

Learning is fun at

Park Hill Infants' School



Attendance Policy

January 2026

Version 10

Review Date: January 2029

Version Control	Date	Actions
V1	January 2017	Original document
V2	June 2019	Reviewed
	July 2019	Approved at FGB on 9 July 2019
V3	September 2021	Amended Registration Times and Late Letter criteria Amended legal phrasing relating to Penalty Notices under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 Removal of the term 'fixed penalty notice', replaced by 'penalty notice.'
		Approved at Progress and Attainment Committee on 15 November 2021
V4	June 2022	Reviewed and reformatted. Amended Registration Times – U code (unauthorised late arrival) from 09:40am. Equalities Statement added.
	July 2022	Ratified at Curriculum meeting 11.07.22 – Staff notified of new policy and uploaded to school website
V5	September 2022	Links to other policies added to Section 2 Strategic Lead contact information added to Section 10
V6	November 2022	Section 3 amended with expectation for individual attendance and amended responsibilities for providing medical evidence Ratified by Governors 21/11/2022. Policy shared with all staff.
V7	July 2023	Reviewed and reformatted. All sections amended to meet requirements of 'working together to improve school attendance' DfE document by S. Croucher.
	Sept 2023	Approved by Senior Leadership Team and shared with all staff.
	Nov 2023	Noted as approved by Governors at Curriculum meeting 13/11/2023.
V8	June 2024	Policy amended to include changes from 19 th August 2024 including increased charges for Penalty Notices in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, published Feb 2024, applies from 19/08/2024) Approved by Senior Leadership Team and noted as approved in Curriculum meeting 08/07/2024 to come into effect from Sept 2024.
	July 2024	
	Sept 2024	
V9	Feb 2025	Policy amended to include changes to Leave of Absence request procedure on page 11. Approved by Headship Team and noted as approved at Full Governing Board meeting 10/03/2025.
V10	January 2026	Sections on medical evidence updated on page 8 and page 11. Information added about the difference between a Fixed Penalty Notice and Magistrates fine on page 15. EWO details updated. Approved by Headship Team. Noted as approved by Governing Board by email 26/01/2026.

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1 EQUALITIES STATEMENT

At Park Hill Infant School, we continue to teach our children about what it means to be strong, positive and productive members of society. We have always taught our pupils about equality and this remains an important part of our curriculum. We ensure that we always celebrate diversity, promote equality, demonstrate respect and stand together to challenge all forms of discriminatory language and behaviour.

We recognise that education is a vital tool for powerful, permanent and informative change. Our continuously evolving curriculum demonstrates our determination to use education to tackle issues of racism, homophobia and inequality. We strive to ensure our curriculum and supporting resources reflect values of inclusivity, diversity, equality and belonging. We do this by planning to meet the needs of all genders, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more-able, gifted and talented, of children with disabilities, of children from all socio-economic backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, religion and cultural backgrounds, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

2 INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's learning and progress and is therefore fundamental to our school's success.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils;
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality;
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Acting early to address patterns of absence;
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

By law, parents are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or has a day of religious observance.

Children's life chances are enhanced by regular attendance at school and the school will support parents and carers in achieving excellent attendance in order to maximise educational opportunities for their children. The school will communicate the minimum expected attendance level for every pupil for the academic year at the beginning of the academic year and reminders will be sent throughout. Where a child is placed on school roll in-year, this information will be communicated to parents and carers upon their admission to the school.

We will ask parents and carers to come into school to discuss any circumstances which may impact on their child's attendance. We commit to supporting families in order that children have maximum opportunity to achieve in the school system.

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school. Children whose attendance falls under 80% are missing on average one day's schooling each week and this seriously damages their life chances. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The following policies should be read in conjunction to this policy:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Self-Regulation: Promoting Positive Behaviour
- Exclusions Policy
- Equalities Policy
- SEND Policy
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school
- Children with Medical Conditions and First Aid
- Pupil Arrival and Collection Policy
- Promoting Pupil Wellbeing and Mental Health

3 LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 THE GOVERNING BOARD

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos
- Making sure the school’s attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils’ individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school’s processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school’s legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school’s strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

The link governor responsible for monitoring attendance is Jane Cleall-Smith.

4.2 THE HEADTEACHER

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Where necessary, giving authorisation for Education Welfare Officer to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Communicating the school’s high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

4.3 THE DESIGNATED SENIOR LEADER RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE

The designated senior leader, also known as the ‘senior attendance champion’, is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carer
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with the Inclusion Leader and parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Ensuring that the school is communicating with the local authority (via the Inclusion Leader) when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil’s needs

The designated senior leader, also known as ‘senior attendance champion’, responsible for attendance is Natasha Parry and can be contacted via the main office telephone – 0208 680 0747 or the email address – enquiries@parkhill-inf.croydon.sch.uk

4.4 THE ATTENDANCE LEAD

The school attendance lead is responsible for:

- Contacting parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Following up all unexplained absences;
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data;
- Daily inputting of attendance data/ coding (see Appendix 15);
- Production of correspondence regarding attendance and absence to parents/ carers;
- Developing school's attendance policy and strategy and ensuring all documents relating to attendance are up-to-date e.g. school brochure, school website information on attendance, promoting good attendance leaflet, standard school letters;
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, the Headteacher, the EWO and the governors;
- Working with Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to tackle persistent and severe absence;
- Referring irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the EWO;
- Advising the Headteacher/ senior leadership team (authorised by the Headteacher) when to refer parents/ carers to the EWO for the issuing of Penalty Notices.

The attendance lead is Stephanie Croucher and can be contacted via the main office telephone – 0208 680 0747 or the email address – attendance@parkhill-inf.croydon.sch.uk

4.5 THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER (EWO)

Our education welfare service is provided by Team EWS. The Education Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring the best outcome for all pupils;
- Improving school attendance and punctuality by contributing to relevant areas of school policy and procedure and providing termly attendance reports;
- Supporting school with cases of poor attendance/ punctuality/ unauthorised leave;
- Taking action in respect of individual absentees to secure regular attendance e.g. referrals to the Local Authority for consideration of Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence;
- Making referrals to, liaising with and collaborating in joint work with other practitioners and external services e.g. child protection services/ social care/ Early Help;

The Education Welfare Officer is Nicci Wayne and can be contacted by telephone - 07460 529891 or the email address – nwayne@teamewo.com

4.6 CLASS TEACHERS

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office twice per day, at the registration times (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.)

4.7 ALL SCHOOL STAFF

All school staff are responsible for:

- Keeping regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, twice daily;
- Encouraging good attendance and punctuality;
- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- Providing a safe learning environment;

4.8 PARENTS/ CARERS/ PERSONS WHO HAVE DAY TO DAY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CHILDREN

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/ children is unable to attend school by calling the school office or sending an email to attendance@parkhill-inf.croydon.sch.uk before 9:30am on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advising when they can return
- Notify the school if their child is going to be late due to an unforeseen circumstance (i.e. car breaking down, urgent appointment)
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;
- Provide at least two up to date emergency contact numbers, in addition to the contact information of the main parent(s)/ carer(s), and inform the school of any changes of address or contact details;
- Provide supporting medical documentation when requested. This can be produced in the form of an appointment card, prescription or letter;
- Ensure that, where possible, medical appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and providing a letter or appointment card as medical evidence for any medical appointment e.g. GP appointments, hospital appointments, optician appointments, hearing or speech assessments, dentist appointments etc.
- Ensure that family holidays are booked outside of term time
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school/ Education Welfare Office and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school office and/ or a member of the Headship Team who can be contacted via 0208 680 0747 or by emailing attendance@parkhill-inf.croydon.sch.uk

4.9 PUPILS

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly and achieve at least 96% attendance each year;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- Be picked up from school punctually.

5 ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is place to which children want to come.

The school encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by ensuring that school is a place where children are treated with respect and feel valued;
- by contacting parents/ carers for any unexplained absences from school and providing infection control information including when a child can return to school after a common infection e.g. chicken pox
- by responding promptly to a child or parent/carer concern about the school or other pupils;
- by taking time to discuss issues which may be impacting on attendance and helping parents/carers to overcome obstacles;
- by publishing and displaying attendance statistics;
- by celebrating excellent and improved attendance;
- by organising a 'Fun Day' for the class with the highest percentage of attendance each term;
- by formally writing to thank parents/ carers that move holiday dates out of school term following discussions with school staff;
- by encouraging parents to take an active interest in the work of the school and support their child's enthusiasm for attending school;
- by informing parents/ carers when their child's attendance is low and communicating the schools' expectations for good attendance and punctuality through letters and the 'importance of good attendance' leaflet;
- by providing parents/ carers with a copy of their child's attendance report as part of their annual written school report and addressing low attendance as part of the discussion at Parent Consultations;
- by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance and holding meetings with them and finally referring the family to Education Welfare Service (EWS) if the irregular attendance continues.
- By encouraging parents / carers to contact a member of the Headship Team if there are circumstances they should be aware of in connection with a child's attendance or punctuality. All information received will be held confidentially and the school will endeavour to offer support and advice where possible.

6 RECORDING ATTENDANCE

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice. A school day counts as 2 attendance marks. (See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.)

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside of the registration times are signed in or out from the school office. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of fire as an appendix to class registers.

Registers are checked regularly by the Education Welfare Officer to ensure they are kept accurately and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences.

6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 9.00am and ends at 3.30pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.10am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.10am and will be kept open until 9.40am.

For pupils in Reception, the register for the second session will be taken at 13.15pm and will be kept open until 13.30pm.

For pupils in Years 1 and 2, the register for the second session will be taken at 13.30pm and will be kept open until 13.45 pm.

Morning Registration – Reception & KS1 (All classes)	
09:00am – 09:10am	Gates are opened, children arrive to class
09:10am	Gates are closed, AM register is opened and called
09:15am	Children arriving after this time are signed in at the office and marked with an 'L' code. A reason for lateness should be entered into SIMS if received.
09:40am	AM register is closed. Children arriving after this time are signed in at the office and marked with an 'U' code (unauthorised.)* A reason for lateness should be entered into SIMS if received.
Afternoon Registration	
Reception (Class 1, 2 & 3)	
13:15pm	PM Register is opened and called
13:30pm	PM Register is closed. Children arriving after this time are marked with an 'U' code (unauthorised.)* A reason for lateness should be entered into SIMS if received.
KS1 (Class 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9)	
13:30pm	PM Register is opened and called
13:45pm	PM Register is closed. Children arriving after this time are marked with an 'U' code (unauthorised.)* A reason for lateness should be entered into SIMS if received.

* If the child is late to a registration session for an authorised reason after the register is closed, e.g. for a medical/dental appointment, the school can authorise this late mark as an 'L' code and not a 'U' code.

6.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am, or as soon as practically possible. Parents should contact the office on 020 8680 0747, option 1. In the event that the parent is unable to speak with a member of the office team, a message should be left on the school's answering machine, clearly stating their child's full name, class and the specific nature of the illness along with an estimated date of return to school. Alternatively, an email can be sent to attendance@parkhill-inf.croydon.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Medical Evidence

Medical evidence may be requested for absences to ensure that the school is accurately recording absences in line with DfE guidance. This may be provided in the form of a prescription, appointment card, prescribed medicine label, hospital report, record of attendance from doctor's surgery or GP hub.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness and requests medical evidence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this until evidence is provided.

Medical evidence may be requested in the following circumstances:

- Where an absence is for illness lasting three consecutive school days or more;
- Where an absence is for illness takes place directly before or after a school holiday;
- Where the school requires further information about an illness in order to ensure that infection control measures have been taken e.g. advising parents/ carers of the recommended times for children to be kept home from school due to an infection e.g. Strep A/ Scarlet Fever
- For absences where the pupil's attendance is below 90%, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness.

6.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides medical evidence.

The pupil's parent must notify the school of any planned medical or dental appointments by calling or speaking to staff at the school office, who can be contacted on 0208 680 0747 or by emailing to attendance@parkhill-inf.croydon.sch.uk

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.

It is essential that a medical evidence, such as an appointment card/letter, is brought to the school office or sent by email to attendance@parkhill-inf.croydon.sch.uk All children leaving school for a medical appointment or returning to school after a medical appointment must be signed in/out at the school office EntrySign machine.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 7 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

6.4 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels by:

- providing parents/ carers with a copy of their child's attendance report as part of their annual written school report and addressing low attendance as part of the discussion at Parent Consultations;
- by informing parents/ carers when their child's attendance is low and communicating the schools' expectations for good attendance and punctuality through letters and the 'importance of good attendance' leaflet;

- by encouraging parents / carers to contact a member of the Headship Team if there are circumstances they should be aware of in connection with a child's attendance or punctuality. All information received will be held confidentially and the school will endeavour to offer support and advice where possible;
- by informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance and holding meetings with them;
- by referring the family to the Education Welfare Officer (Team EWS) if the irregular attendance continues after the parents have been notified by correspondence from the school/ after an attendance meeting

7 LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

Leave of absence taken during school time is **not a right** and can only be taken with the permission of the Headteacher. The school term dates are published in advance of each academic year on the school website. It is not acceptable for parents/ carers to take children out of school, during term time, for a family holiday. The school will not authorise absences for a family holiday.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The school considers each application for a Leave of Absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances that are unexpected, unavoidable and outside of your control.

The Headteacher, on behalf of the Governing Board, will only authorise leave in exceptional or emergency circumstances and days must be kept to a minimum.

If there are exceptional circumstances which require a leave of absence during term time, parents/ carers can contact the school office to arrange a meeting with a member of the Headship Team **as far in advance of the requested leave period as possible**. After the meeting, if parents/ carers still need to request term time absence from school they will be directed to complete a Leave of Absence request form and return it to the office prior to the start date of the requested leave period. If travelling outside of the UK, the parent/ carer will be asked to provide flights tickets showing the child's departure and return to the UK.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
 - If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
 - Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
 - Attending provision arranged by the local authority
 - Attending work experience
 - If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

If a leave of absence is not granted by the Headteacher, and the absence is still taken, parents/ carers may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and/ or the Local Authority for the consideration of a Penalty Notice (see Section 8.)

Park Hill Infant School greatly appreciate parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to term time leave. The school is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible.

8 LEGAL SANCTIONS

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. The Education Welfare Officer may send a referral for the consideration of a penalty notice to the local authority. Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority may issue Penalty Notices to parents of children of compulsory school age with unauthorised absences from school. **The fines are issued to each parent, for each child.**

Reasons for Penalty Notices/Prosecution Term Time Leave of Absence

Term time leave: The EWO may apply to the local authority for a penalty notice if there are **5 or more days of consecutive absence** due to term time leave.

Unauthorised Absence: The EWO may apply to the local authority for a penalty notice if there are **10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.**

These absences can be a combination of the following codes:

- G - Term Time Leave of Absence
- O - Unauthorised Absence
- U - Unauthorised Late Arrival After the Close of Registers

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school and Education Welfare Officer will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks);
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil;
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution;
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. **From 19th August 2024**, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, **the first time** a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absences from school within a three-year rolling period, the amount has increased to £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

First Penalty Notice

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, **the first time** a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absences from school within a three-year rolling period, the amount has increased to £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days. **Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.** Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in the local authority taking alternative action including presenting the case straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.

For example: If a family with two children receive unauthorised absences from school, this would amount to £640 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £320 if paid within 21 days.

Second Penalty Notice

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, **the second time** a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absences from school within a three-year rolling period, there will now not be any discount for early payment. The penalty notice will be payable for the full amount of £160 within 28 days of the date of issue. **Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.** Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in the local authority taking alternative action including presenting the case straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.

Any further referrals for unauthorised absence within a rolling three-year period

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, in the case where the threshold for a Penalty Notice has been met for the third time in a rolling 3-year, a Penalty Notice cannot be issued, and the Education Welfare Officer may need to take alternative action including presenting the case straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child. **A fine issued by a magistrates' court for an attendance offence can show up on an enhanced DBS check.**

The difference between a Fixed Penalty Notice issued by the council and a Magistrates Court Fine

- **Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN):** A standard school attendance fine (penalty notice) is a civil matter and not a criminal conviction, provided it is paid on time. FPNs do not usually show up on any level of DBS check.
- **Magistrates' Court Fine:** If a penalty notice is unpaid, or the local authority decides to prosecute the parent in court directly, the resulting court appearance and fine is a **criminal conviction**. This conviction is recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC) and is likely to show up on an Enhanced DBS check.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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.

Who is liable for a Penalty Notice/ Prosecution?

Penalty notices/ prosecution are issued for each parent for each child. Parent refers to anyone with parental responsibility and may include carers, step-parents, grandparents or any other adult with parental responsibility.

9 RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

9.1 WHEN A PUPIL DOES NOT ATTEND SCHOOL WE WILL RESPOND IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

- On the first day of absence, if no telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.30 a.m. the school will contact them that day;
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and emergency contacts for the child. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers or invite them into school to discuss the child's absence. The school will advise parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to EWO;
- We will always report an unexplained absence of a child with a Child Protection Plan to the child's social worker within one day;
- We will always follow our safeguarding procedures for unexplained absences, including involving the EWO, carrying out a home visit to the home address and making a referral to the Local Authority for a child missing education (in accordance with our Safeguarding policy.) See point 10.3 for more information.

Pupils whose attendance falls to 90% or lower are classed by the Department for Education (DfE) as 'persistent absentees'. Such pupils are likely to be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who will, in the first instance, work with the family to attempt to remove the obstacles causing the non-attendance. We encourage all parents to engage with the Education Welfare Officer.

Where attendance fails to improve and absence cannot be justified in law, the consequence may be the issuance of Penalty Notices in accordance with the Local Authority's penalty notice protocol. In addition, the school will support the EWO in prosecutions brought under Section 444 Education Act 1996, or in applications in the Family Proceedings Court for Education Supervision Orders.

Failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWO may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

9.2 WHEN PUPIL IS PERSISTENTLY LATE:

The school register opens at 9.10am, when students are expected to be present. If a student arrives after the close of the register (09:40am), they are given an attendance mark for health and safety reasons, but are regarded in law as being absent. If a child persistently attends school after the close of the register consideration will be given to

(a) the issue of a Penalty Notice under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority may issue Penalty Notices to parents of children with unauthorised absences from school. See Section 8 for more information on Penalty Notice charges.

or (b) a referral to our EWO for a prosecution. Lateness not only affects the learning of the student in question, but also affects the learning of others.

Persistent lateness, after the register has been taken by the class teacher, but before the register is closed at 9.40am, is equally concerning. The school will monitor lateness closely and send a letter of concern to parents /carers if this exceeds 5 days in any half term. Further persistent lateness will result in parents being invited into school to discuss the matter and this may result in a referral to the EWO.

9.3 CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Croydon Council's Children Missing from Education Team.

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff may include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts – in addition to the main carers of the child)
- Letters home (including by recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the pupil/ family
- Referral to the EWO (Team EWS)

All contacts and outcomes will be recorded on the pupil attendance record and on CPOMS.

10 SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO ARE ABSENT OR RETURNING TO SCHOOL

10.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The school's approach towards pupils with complex barriers to attendance includes but is not limited to:

- ensuring that strong pastoral systems are in place so that pupils and families are supported when needed;
- pastoral support for pupils with poor attendance linked to school refusal/ anxiety around coming to school;
- running an Early Birds Club Mon-Fri from 08:30am-09:00am - places are offered free-of-charge to pupils with low attendance/ poor punctuality or who have been identified as vulnerable. Breakfast is provided. Early Birds Club is aimed at promoting and further developing a range of key skills including speaking and listening, play skills, social interaction and emotional development;
- publishing our leaflet 'The Importance of Good Attendance and Punctuality' on the website/ hard copies in school office and circulating the leaflet to parents/ carers by email;
- offering attendance 1:1 parent meetings with the attendance lead for all parents/ carers - not just parents/ carers of children with low attendance;
- organising formal attendance meetings with School Leaders to meet with parents/ carers for low attendance/ attendance concerns
- holding Attendance Coffee afternoons to raise awareness of our expectations of good attendance and punctuality;
- encouraging class teachers to talk to parents/ carers about attendance during Parent/ Teacher consultations;
- enabling staff to chat informally with parents/carers about attendance e.g. at drop-off and collection times;

When required, we work with partners to promote good attendance. Examples include:

- Our Education Welfare Officer – Mrs Wayne - Team EWS
- Local Authority services such as Early Help, Children Missing Education
- Social workers – where relevant and necessary

Please see additional strategies for supporting children with mental health, physical health or SEND in separate policies on Promoting Pupil Wellbeing and Mental Health, Supporting children at school with medical conditions and first aid and the SEND policy.

10.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The school's approach towards pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their SEND includes but is not limited to:

- Individual healthcare plans (IHCPs) can help to ensure that schools effectively support pupils with medical conditions – in cases where a child has low attendance due to a medical condition, the school may need to make arrangements such as: adjustments to the child's timetable, considering access requirements, organising additional staff training and completing individual risk assessments;

- providing ‘break-out’ rooms for children with additional staff, including the ‘Starlight’ Room for children with SEN Support and the Nest for children with nurture support;
- where necessary, offering support via the school counsellor/ nurture support mentor to help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries;
- school staff with First Aid at Work or Paediatric First Aid training may be asked to provide support to pupils with medical conditions, including the administering of medicines. Parents/ carers are given the option of bringing Calpol/ Nurofen to school, alongside any prescription medications, and written consent from parents/ carers is captured to enable staff to administer medications to children;
- where appropriate, the school may make referrals on behalf of pupils and their families for extra support and advice from services such as CAMHS, Early Help or the School Nurse Team.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil’s needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Please see additional strategies for supporting children with mental health, physical health or SEND in separate policies on Promoting Pupil Wellbeing and Mental Health, Supporting children at school with medical conditions and first aid and the SEND policy.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The school’s approach to supporting pupils back into school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence includes but is not limited to:

- a phased return, if necessary;
- where the school has been notified in advance of a lengthy period of absence, the school may send a letter prior to the start date of absence to alert parents/ carers of potential sanctions e.g. penalty notices and send a follow-up letter after the absence to inform parents/ carers of their child’s low attendance and the impact that the absence may have on their progress at school;
- ‘catch up’ informal meetings with parents and carers, if necessary;
- where necessary, offering support via the school counsellor/ nurture support mentor to help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries;
- extra learning interventions to help pupils who may have missed learning.

For more information, please see the Whole-School Attendance Strategy.

11 ATTENDANCE MONITORING

11.1 MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) fortnightly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level, year group and cohort level;
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern;
- Log conversations/ meetings with parents on CPOMS about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.

In line with our privacy notice for pupils and families, specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE and local authority on request. The school has granted the DfE and local authority access to attendance data so the data can be monitored regularly and securely via Wonde (for the DfE) and StudyBugs (for the LA.)

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school and targeted group level against local, regional and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

11.2 ANALYSING ATTENDANCE

The school will:

- Follow the actions set out in the Attendance Strategy document to monitor, analyse and improve attendance – this document sets out the responsibilities for individual staff with regards to school attendance;
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families;
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns;
- Attendance data is held electronically on SIMS (Management Information System), accessible by authorised staff, enabling the school analyse comprehensive attendance reports for individual children, group and whole school attendance;
- Returns of school data are made daily to the Department for Education (DfE), via Wonde, and the Local Authority, via StudyBugs, and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts

11.3 USING DATA TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis;
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the Inclusion Leader, Designated Safeguarding Leads and Pupil Premium Leader);
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 11.4 below)
- Set attendance targets each year which are agreed by the Headship Team and Governors at the first full board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and are based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies;
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

11.4 REDUCING PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;
- Follow the attendance interventions listed in section 6.4
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or are persistently or severely absent, to;

- Discuss attendance and engagement at school;
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance;
 - Explain the help that is available;
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence;
 - Review any existing actions or interventions.
- Provide access to wider support services, such as Team EWS and Early Help, to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant;
 - Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence;
 - Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 8)

12 CHANGING SCHOOLS

It is important that, if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school, they inform the Headteacher as soon as possible in writing. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and/or Children Missing from Education Team at Croydon Council as appropriate (see section 10.3)

13 MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/ or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years or sooner if required. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

14 APPENDIX 1 - REGISTRATION TIMES ON A PAGE

Our school day runs from 09:10am until 15:30pm

Morning Registration – Reception & KS1 (All classes)	
09:00am – 09:10am	Gates are opened, children arrive to class
09:10am	Gates are closed, AM register is opened and called
09:15am	Children arriving after this time are signed in at the office and marked with an 'L' code. A reason for lateness should be entered into SIMS if received.
09:40am	AM register is closed. Children arriving after this time are signed in at the office and marked with an 'U' code (unauthorised.)* A reason for lateness should be entered into SIMS if received.

Lunchtime	
Reception (Class 1, 2 & 3)	12:00pm to 13:15pm
KS1 (Class 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9)	12:15pm to 13:30pm

Afternoon Registration	
Reception (Class 1, 2 & 3)	
13:15pm	PM Register is opened and called
13:30pm	PM Register is closed. Children arriving after this time are marked with an 'U' code (unauthorised.)* A reason for lateness should be entered into SIMS if received.
KS1 (Class 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9)	
13:30pm	PM Register is opened and called
13:45pm	PM Register is closed. Children arriving after this time are marked with an 'U' code (unauthorised.)* A reason for lateness should be entered into SIMS if received.

At the end of the school day, children should be collected promptly at 15:30pm. If a parent arrives later than 15:40pm, they are required to sign their child out of the office.

* If the child is late to a registration session for an authorised reason after the register is closed, e.g. for a medical/ dental appointment, the school can authorise this late mark as an 'L' code and not a 'U' code.

15 APPENDIX 2 – 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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available

Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		

Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays