

**Carterhatch Junior School  
Attendance Guidance  
June 2024**

To be read in line with the Enfield Learning Trust (ELT) Attendance Policy.

**Responsibilities: Parents and Carers**

- Ensuring their children attend regularly.
- Ensuring they arrive on time.
- Ensuring they are properly dressed and in a condition to learn.
- The collection of their children at the end of the school day.

**Parents should:-**

- Impress upon their children the importance of attending school regularly and the need to observe the school's code of conduct regarding behaviour, code of dress, homework etc.
- Work in partnership with school to resolve issues that may lead to non-attendance.
- Ensure they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school.
- Notify the school regarding absence on the first day of absence.
- Where possible arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours. Where they are made in school hours, parents should provide evidence that this was unavoidable.
- Not arrange absence in term time unless classed as 'special circumstances' at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- Be aware that a note covering absence will not automatically guarantee authorisation and that only the *Headteacher* can authorise absence.
- Be aware that absences for shopping, looking after siblings, birthdays etc. are not acceptable *and will not be authorised*.

**Responsibilities: School**

Staff are required to call the attendance register at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether pupils are present, absent or on an approved educational activity (guide to symbols in Appendix 1 of this document).

- Make it clear to pupils and parents that regular attendance is the expectation.
- Support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils.
- Have clear rules for parental contact with the school in the event of absence.
- Be clear on action to be taken when absence is unreported by parents.
- Ensure prompt follow up on unexplained absences (first day calling).
- Respond promptly to issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and parent.
- Recognise that some parents have difficulty in understanding written communication.
- Work in partnership with the EWS.
- Enforce Fixed Penalty Notices where necessary.

## Punctuality

The school takes steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness is monitored and followed up. School gates open at 8:30am and close promptly at 8:40am.

## Medical Appointments

- Non-urgent appointments for the GP, dentist, optician should be made where possible outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Appointments for more urgent issues or hospital appointments will require evidence to be shown such as an appointment card or letter in order for the pupil's absence to be authorised.
- Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment unless there is a reasonable explanation why this would not be possible. The absence may be recorded as unauthorised if evidence is not produced.

## Unauthorised Absence

### Absence will be unauthorised if: -

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- Evidence provided for absence is not deemed satisfactory.
- The pupil is staying at home to mind the house.
- The pupil is shopping during school hours.
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday.
- The pupil is on holiday without permission
- The pupil is taking a pet to the vet.
- The pupil is looking after brothers and/or sisters.

*Where an unauthorised absence is recorded, a Penalty Notice Warning should be issued to the parents/carers (see note on Penalty Notices pg.3-4).*

Where school is unable to get a reason for absence and a pupil has been absent for 10 days or more, pupils will be at risk of losing their school space.

## Holidays

From 1 September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

### **Absence for Exceptional Circumstances**

Applications for exceptional circumstances must be made to the Headteacher in advance. Depending on the reason for the request, the Headteacher will consider to authorise or unauthorise the absence. Evidence may be requested. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

If the school grants permission such absences are authorised. If a child fails to return on the agreed date, the additional absence should be treated as unauthorised and a *Penalty Notice Warning* should be issued. Such situations may call into question approval of any further applications made by the family.

If permission is not granted, a *Penalty Notice Warning* will be issued and parents/carers will be required to sign that they have understood school could apply to the Local Authority for a *Fixed Penalty Notice (fine)* to be issued without further warning. There would be no monitoring period.

### **Religious Observance**

Parents/carers must ask the Headteacher in advance for time off for religious reasons. A period of three weeks or 15 school days in advance of the religious celebration will be considered as a reasonable timescale. Only days set apart for religious observance by the parent's religious body will be approved. Where necessary, advice will be sought from the parent's religious body to clarify this.

### **Penalty Notices**

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives schools the power to issue Penalty Notices in cases of non-school attendance. This is an alternative to prosecution.

As from 1 September 2013, amendments to the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay a penalty fine, will lead to prosecution. However, prior to a Penalty Notice being issued, a formal warning letter will be sent to parents/carers advising that there will be a 15 day monitoring period for attendance to improve and for them to contact the Headteacher to discuss school's concerns.

A warning that a Penalty Notice may be issued will be sent to both parents or carers (where applicable) for any of the following reasons:

- their child has an unauthorised absence;
- their child is taken on holiday during term-time;
- parentally condoned absences;
- truancy;
- Persistent lateness after registers have closed.

Only the Headteacher (or her representative) can authorise any absence. Evidence of the reason for absence may be requested. If a child continues to be absent without authorisation for 20 sessions or more (10 school days) during a three-month period, school will apply to the Education Welfare Service for a Penalty Notice to be issued. Where there are two parents/carers with parental responsibility, it is likely both will receive a Fixed Penalty Fine.

## Appendix 1

### Marking of Attendance Registers

#### Guide to Symbols

#### Electronic registers are pre-marked:

/ am \ pm	Present
O	Absent
L	Late during registration period
U	Late after registration period – indicate in column time of arrival and reason given
I	Authorised absence for sickness

#### Symbols for absence

C	Other Authorised Circumstances to be specified
M	Medical – doctor/dentist/hospital/optician appointments
H	Holiday (authorised only by Headteacher)
E	Exclusion
R	Religious Observance
G	Holiday – NOT agreed
O	Unauthorised absence
B	Educated off site (this code will not apply to part-time placements unless the child is registered at an appropriate educational provision – not dual registration)
J	Interview
P	Sporting activity
V	Education visit or trip

#### Symbols for Covid-19 related absence

X01	Non-compulsory school age
X02	Self Isolating: COVID19 symptoms
X05	Quarantine
X06	Shielding
X07	Government Restrictions / Local Lockdown
X08	Not attending in response to outbreak management
I02	Confirmed case of COVID-19

Attendance Officer **must obtain a reason for all child absences**