ROBERT BLAIR PRIMARY SCHOOL
Attendance Policy

Version No.	Date	Approved by	Review Frequency	Review Date
3	October 2024	Curriculum Committee	2 Years	September 2026

Our purpose:

To provide an education for our pupils that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes for all.

Our Vision:

Every pupil Leaves Robert Blair demonstrating:

- ✓ Strength in their national and cultural identity
- ✓ aspiration for themselves, and in others, to achieve more
- ✓ positive choices and creating opportunities to be the best they can be
- ✓ they be an active participant and citizen in creating a strong civil society
- ✓ they can be productive, valued and competitive in the world.
- ✓ tolerance, empathy and an acceptance of the diversity others and their positive role in our community

Our vision is that all pupils strive for the highest possible achievement to be the best they can be, that they value and respect themselves, others, their local, national and global community and that they are passionate about learning and pursuing excellence.

Respect for others is central to our vision and encompasses the values of empathy, inclusiveness, friendship, fairness, embracing diversity and valuing learning. We care for each other and work together.

The second tier of our vision is that all staff and adults, are aware of and expected to adhere to and model our core values of respect, integrity and positivity. All members of our community are expected to acknowledge and foster their emotional, spiritual, physical and social health to achieve total wellbeing. The pupil, staff and community consultations make it clear that we should strive for the highest possible achievement.

Respect for the global community is the third tier of our school vision.

- ✓ We value justice, peace, citizenship, human rights, guardianship and conservation.
- ✓ We participate actively in our communities and look after our environment.
- ✓ We are working towards a better future not just for our children but for all things and for all time.

'I have the right to an education'.

Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that children and young people have the right to education no matter who they are: regardless of race, gender or disability; if they're in detention, or if they're a refugee.

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
99%	Excellent
97-98%	Good
95 - 96%	Average
95% and below	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.

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 concerns.
- 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 (Bright Future/Early help)

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 school's 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.

Morning registration will be closed at 09.05am and afternoon registration will close at 13.05pm. 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.
Parents will be asked to provide copies of the flight information, destination address and a contact number.
[Appendix 1 - Leave of absence form/ school response letters]

Penalty Notice for leave during term Time.

Penalty notice for Leave during Term time is now £80 per parents per child. This will increase to £160 is it is not paid within 21 days.
The Penalty Notice is not paid to school. The Islington Local Authority will send the relevant information and fine is is paid directly to them.

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 for Soft Start
School starts and registration is at 9:00am
Class teachers will complete registers
Late marks will be recorded after **9:05am**
Registers close at **9:05am** any mark after this will be marked as unauthorised late

Afternoon Register session:
Afternoon session starts and registration is at 13:00pm
Class teachers will complete registers
Register will close at 13:05pm

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 school's 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 school's receptionist.

- Parent will need to provide evidence of absences if a child is absent for 3 consecutive days or more. This can be note from GP, prescription or photo of the prescribed medications.

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 Arbor 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 does considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's full 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 and the Attendance Lead. The attendance team will monitor the pupil's attendance on weekly basis and the information will be shared at Pupil Progress Review (PPR) meetings 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 along with any support required by the parents. If there is no change or improvement of attendance over and an agreed period, parents/ carer could face further legal action from the Local Authority.

In an event where there is no improvement of attendance, parents will be asked to provide evidence for all further absences.

5.5 How we monitor absence:

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

Pupils whose attendance is raising concern from weekly monitoring will:

- Initially be invited to a meeting with the Pastoral and Welfare Lead to discuss concerns and support
- Have follow up meetings with appropriate members of the attendance team (including Class Teachers)
- **Be referred to EWO service** and a meetings or home visit will be arranged with the EWO and Pastoral and Welfare 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 will be arranged with the school's EWO and Attendance Lead to monitor, review and discuss outcomes.

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:

Robert Blair Primary School

Application for Leave of Absence in Term Time

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.

There are 190 school days in a year – this leaves 175 days for holidays, cultural activities and family time.

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.

Please be advised that holidays in term time are not a right and will only be granted under exceptional circumstances.

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.

Please complete all parts of the form		
Names of pupils	1. 2. 3.	
Classes/ year group	1. 2. 3.	
Home address and contact numbers	Address:	Contact Numbers:
	Email:	
I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:		
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		

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.

Name of Parent/Carer making application _____

Signed _____ Date _____

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO INCLUSION OFFICE GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE

Appendix 2:

School response letter approved:

Headteacher: Michelle Bahn
Brewery Road, Islington, London N7 9QJ Tel: 020 7607 4115 Fax: 020 7607 5395
Email: admin@robertblair.islington.sch.uk
www.robertblairschool.com

//2024

RE: Response to Request for Term Time Leave (Approved)

This response is in relation to:			
	Name	**D.O.B**	**Class/ Year**
1.			
	Address		

Dear
I have carefully considered your request for your child (child's name) to have a leave of absence in term time. Your request was discussed with the Senior Leadership Team and it was decided that we can authorise your request on this occasion.

It was decided to authorise the leave because the circumstances are exceptional and your child has no history of term time leave, your child's current attendance is (%)

(Child's name) is authorised to have (days) of leave of absence, with his/her last day of school being (date) and his/her expected date of return being (date). Please note that while this leave is authorised by the school, the absence will still impact your child's overall attendance figure.

If for any reason your child does not return to school on the expected date, you must make all possible efforts to contact us. If we do not feel that the reason for the delay is acceptable, the absence will be unauthorised. You will risk losing your child's place at the school and please be aware that you may face a penalty notice or a summons to court for your child's unauthorised absence, once your child turns 5 years old. 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

Michelle Bahn
Head teacher

Appendix 3:
School response letter refused:

Headteacher: Michelle Bahn
Brewery Road, Islington, London N7 9QJ Tel: 020 7607 4115 Fax: 020 7607 5395
Email: admin@robertblair.islington.sch.uk
www.robertblairschool.co.uk

****/**/2024**

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

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

Dear Parent/ Carer of

I have carefully considered your request for your child (*****) to have a leave of absence in term time. Your request was discussed with the Senior Leadership Team and it was decided that we cannot authorise your request and their attendance will be marked as Unauthorised.

Good attendance is essential for your child to both achieve the very best now and set up good habits for their future. We would like to congratulate the many parents who do make sure their children attend school regularly.

However, there are still pupils who are absent without good reason; this is clearly unacceptable.

We all have a responsibility to ensure that our children receive an education that is appropriate for their age, ability and aptitude. Absences disrupts the education of both the individual and the whole class. Research shows that children who do not attend school regularly:

- Do not achieve well in school;
- Find it more difficult to maintain friendships;
- Miss out on social events; and
- In extreme cases, are more likely to be involved in crime

Absence can only be authorised when there is a good cause, for example if a child is too ill to attend school. Parents cannot authorise absence; only the Head Teacher may do so as authorisation must be within the boundaries set by The Education Regulations 1996.

To this end, please remember that the following are not acceptable reasons for a child's absence during term time: holidays, parental illness, birthdays, shopping trips, visiting family, not wanting to go to school. You should also be aware that arriving at school late or after the registers are closed do count as unauthorised absence; this could also have serious consequences for parents.

Robert Blair Primary School regards children's school attendance for 190 days annually as a right and not in any way optional. **Like all Islington schools, we do not authorise holidays taken in term time.** Some parents are under the impression that they have a right to a certain number of days holiday during term time. This is not true. **PLEASE BE AWARE THAT YOU MAY FACE A PENALTY NOTICE OR A SUMMONS TO COURT FOR YOUR CHILDS UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**, once your child turns 5 years old.

If you withdraw your child from school for this leave it will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions or wish to discuss any part of this letter.

Yours sincerely

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 ARBOR
- If no response by 1.00pm 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

Child's attendance falls below 95%	**School Letter 1** Informs parent that attendance is a concern and will impact on learning.	
Child's attendance falls below 90%	**School Letter 2/invitation to meeting** Letter informing parent that attendance needs to improve Parents invited in for a meeting with Attendance Lead/or EWO	Referral EWO and invitation to blitz meeting. **Initial casework considerations? Reasons for absence? Holistic picture?** Attendance and action logged on the school's Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS)
Child's attendance continues to fall below 90%	Referral to by phone and follow up email EWO visits or calls to inform parent that attendance needs to improve	**EWO Letter 1** **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.**
EWO feeds back on calls/visits within one week	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*.	**Parallel process of support for child and family as well as challenge through statutory action processes.**
Child's attendance continues to fall below 90%	Letter inviting parent to school-based meeting with the EWO and attendance lead. (whether parent attends or not continue to monitor attendance)	**EWO letter 2** Inform parents of further action which may result in a court warning or a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN).
Child's attendance continues to fall below 90%	EWO initiates court action and refers to Salma's team in Islington Actions reported to attendance lead by EWO Continue to monitor attendance Spreadsheet updated by attendance team	**EWO letter 3** **This leads to the process of issuing a penalty notice in most cases, court action if parent doesn't pay the penalty.**
Statutory action outcome.	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 2024 by Attendance Team

Next review Sept 2026 with Attendance Policy