



# **Little Heath School Attendance Policy**

**Revised 18/09/20/14**

**This policy was adopted on 01/10/14  
The policy is to be reviewed on 30/09/15**

**Signed ..... Chair of governors)**

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*Little Heath School has adopted the Redbridge Children's Services Attendance Strategy (Adapted for Special Schools and reviewed: November 2013). This policy should be read alongside it.*

Attendance at school is a legal requirement between the ages of 5 – 18 years. Young people are entitled to formal education during this phase of their lives. It is important that they receive their entitlement for their present and future lives and for the economic and well-being of society.

As a Children's Service Area, Redbridge LA is responsible by law for making sure that registered pupils of compulsory age regularly attend their school. The Government also has a priority in reducing unnecessary absence from school.

Many pupils attending Little Heath School are more vulnerable and have greater needs than the majority of their mainstream counterparts. This means that they may have more genuine absences from school for medical reasons or experience greater social need than others. It is our responsibility as educators to do all we can to encourage and support regular and frequent school attendance.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school. We at Little Heath School are committed to ensuring that Little Heath families understand how important this is. We give high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home- school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/ carers and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

## PROCEDURES

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised. A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order.

### Registration

At Little Heath School a manual registration system is currently used to register pupils. This system will be superseded by a computerised system during the autumn term 2014. Manual registers must be marked in ink and where an alteration is necessary this must be clearly identified showing both the original entry and change. Registers are then returned to the school office at the end of the registration period. The information is then entered onto the school's information management system. The morning register closes at 9.15. All pupil arrivals after this point are treated as absent from that session, unless they arrive on school transport.

### **Procedures for following up absence / lateness**

Pupils who arrive late should be registered as absent but with a small capital L in red in the absence circle on their arrival (usually by the office staff). Pupils who arrive more than 30 minutes after the beginning of registration should be marked absent for that session (i.e. half day). A 'Late Book' will be kept in the school office where the names of pupils who have arrived after this 30-minute period will be written by the office staff and used to check the pupils in the case of a fire. These absences are regarded as unauthorised absences if no satisfactory explanation is given in a note or by telephone by the parents/carers. Parents or carers dropping pupils off late must report to Reception and explain the reasons for lateness. This is also recorded in the SIMS electronic system along with the time of arrival.

It is the responsibility of the parent / carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. This can be done by leaving a message on the answer phone or phoning when the school office opens at 8.00am. In any case a parent/ carer should contact prior to 9.30am. If this contact is not made Little Heath will contact the parent/carer by telephone or, if the parent is unobtainable, send a text message or email and/or write a letter requesting information.

If this fails to provide an explanation for the absence the Parent Student Adviser will attempt to get in touch and a (second) letter may be sent to the parents / carers. The school's Education Welfare Officer may be informed and the parent/ carer may be invited in to the school for a meeting by the Parent Student Adviser and the Educational Welfare Officer. The meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If a pupil is persistently late the school will write to parent/carer inviting them to a school-based meeting with the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **Authorised and unauthorised Absence**

"Leave" in relation to a school means leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school.

The Head teacher will only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance and where he is satisfied that there are exceptional or special circumstances to justify the request. The DfE (2013) now state that leave of absence requests for holidays should not be granted.

It is acknowledged that due to individual needs of pupils at Little Heath School, the Head teacher may apply special consideration to requests for compassionate leave and where a parent/carer can demonstrate external funding has been awarded to a family for a holiday.

It may be necessary for the school or Education Welfare Officer to ask the parent/ carer to provide the school with written evidence of the reason for absence e.g. appointment cards, medical certificate or a letter from the GP.

If there is an extended period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Education Welfare Officer may ask for permission of the parent/ carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance / punctuality**

Attendance statistics are monitored by the Head teacher and the Governing Body and reported to the local authority. Targets are set annually for attendance figures. The current target is 93%.

Parents and carers, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence. Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters and school blogs, Parent/ Carer Consultation Days and pupil reports will be used. Pupils with a known attendance problem admitted to school will be interviewed with parents and will be set targets for improvement. Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding punctuality and attendance.

In addition, regular attendance and punctuality will be promoted and recognised through awards and certificates in tutor groups and assemblies. A termly Governors' attendance prize will be presented to raise awareness and commitment from pupils and their parents/ carers.

The Parent Student Adviser will contact parents and carers to discuss any issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, will be promptly investigated by the school. The Parent Student Adviser and Head teacher will have regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer, in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties. The EWO will organise three-weekly regular Register sweeps. A letter is sent out to parents if a child is persistently absent from school.

### **Sanctions for persistent lateness and Non – Attendance**

A Penalty Notice can be considered for unauthorised leave of absence taken without permission after the third day of absence. It will be issued by the EWS at the request of the Head teacher in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct after consultation with the Chair of governors. A penalty Notice can also be considered for any unauthorised absence where there is no justifiable cause. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

The Local Authority may impose an Education Supervision Order, Parenting Contract or Parenting Order in certain circumstances.

## Pupil absence monitoring procedure

1. ALL registers must be returned to the office by 9.15am
2. All absent pupils will be contacted on their first day of absence by either a designated member of the administration team or the Parent Student Adviser (PSA). All telephone calls home will be by 10.30am.
3. Records of late arrivals will be made in the 'late book' and on SIMS.
4. The time of all calls to pupils home will be recorded on the pupil absence monitoring form.
5. If on the first call to a pupils home no one answers, then a message will be left for the family to contact the school as soon as possible to explain why the pupil is not at school.
6. On making contact with the pupil's family, they will be informed that for every day the pupil is absent the family must contact the school to inform them of the pupil's progress. If they do not, then the school will contact them each and every day of absence.
7. The pupil's family will also be informed that they must write a letter explaining the absence and this will be kept on file.
8. If a pupil is absent for more than two days without contact by the family the PSA will be informed to follow up the absence.
9. If the admin staff are unhappy with the reasons given for a pupils absence then the PSA will be informed of any concerns and will follow up with the pupil's family.
10. The absence monitoring form will be kept as an individual record for each pupil in a pupil absence monitoring record file. At the end of each term, statistics will be produced to show the performance of response times to a pupil's absence. It will be used to inform individual pupil's families of any patterns forming. The information will also be used to inform the Senior Leadership Team and School Governors and, if necessary, the Educational Welfare Officer for the school.

### PUNCTUALITY

At 9.15 the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have a late mark. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Education Welfare Officer to resolve the problem.

Persistent lateness should be discussed with the relevant Head of Key Stage (Jen Christensen at KS3, Tessa Christoforou at KS4, Dai Robert at KS5) who may refer the matter to the PSA or EWO.

### REPORTING NON-ATTENDANCE

In addition to the procedures set out above, the school will report pupils' attendance and unauthorised absences to homes in accordance with the legal requirements outlined in the latest government circular.

### ROLES

**Families will:**

- Notify the school of any absences on the day of that absence

- keep close contact with the school if a pupil is on extended leave due to ill health

**Form Tutors will:**

- Keep an accurate and up-to-date attendance register of their Tutor Group (see details on marking the register above)
- Correct any inaccuracies which may occur in the attendance register
- Follow up absences as outlined above (see "Following up absences")
- Liaise with the relevant Head of Department about attendance
- Inform office staff if they receive any communication that a pupil will need to leave the school premises part way through the day by prior arrangement e.g. for a medical appointment

**Heads of Key Stage /Form Tutors will:**

- As and when the need arises, enable attendance and lateness to be discussed and appropriate action to be taken

**Administrative staff will:**

- Maintain a record of pupil attendance on the school's computer system
- Telephone pupils' homes as necessary re attendance
- Pass on information re attendance to the relevant staff
- Keep records and inform outside agencies as necessary to comply with local and national policy and procedures
- Store notes from home in the pupil file

**Teachers will:**

- Monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality to lessons
- Inform senior members of staff if a pupil leaves a lesson without permission and does not return within a short
- Pick up and mark registers at the start of the day and period 5
- To discuss the impact of low attendance on learning with families at consultation meetings where appropriate

**Parent Student Adviser will:**

- Liaise with Head teacher
- Liaise with EWO or other relevant services
- Contact parents/carers (by telephone or home visit) to monitor attendance
- Liaise with Admin staff over any queries
- Meet with the Education Welfare Officer every three weeks
- Keep records of pupils who arrive late and note down reason
- To notify the safeguarding team of absences of vulnerable pupils
- To send out letters each term whose families attendance falls below 90%

**Registration codes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual reg)
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (attending other estab)
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess)
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT med/dental appointments)
<b>J</b>	Interview
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by other code)
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip
<b>W</b>	Work experience
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on roll
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils
-	All should attend / No mark recorded