



Attendance & punctuality policy

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Revisions

Date	Summary of changes
November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Addition of the definition of compulsory school age.● Updates and corrections to references to legislation and federation policies.● For authorised absence, use of the wording in the Department for Education’s document: School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities 2020.● That when attendance is below 94% it will be referred to Hackney Education’s attendance service.● The addition of soft start times for several schools and the new end of day time for St John & St James.



1. Background and guidance to pupil attendance and absence

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the parents or guardians of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) To any special educational needs he/she may have.

Non-attendance of school can be damaging to a child's education. Parents¹ may not authorise absence; only schools can do this. Schools will not authorise absences unless under special circumstances. All absences are to be treated as unauthorised unless and until schools and parents agree on a satisfactory explanation, and it is important that schools have procedures, consistently applied, for determining the nature of any absence from school.

This policy aims to outline the federation's absence procedures and provide information on what to do if a child is absent from school.

Compulsory school age starts on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following a child's fifth birthday, whichever comes first. If a child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates, then they reach compulsory school age on that date.

2. Links to other policies

This policy has links to a number of other policies/guidance:

- Charging & remissions policy
- Child protection & safeguarding policy
- Data protection & retention policy
- Special educational needs policy
- Medical needs policy

3. Attendance

3.1 Attendance and Admissions Registers

The federation governing board is legally responsible for ensuring attendance registers are maintained under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Headteachers are required to ensure that an attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, attending an approved educational activity (and if the pupil is of compulsory school age, the nature of this activity), unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances and the nature of those circumstances, not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19), or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

Schools input all attendance on the federation's management information system, Arbor, and may keep registers manually or on the computer.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry

¹ References to parent or parents are to mothers, fathers, legal guardians and carers



- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

3.2 Attendance marks used in schools

Code	Description
/	PRESENT (AM)
\	PRESENT (PM)
B	EDUCATED OFF SITE (NOT DUAL. REG)
C	OTHER AUTHORISED CIRCUMSTANCES
D	DUAL REGISTRATION
E	EXCLUDED
G	FAMILY HOLIDAY (NOT AGREED)
H	FAMILY HOLIDAY (AGREED)
I	ILLNESS
J	INTERVIEW
L	LATE (BEFORE REGISTER CLOSED)
M	MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS
N	NO REASON YET PROVIDED FOR ABSENCE
O	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
P	APPROVED SPORTING ACTIVITY
R	RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE
S	STUDY LEAVE
T	TRAVELLER ABSENCE

3.3 Approved educational activities off-site

The absence of pupils taking part in supervised educational activities outside the school is recorded as 'approved educational activity.'

The following activities are examples of when the approved educational activity category can include:

- field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas;
- participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities;
- franchised pupils receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location while remaining under overall supervision of the home school (i.e. a flexible arrangement short of formal dual registration). This can include special tuition for dyslexic children and sick children being taught at home but remaining on roll.

Where a school has to close due to severe weather conditions, teacher industrial action, fire or other structural damage or for in-service training, the register is marked as school closed. This does not affect pupils' attendance figures.

4. Deleting pupils from the admissions register

There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admissions register and where a school has decided to remove a pupil from their admission roll, they should notify the local authority.

If a pupil is to be taken off the admissions register because he or she is moving to another area or school, the school should find out the name and address of the new school and when the pupil will start, confirming this information with the receiving school. School staff should be concerned about a pupil's welfare:

- if the parents do not name the receiving school; or
- if a pupil has 'disappeared' from the area without explanation; or
- if a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term-time.

More information can be found in the data protection & retention policy.

If schools are concerned about a child's safety and/or wellbeing, they will refer to the guidelines laid out in the child protection & safeguarding policy.

5. Children Missing in Education

School aged children residing in Hackney have the right to receive an appropriate education and the vast majority of children are doing so. However, there are a number of ways a child fails to access the school system and hence becomes missing from education. It is vital our schools are proactive in ensuring that as far as possible, children and young people are not lost to education and that when families inform schools of relocation, all relevant information in regard to destination, forwarding addresses, new schools etc. is sought. It is not acceptable to de-register a child with only minimal information on where the family are moving to. In order to successfully ensure that no child is missing in Education, our schools liaise with the local authority's Children Missing Education team.

The Children Missing Education team will:

- co-ordinate, through multi-agency work, the identification, referral, tracking and engagement of children missing or at risk of missing education;
- manage the co-ordination of the referral process;
- work in partnership with key stakeholders in Hackney to develop the already existing inter agency network so that all members are aware of the referral process for pupils who are missing or at risk of missing education;
- manage a central database of all children missing or at risk of missing education in the borough and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and placements;
- identify and allocate a lead professional in relation to Children Missing Education;
- follow robust tracking and monitoring systems to confirm residency of children moving out of the borough;
- raise awareness of the service and provide guidance/advice to all schools and lead professionals in the borough regarding children missing education.

The school will:

- follow the procedures for investigating pupil absence. If the school is unable to establish the reason or locate the pupil(s) following all reasonable enquiries, then they must inform their allocated attendance officer/advisor within five days;



- refer a pupil to their allocated attendance officer if they have been unable to confirm that the pupil has started at another school should the parent inform the school of a new address outside of Hackney;
- keep the child on roll for a further 10 days whilst the Education Attendance Service (EAS) makes further enquiries about the child following any referral made about the pupil not attending school. The outcome of this investigation may be:
 - the child is located and remains on the school roll;
 - the child has started at a new school;
 - the child is not located and is deemed to be a missing child.
 - The EAS will advise the school whether to remove a child's name from the admission register.
- prescribe the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age can be deleted from the admission register. When a pupil is deleted from the admission register the school must clearly indicate the date and the reason for the removal from roll.
- only remove the pupil's name from the register if the EAS has been unable to locate a child and the Attendance Officer has informed the school to remove the child's name from the register. The discharging school MUST ensure that the Common Transfer File (CTF) is coded XXXXXXXX (destination unknown) and uploaded to S2S.
- ensure that when a child is removed from roll without an identified receiving school, a Children Missing Education referral is completed immediately.
- immediately notify Children's Social Care on 0208 356 5500 if a pupil is subject to a Child Protection Plan and disappears without any warning.

6. Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is where the school has either given permission in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered is accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical appointments (appointments should be made outside school times where possible)
- Unavoidable cause (which is expected to be an emergency and unavoidable)
- Days of religious observance
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment

More information about authorised absence can be found in the Department for Education's document: [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities 2020](#)

Should this document be amended during the life of this policy, please refer to the most up-to-date guidance from the DfE.

7. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence includes "holidays" taken by parents with their children during term time. It also includes truancy. Headteachers will report data on attendance each term to their LAB and the Executive Principal will provide data from all federation schools to the Central Governing Board. Each school is required to publish attendance and absence figures to the DfE.

7.1 Family Holidays

Under education law, parents may request absence for pupils from school due to a family holiday. It is for schools to determine whether or not they agree to a family holiday during term time. In the majority of



cases schools will not authorise holidays. However, in exceptional circumstances the Headteacher may authorise a holiday during term time.

In considering any request for holiday absence, schools will look at individual circumstances and take account of:

- the age of the pupil;
- the time of year proposed for the trip;
- its nature and parents' wishes;
- the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; and
- the pupil's stage of education and progress.

8. Persistent absenteeism

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. The parents of any child whose absence approaches the 10% mark, will be asked to meet with key staff to review the circumstances that have led to the child being absent from school and consider strategies to improve attendance. Any child whose attendance is below 94% will be considered for in school interventions which will include discussions between the family and the school based attendance lead. Fines will be considered by Headteachers as a way of tackling absence.

9. Keeping the school informed of contact details

Schools will contact a parent if their child is absent from school. Parents of children enrolling in the school are asked to provide details of emergency contacts for the child. This information is kept on Arbor This information includes:

- home address and telephone number of parents;
- place of work, and telephone number (if applicable);
- mobile telephone number;
- names and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the school i.e. childminder, relative, neighbour;
- information about any person who has been denied legal access to the child;
- information about who has primary responsibility for the child.

Parents are asked to renew their contact details at least once annually. If there are any changes to any of the above, parents should notify the school office. When there is a change to the end of the day arrangements, parents should inform either the school office or the class teacher.

10. Responsibilities

10.1 Local Authority

It is the responsibility of the local authority (LA) to oversee how schools and parents are ensuring children in Hackney are attending school on a regular basis. School Attendance Officers are available to work with schools and parents through a traded service to ensure children are attending school.

10.2 Governors and LAB members

It is the responsibility of governors and LAB members to monitor attendance on a regular basis and challenge Headteachers and the Executive Principal when absence is a cause for concern.

10.3 Headteachers

Headteachers should have high expectations for the attendance of pupils in their schools and are required to report attendance figures to their LAB. They are also required to inform the LA if a pupil fails to attend



regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days (and the absence is treated as unauthorised) or is missing from education. Headteachers will notify the LA if there are areas of concern.

10.4 Staff

Staff need to ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently and that attendance targets are set for individual pupils and year groups. Parents should be contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised. Pupil attendance and lateness need to be monitored regularly.

10.5 Pupils

Pupils should be encouraged to attend school regularly and inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.

10.6 Parents

Parents have a prime responsibility to ensure that their children who are of compulsory school age attend school. Parents should encourage good attendance and inform the school on the first day of non-attendance and discuss planned absences with the school in advance (e.g. family holidays, special occasions). If a child does not attend regularly, parents should work closely with the school and any assigned School Attendance Officer to resolve the problem.

11. Legal action to enforce school attendance

Local Authorities and schools can use various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason. They can issue parents with:

- **A Parenting Order** This means parents have to go to parenting classes and have to do what the court says to improve school attendance.
- **An Education Supervision Order** If the council thinks a parent needs support in getting a child to go to school but the parent isn't co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help get the child into education.
- **School Attendance Order** A school Attendance Order is issued if the local authority thinks a child isn't getting an education. A parent is given 15 days to provide evidence that they've registered their child with a school or that they're giving them [home education](#). The order may require parents to send their child to a specific school and can result in prosecution or a fine.
- **A fine** (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice'). Action can now be taken by schools, through the LA, against parents who condone truancy and parents as well as their children can be fined and/or having to undertake community service. Parents can be fined up to £2,500; and/or get a three month prison sentence

12. Federation approach to unauthorised absence

There are many reasons why pupils are absent from school without permission. Headteachers, staff, parents and pupils will work together to consider the best strategies for helping a child to attend school through:

- making sure children understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- take an interest in a child's education by asking about school work and encouraging them;
- discussing any problems a child may have and inform the school about anything serious;
- not letting children take time off school for minor ailments;
- arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays;
- setting reward schemes, such as certificates, school trips and activities;
- establishing home and school routine plans to help with organisation.

Our schools will also:



- implement a first day contact with parents of children who are absent from school without prior knowledge;
- encourage attendance checks, scheduled or unscheduled;
- have a member of staff responsible for attendance and ensure all staff work together to encourage good attendance.

There are a number of benefits of a whole school approach to tackling absenteeism. These include:

- a shared responsibility for promoting school attendance rather than being left to particular individuals or groups;
- opportunities arise for cost-effective networking and joint training involving groups of schools or different professional groups;
- rigorous collection and analysis of data about attendance enables schools to check their progress against measurable outcomes.

13. Punctuality

It is important that pupils are encouraged to arrive at school on time and are prepared for the school day. Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning as the beginning of the day is often when the children are prepared for their lessons. Children who arrive late disrupt lessons and this can be embarrassing for the child. Poor punctuality can also encourage poor attendance.

All children arriving late must be recorded and the register updated as necessary.

14. Children collected late from school

Children collected late from school can often experience distress, as they are keen to see their parents at the end of the school day.

Parents must make every attempt to collect their children on time and inform the school of any situation that may prevent them from doing so. Schools must monitor all cases where children have not been collected on time and take action as necessary.

15. Charges for late / non-collection of children

Schools have the power to impose a charge on parents/carers who fail to collect their child from school within a reasonable time after the close of the school day or after school activity.

Parents must telephone the school office if they are running late and advise on the time of their arrival at the school. On arrival, the school office will ask parents to fill in a brief form detailing the reason for late collection.

Charges will be set out in each school's charging schedule to the federation's charging and remissions policy.



Appendix 1: School attendance & punctuality procedures

Absence procedures

If a child is absent a parent must;

- Contact the school as soon as possible on every day of absence for a short period of absence or inform the school of the expected length of a longer period of absence, e.g. five plus days.
- Or, report to the school office/reception, who will make a note of the absence and arrange for the Pastoral Manager to speak to the parent if necessary
- If a child is due to have a planned medical procedure/operation, the school must be notified in advance and provide documentary evidence.

If your child is absent the school will;

- Telephone the parent on the first day of absence if they have not received notification of the absence from the parent,
- Invite the parent in to discuss the situation with the Pastoral Manager/Headteacher (or other relevant staff member) if absences persist;
- Ask for medical evidence, e.g. a doctor's letter or prescription medication if attendance falls below 95%
- Refer the matter to the Hackney Learning Trust School Attendance Officer if a child's attendance falls below 90%.

Punctuality procedures

Lateness

Those children who arrive late are coded as 'L' (Late) in the school register. Children who are significantly late, see table below, are coded 'O' which is an unauthorised absence. Ten sessions of unauthorised absences may result in a Penalty Notice Warning being issued. A session is equal to a half-day absence.

If your child has a persistent late record, the parent will be asked to meet with a senior member of staff and/or Pastoral Manager to resolve the problem. Parents can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Children picked up late from school

In the event that the parent is running late or has made alternative collection with a friend/relative they should ring the school to advise them of those changes so that both the teacher and child are aware.

If it appears that there have been no alternative arrangements made for the collection of a child by the parent, the school staff should take the following steps:

- Messages are checked to see if there are any changes to the end of day arrangements
- Parents are contacted at home or work
- If this is unsuccessful other authorised adults are contacted

In the meantime, the child will wait near the office under adult supervision. All late collected children will be recorded in the "late book" and this information may be passed on to the Pastoral Manager for further investigation.

If a child is collected two hours later than the expected collection time, the school must contact the Emergency Duty Team at Social Services to inform them of the situation. The Emergency Duty Team will advise the school on any action to take which may include contacting the police.



Morningside Primary Schools’ procedure for Emergency Duty Care slightly differs due to operating a play centre until 6pm. The school office will call parents at 3:30pm if their child was not collected on time. If the school does not receive an answer they will keep the child in play centre until 6pm. After 6pm the school will continuously make calls to parents and by 6:30 if the parent still has not answered or contacted the school the emergency duty team will then be called.

After school clubs, trips and visits

It is essential children are collected from school clubs, trips and visits at the time specified. Whilst every effort is made to ensure children return from trips on time, in the event that children will be returning later than expected, the school will inform parents.

The procedures outlined above will apply to children collected late however the school may decide to remove the child from the activity if late collection continues to be an issue.

School start and end times

School	Start & Late times	End of day times
De Beauvoir	Start 8:45am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
Gainsborough	Soft start from 8:45am Start 9:00am Late register mark 9:10am. Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
Holy Trinity	Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
Morningside	Soft start from 8:45am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
Springfield	Soft start from 8:45am Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
St John & St James	Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
St John the Baptist	Soft start from 8:45am Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
St Matthias	Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Policy written:	November 2012
Amended/Updated:	November 2021
Adopted by Outcomes & Provisions Committee:	November 2021
Review date:	November 2023

The Outcomes & Provisions Committee have reviewed this policy with careful consideration of our approach to equalities as outlined in the Equalities Policy, January 2020.

We would like to acknowledge the work of other colleagues in drafting this policy. We have drawn on a range of sources including policies from other schools, good practice guides, published schemes and LA and Statutory guidelines where appropriate.

