

# ROBERT BLAIR PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy

Version No.	Date	Approved by	Review Frequency	Review Date
1	September 2020	B&S Committee	2 Years	September 2022

### Our Vision:

Robert Blair Primary School:

- Expectations are high
- Individuals are nurtured
- Creativity is valued

Through inclusive learning community.

### 1.0 Introduction:

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Every day counts in teaching and learning.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

At Robert Blair Primary school, our staff are committed to working with parents and children to support, model and encourage a high level of attendance and ensure that all children's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### 2.0 Importance of good attendance:

Helping children to develop a good attitude towards attendance is an important life skill, this starts from the child's first experiences in Early Years and continues all the way through primary school. We aim to encourage an attitude that will support children to be responsible learners, prepare them for life as young adults and give them the skills to become a valued member of society. Attendance and punctuality are core life skills.

### 2.1 Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning potential. Pupils with poor attendance are more likely to make less progress at school. Pupil absence disrupts teaching routines and may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

## 2.2 Attendance Metrics describing attendance levels:

100%	Outstanding
98% or above	Excellent
97% or above	Good
95 - 97%	Average
94 - 95%	Below average
90-94%	Poor and Requires Improvement
85-90%	Persistent Absenteeism and Cause for Concern. Persistent Absenteeism and
85% & below	Serious Concern.

**Pupils with attendance below 90% are at risk of Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) and legal action in addition to less absence in cases of term time leave.**

## 2.3 Law relating to attendance:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

***Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, a parent is responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age (5-16) receives sufficient and suitable education, either by regular school attendance or other arrangements. This means that the parent of a child registered at a school has a legal duty to ensure the child's regular attendance.***

***Failure to fulfil this duty is an offence under section 444(1) of the education Act 1996***

## 2.4 Safeguarding:

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of Robert Blair Primary School, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses all areas of:

Attendance/ Behaviour Management/ Health and Safety/ Access to the Curriculum/ Anti- bullying /Child Protection

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

***Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safe guarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18***

## 3.0 Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, pupils and all members of school staff. We promote a culture within school where we challenge issues related to attendance and celebrate success.

### 3.1 At Robert Blair Primary School we will:

- Rigorously monitor daily attendance and quickly address
- Include and have high expectations of pupils in relation to attendance

- Give regular updates on your child's individual attendance record at the end of each half term and an overview of the whole school attendance
- Support and challenge children, parents/ carers around issues that may become a barrier to their child's attendance
- Discuss your child's progress and related attendance at twice yearly parents evenings
- Celebrate good attendance as whole school and class
- Communicate attendance of house groups in weekly assembly and regularly discuss with pupils the importance of good attendance
- Reward good or improving attendance through House group points, linking learning, behaviour and attendance together
- Discuss attendance concerns at leadership level
- Work closely with other professionals including:
  - Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)
  - Social Workers (SW)
  - Health Professionals (CAMHs, SLT, OT)
  - School Nursing Team
  - Family support (Families 1<sup>st</sup>/ School Home Support)

#### **4.0 Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

#### **4.1 Authorised absences:**

A child is absent from either morning or afternoon or both sessions and the parent or carer have provided a reasonable reason, such as:

- Illness
- Medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time)
- Emergencies

Parents and carers have a responsibility to report absence to the school via phone call, written notes, text messages and where possible provide the office of a copy of letters for medical appointments (prior to leave).

It is at the schools discretion to decide if the reason given is reasonable.

#### **4.2 Unauthorised absence:**

The child is absent and the school does not consider the reason to be reasonable, such as:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;

- the pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil or parents are shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday, wedding;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday;
- the pupil has low attendance over time;
- the illness of another child or parent;

#### **4.3 Impact of Lateness:**

Poor punctuality (lateness) is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work, information for the day ahead, important assemblies and sometimes class trips. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and this can be embarrassing for the child and can potentially encourage absence from school in the future.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. 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 an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

#### **4.4 Request of leave during term time:**

**Holidays or leave in term time is not a right and may only be granted under exceptional circumstances.** No time off for holidays during term time will be authorised for any reason, including home country visits or visits to relatives. Requests for term time absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Resulting absence could lead to a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) issued by London Borough of Islington.

Parents/ carers will need to complete a request for leave form available at the school reception. This needs to be completed and returned a minimum of **four weeks** prior to leave.

Requests will be discussed at Leadership where authorisation will be granted or not by members of the Leadership team. Parent/carers will be informed by letter as to the outcome and the reason for the decision.

[Appendix 1 - Leave of absence form/ school response letters]

#### **5.0 School Procedures:** (See appendix 4. Attendance Procedures reviewed January 2019).

It is very important that parents/carers follow these procedures to support a level of good attendance.

#### **5.1 Registration and school day:**

##### **Morning Register sessions:**

School opens at 8:45am

School starts and registration is at 9:00am

Class teachers will complete registers

Late marks will be recorded after **9:05am**

Registers close at **9:30am** any mark after this will be marked as unauthorised late

##### **Afternoon Register session:**

Afternoon session starts and registration is at 13:15

Class teachers will complete registers

Register will close at 13:30

## 5.2 Absences Procedures:

If your child is absent parents/carers must:

- Call the school before 9:00 on the morning of absence and either speak to the schools receptionist or leave a message on the school voice mail.  
**School Number: 0207 607 4115 (press 1 to report your child's absence)**
- Provide letters of appointments prior to absence on medical grounds, to the schools receptionist.

## 5.3 Recording of absences and attendance completion:

The school receptionist will record absences and late arrival on the daily attendance log, they will record any messages received on the answer service and text message service at **9:30 am**.

School Admin team will complete **first day calling** for all pupils who are not present and the school has not received a call from.

School Admin team will complete attendance for all class groups on SIMs and print a class register for each class at the close of each session.

Parents/carers will need to sign their child in or out between sessions on the daily attendance log which is held at the reception desk.

The daily attendance log and printed class registers are printed and are available and taken out during emergency procedures

## 5.4 Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

When a child's absence builds up over a period over time this is known as '**persistent absentee (PA)**' this is classified as a child who has missed 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through regular meetings with the designated Educational Welfare Officer from the Local Authority, Attendance Lead, attendance team weekly monitoring and at each Pupil Progress Review (PPR) where school senior leaders and class teachers discuss individual's progress and attainment.

Parents/carers will be offered meetings to discuss concerns and expectations of improved attendance will be outlined. If there is no change or improvement of attendance over an agreed period parents/ carers could face further legal action from the Local Authority.

## 5.5 How we monitor absence:

The attendance team monitors any concerning absence trends and makes phone calls to relevant parents/carers to inform of school concerns.

Pupils whose attendance is raising concern from weekly monitoring will be:

- Initially called by Inclusion Lead and concerns discussed;
- Follow up meetings arranged with appropriate members of the attendance team (including Class Teachers)
- **Referral to EWO service** and arranged meetings or home visit with EWO and Inclusion Lead

At the meetings the parent/ carer will have an opportunity to discuss the challenges and school will work with the family to try and improve the situation.

Half term review meeting with school EWO and Attendance Lead to monitor and meet parents/carers

#### **5.6 The Educational Welfare Officer (EWO):**

We expect parents to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff to resolve any problem which may be a barrier to school. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, we may refer to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) who works closely with the local authority. They will support legal procedures can issue sanctions such as Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.


#### **6.0 Summary:**

Attendance of children is the responsibility of all and is a legal requirement of parents and carers. The school adheres to this policy which is written in accordance to guidance and advice from the London Borough of Islington.

Working together we can ensure that your child reaches their potential and help to achieve a level of good attendance across the whole school.

## Appendix 1:

### Term time leave of absence Application form:

Application for Leave of Absence in Term Time		
		
<p>Parents and carers are strongly urged not to book holidays or take special leave during school term time because Your child will miss out on important school work and may not be able to catch up. This could have serious consequences on progress, attainment and opportunities later in life. Other pupils' education could be affected - the time teachers have to help all the children in a class is reduced if they spend time helping your child catch up after a holiday. Educational experiences in school missed as a result of a family holiday cannot be re-captured later.</p>		
<p>There are 190 school days in a year – this leaves 175 days for holidays, cultural activities and family time.</p>		
<p>If you feel that absence from school in term time is absolutely unavoidable, complete this form and return it to the Head teacher/ Inclusion manager.</p>		
<p><b>Please be advised that holidays in term time are not a right and will only be granted under exceptional circumstances.</b></p>		
<p>Each case is considered individually; however, leave will not usually be granted if your child already has low attendance or if the leave coincides with important examinations.</p>		
<b>Please complete all parts of the form</b>		
Names of pupils	1. 2. 3.	
Classes/ year group	1. 2. 3.	
Home address and contact numbers	Address:	Contact Numbers:
	Email:	
<b>I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:</b>		
Date of Last day at School		
Date of Return to School		
Numbers of days absent		
Reason for leave of absence		
Address and contact of place of visit or stay		
<p><i>I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a penalty notice or a summons to court for irregular school attendance.</i></p>		
Name of Parent/Carer making application _____		
Signed _____ Date _____		
<b>PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO INCLUSION OFFICE GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE</b>		

[Appendix 2:](#)

School response letter approved:

**Insert forms with new letter head**

[Appendix 3:](#)

School response letter refused:

**Insert forms with new letter head**

DRAFT





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**RE: Response to Request for Term Time Leave (Refused)**

(Date)

This response is in relation to:			
	Name	D.O.B	Class/ year gr
1.			
2.			
Address			

Dear

I have carefully considered your request for your child/ren (names) to have a leave of absence in term time. Your request was discussed at The Inclusion meeting on (date)

It was decided that we cannot authorise your request for the following reasons:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Your child's current attendance is (%)

**If you withdraw your child from school for this leave it will be recorded as unauthorised absence and the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. You may be served with a Penalty Notice or a summons to court for your child's unauthorised absence. Please note there is no right of appeal by parents against penalty notice. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.**

Yours sincerely,

Mich Bahn.  
Head teacher



[Appendix 4:](#)

**Attendance Procedures**

### Key principles:

- Improving attendance and reducing PA
- Everyday counts: learning and achievement
- Safeguarding
- Identification of issues and responses
- Support (using internal and external resources) and challenge

### Core task: Daily monitoring and first day calling

Administrator reviews registers every morning and calls as soon as absence is noticed (on day 1) and maintains regular contact to ensure that child returns to school immediately.

Focus challenge and support and identification of issues.

Punctuality is integral to good attendance

Accurate recording of dialogue and actions

First day calling (using scripts where relevant)

Document parent response on SIMS

If no response by 1.30pm email alert to safeguarding lead

Safeguarding lead to decide on next action

Identify term time holidays leave for separate procedures.

### Immediate escalation of any concern

Not able to contact parent

Children on any risk alert / CP / vulnerable circumstance

Applies to all children in school / nursery

Administrator contacts appropriate member of the attendance team on daily basis of issues requiring escalation

### Weekly attendance meeting

Administrator meets with attendance lead weekly to agree issues and actions based on weeks attendance data.

Appropriate data is prepared for meeting: long term data and current week.

### EWO meets with Attendance Lead

Every two weeks to agree actions (but is available 24/7 for immediate response).

### Half termly Strategic Attendance Review Meeting

School Attendance Team

Data

Key issues

Review of attendance actions

### Escalation / Documentation

This framework is a guide and will depend on individual judgement and issues understood in dialogue with family.

Issue	Letter	Intervention
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<b>Child's attendance falls below 93%</b>	<b>School Letter 1</b> Informs parent that attendance is a concern and will impact on learning.	
<b>Child's attendance falls below 90%</b>	<b>School Letter 2</b> Letter informing parent that attendance needs to improve	Referral EWO and invitation to blitz meeting.  <b>Initial casework considerations?</b> <b>Reasons for absence? Holistic picture?</b>
<b>Child's attendance continues to fall below 90%</b>	Referral to by phone and follow up email  EWO visits or calls to inform parent that attendance needs to improve	<b>EWO Letter 1</b>  <b>The case needs an overview on holistic reasons for child's absence: family factors, support needed in school and outside. Early help referral must be considered.</b>
<b>EWO feeds back on calls/visits within one week</b>	EWO to email Attendance team with feedback on calls/visits within a week of referral EWO makes recommendations for next action  Update spreadsheet with EWO feedback by Attendance Lead*.	<b>Parallel process of support for child and family as well as challenge through statutory action processes.</b>
<b>Child's attendance continues to fall below 90%</b>	Letter inviting parent to school based meeting with the EWO and attendance lead.  (whether parent attends or not continue to monitor attendance)	<b>EWO letter 2</b>
<b>Child's attendance continues to fall below 90%</b>	EWO initiates court action and refers to Salma's team in Islington  Actions reported to attendance lead by EWO  Spreadsheet updated by attendance team	<b>EWO letter 3</b>  <b>This leads to a process leading to a penalty notice in most cases, court action if parent doesn't pay the penalty.</b>
<b>Statutory action outcome.</b>	Penalty notice issued. Paid / unpaid.  Attendance team updates spreadsheet	Ongoing review after this action.

*\*Attendance team lead by Attendance Lead who ensures the timely and effective management and delegation of tasks.*

Reviewed September 2020 by Attendance Team

Next review July 2022 with Attendance Policy