

Attendance Policy 2015

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Everybody Excelling Everyday. No Excuses!

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- Vision

Every Pupil will leave Randal Cremer able to excel academically and socially.

- Values

Respect

All Members of our School Community are important to the success of Randal Cremer Primary School

We respect that everyone matters - everyone feels that they are treated fairly & listened to in a non-judgmental manner

We recognise that everyone has a right to the highest possible standard of education and that we each have a personal responsibility to ourselves and others to ensure that this right is never compromised.

Diversity, Inclusion & Equality

We put diversity, inclusion and equality at the heart of everything we do

We welcome and accept all people, and ensure we understand & celebrate everyone's unique differences and similarities

Love

We provide a caring, compassionate, warm, welcoming and nurturing environment for all members of our School Community

Teamwork

We value our relationships and work hard with all members of our School Community to achieve the School's Vision.

High Expectations

We have a commitment to ensure outstanding achievement, enjoyment, health & happiness for self & all members of our School Community

We recognise it takes a 'village' to educate a child

We all work together to ensure consistency of outstanding processes & practices

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

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.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

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.

Safeguarding: - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety

Access to the Curriculum

Anti- bullying

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

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Home – School Bulletin;
- At the pre-school induction meetings held for children about to enter the nursery and reception classes, the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted along with other school routines. This talk includes informing parents about children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left.
- Report to you at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what

their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;

- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent 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

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

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 safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

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, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to Hackney Learning Trust using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to

cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents are asked to contact school if their child is absent. This can be done through telephoning. Messages are recorded and passed to the child's teacher. Parents can alternatively send a letter to school when their child returns explaining the absence or call into school to see the class teacher. All information is used to inform teachers when filling in their registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence the teacher Home School Liaison Team contacts the parent/guardian. This procedure also applies to mid-term admissions.

Regular attendance includes pupils being punctual. Persistent lateness can be seen as absence.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which mean they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% 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 our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor or a Connexions worker, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Hackney Learning Trust School Attendance Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;

- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Assistant Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Hackney Learning Trust Education Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 85%.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually and be appropriately prepared for lessons. They should talk to their class teacher or other appropriate adults if there is something that is affecting their attendance at school.

Governing body

The Governing Body has responsibility for school attendance and should be familiar with the current legislation.

They are acquainted with the registration system in the school.

They will request records on attendance and procedures as necessary.

A member of the governing body will usually be part of the Pastoral Support Team.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for attendance and will ensure that the school meets all legal requirements, sets targets for attendance and unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures.

The Headteacher will ensure that parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission. This will be supported in the signing of a Home School Agreement.

The Headteacher has a duty under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make a return to the Local Education Authority where there is a poor pattern of attendance or a pupil has had an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of more than two weeks.

Registers are legal documents and must be kept for at least 3 years.

Assistant Headteacher of Inclusion

The Assistant headteacher will monitor attendance of all pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and also all children identified as vulnerable and refer to the

Education Attendance Service when necessary. The Assistant headteacher will inform any additional agencies that may be involved with the pupil.

School home support worker

The SHSW is here to support the parents/carers and will liaise clearly with the Assistant headteacher and Office Administrator with regard to punctuality and attendance of pupils.

- Where there are concerns they will attempt to make contact with parents/carers by letter, telephone calls and/or home visits.
- Provide data on weekly basis to class teachers
- Pass messages from parents efficiently to the class teacher or other relevant member of staff

The class teacher

The class teacher has a vital role to play in raising the attendance and punctuality in our school.

- The class teacher will ensure that the registration period is orderly and calm and that the registers are recorded promptly and correctly on SIMS.
- Class teachers should monitor the attendance of pupils and are responsible for referring pupils with poor patterns of attendance and/or punctuality to the Assistant headteacher of Inclusion immediately if they have any concerns.
- Make a personal connection with parents and pupils who have regular absence, or patterns of irregular attendance.
- Class teachers will be responsible for ensuring that eligible pupils receive merits and awards for good attendance.
- Following absence, do your best to provide catch-up opportunities so absentees do not fall behind. Where appropriate, ask parents to play a part in reinforcing missed learning

Learning Mentor - Attendance and Punctuality

When pupils have poor punctuality, the school can offer a range of support including;

- Places at Breakfast Club or
- support from the Learning mentor who contributes to pupil support plans by delivering interventions with pupils and families e.g. SEAL small Group Work or developing initiatives to support attendance e.g. Family SEAL.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from Hackney Learning Trust. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Hackney Learning Trust.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the SAO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Hackney Learning Trust.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8:55am** and we expect your child to be lined up and ready for class on the blowing of a whistle in the mornings ready to go to class.

Registers are marked by **9:15am** and in the afternoon, 12:30p.m. For Nursery, 1:15pm. For Infants and Juniors 1.25pm. Parents must ensure that their children arrive on time and are ready to class. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary. Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence (code 'U') in line with County and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence. If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that, where possible, doctor and dentist appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays In Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Holidays taken during term time will **not** be authorised by the Headteacher and you risk being issued with a fine of up to £120.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS), or any other public examinations.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

The Governors will not authorise any holidays at times when pupils are scheduled to take public examinations. Parents will be notified as soon as these dates are known.

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 97. % attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Home - School bulletin and we ask for your full support.

Rewarding Good Attendance

- Every week the class in each key stage that has the highest attendance receives a trophy.
- The class with the most trophies each term receive a 'film' afternoon
- All pupils with 100% attendance each half term will receive a certificate.
- All pupils with 100% attendance and punctuality at the end of the week will receive a postcard home.
- At the end of the Summer term all pupils with 100% attendance will receive a special medal and also be able to take part in a special end of year trip.
- Any pupils with medical needs that impact on their ability to come to school every day will have their attendance adjusted to reflect this.
- Any pupils with 100% attendance and 100% punctuality will also receive a special prize at the end of the summer term.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.55 am and the afternoon register at 12.30pm.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration is at 8.55am in the morning and 12.30pm in the afternoon.

If your child arrives after 9.00am but before register is closed he/she will be marked as late (L).

If your child arrives after the register is closed he/she will be marked as late (U).

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence, before 9.30am preferably. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. However, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness

- Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

6. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. On returning to school we will require a letter explaining the reason for the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he / she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY

A GUIDE FOR PUPILS / STUDENTS

1. Attending regularly and on time

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Randal Cremer Primary School. It will help you:

- keep up with your school work and get the best results you can;

- get a job – employers like people who are reliable.

Remember, your attendance at school is shown in your Record of Achievement.

2. Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- illness
- emergency dental / medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement
- attending an interview for a job, college, university, etc.

Looking after your brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

You will also need a note from your parents to explain ALL absences from school. You will also need a note if you arrive at school after 9.05 am in the morning. If you do not bring a note, or the explanation on the note is unsatisfactory, the absence will count as unauthorised and will be shown on your end of year report.

3. Need help?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse.

TALK TO SOMEONE – your class teacher, form tutor, another member of staff, your parents.

We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

Summary:

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. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Home / School Contract for Attendance and Lateness

I will endeavour to ensure that.....

will have maximum attendance at school and will always be punctual.