

Attendance Policy

New End Primary School

Date Completed: Autumn Term 2019

Review Date: Autumn Term 2020

Rationale

New End School believes that good attendance at school will contribute to a solid foundation for a child's education. The school will therefore give good attendance and punctuality a high priority. We will encourage all children to maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality through rewarding good attendance at all ages and also rewarding improvements in attendance.

Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- (a) provide a structure for action to achieve consistently good attendance and punctuality;
- (b) ensure consistency of practice;
- (c) provide a clear and unambiguous policy for children, parents, staff and others;
- (d) offer security to new members of the school community;
- (e) enable people to share good ideas and practices with respect to promoting good attendance and punctuality;
- (f) enable the school to review these ideas and practices regularly.

Monitoring Levels of Attendance and Punctuality

The school will report regularly on levels of attendance and punctuality. Reporting will be through the weekly newsletter for parents, discussion at the Governing Body's Home-School Liaison Committee and an item in the Headteacher's termly reports to the Governing Body's. The school believes that there is often a link between educational under-achievement and poor attendance and/or punctuality. The school will therefore target particularly for improvement the attendance/punctuality of those children who are very poor attenders (less than 90%) and whose educational achievement is below average. The school's attendance co-ordinator will meet monthly with the school's educational welfare officer and target for improvement children whose attendance and/or punctuality is poor, based on regular checks of class registers.

Those children in each class whose attendance and/or punctuality is well above average will be rewarded through the school's whole-school reward systems. From September 2016 children with 100% attendance and perfect punctuality have received a star in a special star assembly. Children with attendance of 96 – 99% attendance will receive a

certificate each term to celebrate their good attendance. Children whose attendance and punctuality shows improvement will also be targeted for certificates throughout the year. Classes in KS1 and KS2 will, on a weekly basis, receive weekly stickers for 100% unauthorised absences and perfect punctuality. Each term the class with the most stickers will be acknowledged with a small monetary voucher to buy something for their classroom.

Working with Parents

Where a child's attendance and/or punctuality is poor, the class teacher will speak to the parent about their concern. If there is no improvement a standard school letter will be sent, informing the parent that unless there is an improvement, then the Educational Welfare Service will be involved through a referral from the school. However, the circumstances of individual children will determine the nature of the communication regarding poor attendance and the school will be sensitive to cultural differences in perceptions regarding attendance. Nevertheless, the school will aim for an early intervention in each case. All teachers and key support staff consider monitoring and encouraging attendance to be an integral part of their role. The school recognises that an early response to developing patterns of absence can be most effective. Regular lateness will be followed up in the same way as developing patterns of absence.

Possible methods of approach in tackling early signs of absenteeism include discussion with the child, communication with the parent face to face or by telephone, standard and/or personal letters, school-based interviews and the possible involvement in any of the above before formal referral to the EWS. This may lead to fixed-penalty fines for persistent poor attendance and/or punctuality.

Targets for Improvement

The school will set annual targets for improvement in attendance (including persistent absence levels), punctuality and unauthorised absence rates. These targets will be regularly monitored, reported on and discussed by staff and also reported in the school's SEF. The targets will also form part of the school improvement plan.

Standardisation of Practice

We will work towards standardisation of practice with regard to attendance and punctuality through regular discussion of guidelines for marking the register and responding to absence, examples of good practice, procedures for communicating with parents and identification of appropriate management structures and general procedures for these. It has been agreed that registers will be closed at 9.30 a.m. in the morning session and that registers will be completed by 9.15 a.m. (and any lateness marked before or after this time, as appropriate). All registers are now completed electronically. A paper copy of the register is completed in the form of the dinner register.

Targetting particular forms of absenteeism for improvement

At New End a high proportion of absences are due to holidays being taken during term time. The guidelines from the DfE and Camden CSF and the school's policy are that parents should not normally take children on holidays in term time. All requests for holiday being taken on school days should be made by completing an exceptional absence request form, available from the school office. The form should be completed and returned to the school well before the requested leave might take place. Each request for holiday absence will be considered individually, taking account of: the child's age; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the child's overall attendance; the child's stage of education and progress. If the school does not agree absence and the child goes on holiday, then the absence will be marked as unauthorised. If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised. The school may delete from roll a child who fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. The school will only exceptionally agree absence of more than 10 school days in a school year and, in any case, will not regard 10 days as the norm.

Requests for absences due to 'special occasions' will be treated individually. The school's policy is that only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence, and this is the policy of Camden CSF. For example, attending a wedding of a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday, collection of a member of the family from the airport or a shopping trip in school hours would not. The school will consider the nature of the event, its frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?), whether the parent gave advance notice and the child's overall attendance pattern. Parents who wish to arrange a specialist educational tutor for their child privately should organise this outside school hours, since arranging it during the school day will be detrimental to a child's educational progress.

The school will respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and has discretion to authorise such absences.

Promoting Positive Attendance

We believe that emphasising the importance of attendance throughout the school and amongst all members of the school community is the most effective way of positively raising attendance levels. All members of the school community need to be involved in the setting and the monitoring of attendance and punctuality targets each year. We also believe that it is essential to convey our positive regard for regular attendance to parents/carers and children. The following strategies will be used to promote positive attendance:

- Giving particular attention to the collection, reporting and publication of attendance and punctuality data in school;
- Use of incentives and rewards in recognition of the efforts of parents/carers and children to improve attendance (e.g. achievement certificates and badges for punctuality and attendance, focussed achievement assemblies on this etc.);
- Sending letters to parents/carers when a child attains 100% attendance over a specific time;

- Parents/carers to receive accurate and clear information about their child's education and attendance/punctuality and how important it is that children attend school, including a section in the child's annual report on attendance and punctuality (percentage attendance, positive comments for effort etc.);
- Listening to parents'/carers' reasons for their child's absence and giving clear consistent messages about what the school will accept as a valid reason;
- Early intervention with parents/carers through interview, parents' meetings and parent evenings;
- Prevention through early intervention of children with difficulties;
- Setting attainment goals/targets for individuals/class groups/phases;
- Welcoming children back into school after illness and providing reintegration support;
- Analysing the underlying causes of poor attendance and the relative effectiveness of strategies that contribute to improving attendance;
- Effective working relationships with outside agencies, and in particular the Educational Welfare Service.

Monitoring and Evaluating Policy and Practice

The policy will be reviewed regularly by the Headteacher to ensure that it reflects practice at New End.