



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

School Name	Cherry Lane Primary School
School Address	Sipson Road, Hillingdon, UB7 9DL
Date Policy Revised	September 2024
Date of GB Approval (where applicable)	December 2024
Date of next revision	September 2025

“Attendance Matters.....”

Regular school attendance is of vital importance. It shows a commitment to our school and provides your child with the routines expected in society. It gives children the opportunity to benefit from education and avoid being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviours. Cherry Lane’s expectations are for full attendance.

Good attendance is essential for children’s progress and achievement. Good punctuality shows respect for school rules, teachers and other children. Children who are continually late are missing an important part of the day including work setting and social interaction with their peers. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. Arrival after the closure of registration is an unauthorised absence in accordance with the government guidance.

Nursery provision is non-statutory but we encourage parents to develop good attendance and punctuality at this early stage as this instils the children with good habits. We have a reward scheme through the ‘Here Every Day’ project to encourage good attendance in the Nursery.

Attendance Expectations:

The DfE expect pupils to attend school at least 95% of the time. School and parents/carers are required to work together to ensure that all pupils reach this target. This policy sets out the roles, responsibilities and action that may be taken in order to achieve good attendance.

Why Attendance is so important:

Ensuring regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents/carers and permitting absences from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution. A child who is not in school is missing out on a part of his/her education and is being deprived of the learning that may provide access to future employment and opportunities.

We as a school will:

- Welcome children back from an absence and ensure their reintegration is as smooth as possible
- All information is found on our website www.cherrylane.hillingdon.sch.uk or newsletters.
- Ensure accurate registers are kept – these are legal documents.
Key Stage 1 8.50am and 1.10pm
Key Stage 2 8.45am and 1.30pm
Late pupils **MUST** register on the monitor in the School Office
- Provide CME (Children Missing Education) Audits each month to the Local Authority, this includes all absences.
- Maintain positive links with external agencies i.e. The Attendance Support Team, Children’s Services.
- Promote rewards for good attendance and most improved attendance. **Special awards are made for Children with outstanding attendance.**
- Monitor and record absences and late arrivals. Identifying the reasons for the absence. Meet with Reception parents following the first term if the attendance is a cause for concern
- Use truancy call for first day followed by one to one calls
- Send letters for unexplained absences
- Initiate individual action plans for Persistent Absentees, any child whose attendance falls below **90%**

Parents Responsibilities:

- Ensure attendance and punctuality, unless your child is too ill, they should be in school
- Ensure that their child/children arrive at school at least 5 minutes before the start of the day
- Notify school as soon as possible to explain the absence either in writing or by phone
- In the event of being unavoidably late, at either end of the day, please notify the school as soon as possible and report to the school office on arrival
- **Provide up to date contact numbers and addresses. This is vital in case of emergencies otherwise the school may have to contact Children's Services**
- Help with school work, ensure the child has the correct equipment and know the routines
- Be positive, problems do occur with work or other children. Reassure your child and come into school and talk to either the Class Teacher or Learning Mentors to discuss any worries

Understanding Absences

Of course there are going to be times when your child has to miss school through illness, bereavement or religious observances, in line with Local Authority guidance. You should contact the school on the first day of absence. It is only the school which can authorise an absence not the parent/carer, common colds or coughs will not be authorised. For children who have been identified as poor attendees, evidence for the absence will be required otherwise it will be unauthorised. Medical or dental appointments will only be authorised if an appointment card is produced but good practice would be to keep routine check-ups to outside school hours. A child will be expected to attend school before or after these appointments.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when the school needs to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have current contact numbers at all times. Parents should ensure the school is informed of any changes.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent from school the parent / carer must follow the following procedures:

- **Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9am.** The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call. Email or call into school personally and speak to the office staff.

Late Arrivals

Late arrivals after the registers have been closed are marked as unauthorised for that session. Registers close at 9.00am. Continual unauthorised absences can lead to sanctions and or legal procedures. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

see Appendix 1

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer and/or the Headteacher, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Unauthorised Absences

Are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which 'no' leave has been given or the absence has been condoned by the parent unjustifiably. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (Attendance support team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes however is recorded as an absence for the session
- Shopping trips
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- Their own family birthdays
- Holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher – may result in school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have been issued 2 Penalty Notice's within a 3 year period, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority.
- Day trips
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

Fixed Penalties Notices

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. More information is available from Hillingdon's Attendance support team.

Persistent Absence

Any child whose attendance falls below **90%** for **whatever reason** will be issued with an Individual Pupil Action Plan, which will offer support for the child and guidance for the parents/carers. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to your child's education and we need parents/carers fullest support to tackle the issues. Any absence will require evidence i.e. GP appointment card, prescription repeat form. The child will also be made known to the Headteacher who may arrange an Attendance Panel to discuss the reasons of absence and to offer support where necessary.

Attendance Support Team

The Attendance Support Team are based at the Local Authority and each school has a designated officer from this team. The team can offer support and information to parents and children. They are an independent team who will give impartial advice, if they are unable to resolve attendance issues they have the power to issue penalty notices or pursue prosecution through the courts. To contact them: telephone **01895 250858** or email **attendancesupport@hillington.gov.uk** . Alternatively we offer the support of our Learning Mentors or Mrs Alice Carroll, Pastoral Manager.

Monitoring

Cherry Lane uses Truancy Call, which sends automated messages to parents where no explanation for absence is given. Parents can then respond by messages that are retrieved throughout the day. It also ensures the well-being and safety of the child. Truancy sweeps are made, within Hillingdon, in partnership with the police and the attendance support team.

The attendance of each child is monitored by the Attendance and School Welfare Officer, we particularly look for patterns i.e. Mondays or Fridays. If a child's attendance falls below 93% we start the monitoring process. If the attendance does not improve through this monitoring period we will ask the Attendance Support Team to intervene.

Parents of children with poor attendance will be invited to meet with the Attendance officer to discuss any issues but without improvement an Attendance Panel will be initiated led by the Headteacher . The decision to issue a penalty notice or prosecute each parent/carer per child is taken by the Attendance Support Team. **Parents can be fined up to £2500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.** Magistrates can also impose Parenting Orders, which means the parents must attend parenting classes. (Ed. Act 1996 – Section 444 (i) and 444(1A, amendments 2013 reduce the timescales for penalty notices). Penalty notices of £80 per child per parent may be issued as an alternative to prosecution these can rise to £160 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice.

Nursery Attendance:

If there are concerns regarding the absence of a nursery pupil, the school will follow similar actions to mainstream school up to meeting with the Attendance Officer. The offer of a Family Support Worker and Nursery Manager can be offered. After this stage, if attendance remains at or below 90% (the persistent absence level), the Head Teacher can take the decision to remove the pupil from roll.

Exceptional Leave

DFE guidance states there is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteacher's may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We recognise that there may be very exceptional circumstances, which may result in a pupil being unable to attend school, such as a death in the family or hospitalisation and recovery. **All requests for exceptional circumstance leave must be put in writing to the Headteacher or Mrs Ramsay (Attendance Officer). This letter must contain the reason for the request and the dates of absence, including the return date. Headteachers determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.** Travel arrangements should not be confirmed before seeking permission from school, otherwise leave will not be authorised and details will be passed to the Attendance support Team. Repeat requests/patterns will not

If children are absent for more than a 20 day period the child can be removed from the school roll and referred to the Local Authority Attendance Support Team.

Absence for religious observance

The school will follow local authority guidance regarding absence for religious observance. All requests for such absence must be made known to the school before the said observance.

Equal opportunities

All pupils irrespective of individual circumstances should have an equal opportunity to attend school regularly. Children regardless of age, race or gender should receive the same approach towards their reasons for absence.

Summary

- To raise attendance to at least the national level for primary children – 95%
- To give both children and parents/carers the opportunity to recognise the importance of education not just academically but the socialising skills.
- To give parents/carers the chance to discuss any issues regarding attendance or punctuality.

“Every Day Counts....”

Cherry Lane Primary School



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Headteacher Miss Nicky Tranter

Attendance & Punctuality Policy Update – September 2024

Late Desk

For safeguarding reasons, parents will have to say goodbye at the door and will no longer be allowed to enter the building. Should parents wish to have contact with their child's class teacher, an appointment can be made via the School Office, send an email or you may speak to the teacher at the end of the school day.

As a reminder, all children who are late, ie after their registration time, must sign in on the console in the School Office.

Persistent Lates

If your child is regularly late, even by three minutes every day, this can add up to over seven and a half hours of **lost** learning time in one month. 15 minutes late each day is the same as missing two weeks of school.

Anyone arriving after 9.00am will be registered as an Unauthorised Late (after registers closed). This can affect your percentage attendance and therefore you may fall below the Department for Education threshold for persistent absence.

This means that if a pupil's absence falls below 90% at any time within the school year, they will fall into the category of persistent absenteeism and the London Borough of Hillingdon Attendance Support Team may become involved.

The Attendance Support Team can issue Penalty Notices for **any** unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices can be issued per parent, per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £80 and £160 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid you will receive a summons to Uxbridge Magistrates Court. If unauthorised absences are repeated the Attendance Support Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.