



**The RJ Mitchell
Primary School**

Attendance Policy

Review date: November 2020

At this school there is equality in access to the curriculum for every child. No child will be prejudiced against for this subject regardless of nationality, race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. We have reviewed this policy and can confirm that we believe that no individual or group is disadvantaged by the processes outlined. We do acknowledge that our policy is in English and should a family whose main language is other than English, become part of safeguarding processes we will make sure their language needs are conveyed to social care and hold social care to account in providing translation and support services as needed.

This policy has been reviewed and no individual or group in the school community is disadvantaged by the policy and processes. We do acknowledge that this policy is in English and we have families that are speakers of other languages. Should these families be part of child protection processes we will, supported by other multi-agency partners involved, ensure that language is not a barrier to clear access to this policy and the processes that may ensue.

The R J Mitchell

Attendance Policy

RJ Mitchell Primary School is a successful school and your child plays an important part in making it so. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time every day the school is open, unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND THE EDUCATION ACT 1996 Section 7 of the Act requires all parents/carers of a child of compulsory school age who are registered at a school to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so is an offence. Neglect of this responsibility can result in the prosecution of parents/carers, with a penalty fine of up to £1000.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE?

Authorised absences are those which the school agree are unavoidable, e.g. illness, family bereavement, medical appointments that are unavoidable in school time (provided a written explanation is received and an appointment card is produced) and other absences for which leave has been given by the Head Teacher. i.e. a pupil competing in a sporting event, dance or musical performance; external examination or religious observance. (These are limited to 10 sessions or 5 days per academic year and upon the child's overall attendance not falling below 96%).

Unauthorised absences are those that the school considers avoidable, for example, e.g. minor ailments, birthdays, shopping trips, day trips etc. An absence is unauthorised until an acceptable written/emailed explanation is received. If no acceptable explanation is received, in writing or by email, within one month of the absence, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Under new DFE legislation effective 1st September 2013, Headteacher's may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances such as:

- Parents in the services such as armed forces or police
- Serious illness of a sibling or parent/carer
- Funeral of immediate family member - e.g. Grandparent. (Limited to 1 day)

Family holidays are not regarded as exceptional circumstances, therefore any absence taken for holidays will be subject to a fixed penalty notice. From 1 September 2013 fines will be as follows: £60 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 21 days £120 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 28 days.

REPORTING ABSENCES

If a child is ill and unable to attend school, the parent/carer should contact the school on the first day, no later than 09:30am in person, by telephone or by email at the following address office@rjmitchell.havering.sch.uk. The school should be contacted again each day unless your child was sent home from school and you were advised to keep your child off school for 48 hours in this instance you should contact the school on day 3 if the child remains unwell. When a child returns, he or she must bring a written note signed by the parent/carer for each period of absence, unless an email has been previously sent on the first day of the absence. If a child is absent without parental notification, then a SchoolPing and/or phone call will be made to the parent shortly after 9:30am to determine a reason for absence. If a child does not want to attend school for any reason, it is

important that parents/carers do not collude with the child by supplying a note stating sickness as a reason for absence. Parents/carers must discuss the problem with the school at the first opportunity and, if it cannot be resolved, a referral may be made to the Attendance, Behaviour & Traveller Support Services. If a pupil is absent for 5 days or more the parent/carer will be asked to provide Medical/Supporting Evidence to cover the period of absence. If a pupil is absent prior to or does not return after a school half term/term the parent may be asked to provide Medical/Supporting Evidence to cover the period of absence.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year for whatever reason. In cases of persistent absence or patterns of absence, the school may request evidence of attendance at the GP, via the Attendance & Behaviour Support Officer. Where persistent absenteeism does not improve a referral to the Attendance & Behaviour Support Officer will be made. This will initiate more formal procedures such as Local Authority written warnings and the issuing of fines.

LATENESS

A child must be in class each day at 8.55am the doors open to pupils at 8:45am. Children who arrive after this time are recorded as late. Any child arriving late for school will need to report to the school office and a reason for lateness recorded. Punctuality – is just as important as regular attendance.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

If your child has a medical appointment during the school day, a letter should be sent into school along with appointment card/letter and note written in the child's school diary noting pick up times.

INFORMING PARENTS

A summary of a child's attendance is recorded on the Termly Learning Conference paperwork and also in their school diary each half term. If a child's attendance is shown to be giving cause for concern a letter from the SAFSS Team Lead inviting the parents/carers to a meeting will be issued. Often parents can be unaware that a few single days of absence can soon add up. Similarly, if a child is persistently late a letter will be written to parents informing them of this. If the situation does not improve a referral to the Attendance & Behaviour Support Officer will be made.

ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOUR & TRAVELLER SUPPORT SERVICES – REFERRAL SYSTEM

As a school, all staff members discuss attendance patterns on a regular basis. If a school has a concern it will raise this concern with parents/carers of pupils. Pupils with attendance of 90% or less, or with an identified pattern of absence or lateness, will be referred to the Attendance & Behaviour Support Officer. Each school is allocated an Attendance & Behaviour Support Officer who will liaise with them to ensure attendance meets targets set and will contact and visit parents/carers when a referral is made. Following the intervention of the Attendance & Behaviour Support Officer, attendance will be reviewed regularly and if there is no improvement then a FIXED PENALTY NOTICE may be issued.

Policy Date: December 2018

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