance during Friday's assembly with a book to read in class and in Key stage 1 with an attendance bear called 'Eddie'.
- ✓ The school regularly promotes the importance of good attendance through the newsletters.
- ✓ Awards 100% attendance certificates on a termly basis in a special attendance assembly.
- ✓ Certificates are given to children who attendance is increasing and has reached 94% in the hope of motivating children to improve their attendance further.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and half termly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health and update the school each day if the child continues to be absent. (see section 3.2).

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving the Early Help Team.

The persistent absence threshold 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

➢ If a child's attendance falls below 93% you will receive a text informing you of this fact. This in the expectation that this attendance rises quickly.

➢ If attendance falls below 90% and your child is considered to be persistently absent you will be expected to attend a meeting with the attendance officer or with a member of the senior leadership team. Your child's attendance will be reviewed over a 6- week period and a further meeting will be arranged. This will indicate if progress has been made or if there are further concerns.

➢ Ongoing concerns of worsening attendance may lead to a meeting with Early Help.

➢ Continued persistent absent may lead to legal sanctions.

7. Roles and responsibilities

Parents, the governing body, schools and Southwark Education Authority share legal responsibilities in respect of attendance. Each party has legal duties and they are outlined underneath.

7.1 Role of Parents

Parents are required to:

➢ Fulfil their legal obligations to ensure their child receives full time education by regular attendance at school, under Section 7 of Education Act 1996.
➢ Fulfil their legal obligations under Section 7 of Education Act 1996 to ensure their child arrives on time for school – 9.00 am to secure a full-time education.

✓ Support the school in its aim to raise achievement through their child's full attendance at school.
✓ Contact the school, by telephone on each morning of absence or complete an absence slip or provide letter on the first day of absence if their child is unable to attend for a valid reason.
✓ Try to make appointments for after school and if not for the afternoon to make sure their child attends in the morning to maximise learning time.
✓ Take holidays out of school time only. The school will not approve term time trips unless the circumstances are extremely exceptional. Proof would be required for this, e.g. provision of

a death certificate, flight booking details etc. This is at the discretion of the Head of School and is rarely granted.
- ✓ Reply to letters sent by the school querying absences.
- ✓ Be courteous and polite always when staff question them about absences. Staff have a duty to hold parents to account when children do not attend school.
- ✓ Inform the attendance officer of member of the senior leadership team if they are planning to move out of the area, abroad or to an alternative school. Parents should provide the following information: new address and telephone number, name of new school, school address, school telephone number and start date.

7.2 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head of School and Executive Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Governing Body is empowered to ask the Head of School for a report on any aspect of the running of the school, including attendance.

7.3 The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head of School also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and may have meetings alongside the attendance officer with parents whose children are persistently absent.

7.4 The attendance officer

- ✓ Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- ✓ Reports concerns about attendance to the Safeguarding and Intervention Officer and Head of School
- ✓ Works with the Early Help and Senior leadership team to tackle persistent absence
- ✓ Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- ✓ Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- ✓ The Attendance Officer ensures the correct codes the register with the correct attendance code when all registers have been taken.
- ✓ Identify concerns and follow these up with telephone calls, letters or emails when required.
- ✓ Organise/lead any particular initiatives on attendance and punctuality.
- ✓ Form positive links with outside agencies and Social Services.

- ✓ Share joint responsibility with the PA to the Head of School, to off roll children (under Head of School's instruction)
- ✓ Enter children who arrive after 9.30 am on registers
- ✓ Ensure that communication and data for offsite provision is maintained and daily register is updated with the correct code
- ✓ Completes referral to the Early Help team.

7.5 Safeguarding & Intervention Officer

- ✓ Line manages the attendance officer
- ✓ Supports the attendance officer to monitor the attendance of individual pupils and as a school.
- ✓ Conducts meetings alongside the attendance officer with parents whose children are persistently absent.
- ✓ Liaises with external agencies such as Early Help and Social services.
- ✓ Forms positive relationships with parents to resolve non-attendance issues.
- ✓ Completes referrals to the Early Help team.

7.6 Office Manager

- ✓ *The Office Manager enters names and data of children on to Arbor creating class registers. She does this as children are admitted and at the beginning of the academic year.*

7.7 Class Teachers are required to

- ✓ Take the register at the beginning of every session (see appendix 1 attendance codes) using the appropriate symbols.
- ✓ Positively promote good attendance and punctuality in their classes.
- ✓ Record if children are present or absent on the computerised register using the correct codes
- ✓ Keep daily totals of attendance.
- ✓ If concerned about a child's attendance speak to the Attendance Officer or the Safeguarding and Intervention Officer for welfare/ safeguarding concerns.
- ✓ Ensure parents advise the Attendance Officer, or member of the senior leadership team if their child is leaving school for any reason.
- ✓ Fill in attendance figures on annual report forms.
- ✓ Ensure the implementation of The Attendance Policy and procedures.

7.8 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and provide the attendance officer with this information.

7.9 *Role of Early Help Team*

- ✓ Support school staff to promote good attendance.
- ✓ If other strategies are not successful in developing good attendance and punctuality and there are additional challenges that families are facing a referral may be made to the Local Authority Early Help Team.
- ✓ The Early Help team have powers under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act:
- ✓ The LA can issue penalty notices, court warnings or prosecute where this is deemed appropriate and parents have not fulfilled their legal obligations to ensure children attend school.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Safeguarding and Intervention Officer. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day