HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	**Date:** September 2022
Last reviewed on:	September 2022	
Next review date:	September 2023	

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Harbinger Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at our school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Executive Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Safeguarding

Absence from school is recognised as a Safeguarding issue as it places children at risk. 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 and Anti- bullying.

In cases where failing to attend school on a regular basis has been identified as a safeguarding matter, the school's child protection policy and procedures will be applied.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.
- Ensure children are kept safe and protected from harm.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

In school

In order to promote the importance of regular attendance at school we use a range of approaches to celebrate and raise attendance. These include:

Incentives and rewards

The school recognises good and improved attendance through:

- certificates for classes achieving 100% attendance each week;
- Attendance trophy for 100% class attendance;
- All classes attendance percentage shared in weekly parent newsletter;
- individual certificates for 100% half term/term attendance;
- individual certificates for 100% annual attendance;

Working with parents

The school will work closely with parents and pupils to ensure regular attendance through:

- initial home visits;
- home-school agreements;
- governors report to parents;
- home-school liaison work;
- school newsletters.

- In addition, Staff regularly talk about the importance of attending school every day and being on time
- Children are encouraged to think about how each day of learning builds on the previous day
- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils. Every week we inform parents and children of the weekly attendance percentage per class. We also celebrate the highest attending class by awarding them the school trophy for the week. As an inclusive school, we

ensure that no group or individual misses out on any attendance-related rewards because of disability, special educational needs or other extenuating circumstances

- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Deputy Headteacher and the Attendance Officer with responsibility for monitoring attendance.
- To inform the Local Authority immediately when the school identifies a Child Missing Education/Not in Receipt of Full Time Education
- Before a child is taken off-roll mid-year, take all practical measures to obtain proof and confirmation of where the child is going (e.g. if moving to a new school, Local Authority or country) and report to the Local Authority. This will be recorded on the Admission register.
- Inform the Local Authority immediately if a child has had 10 continuous days of Unauthorised Absence.

Attendance Officer/Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring children who are late sign into the system
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Attendance Advisor
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

At Harbinger we have a soft start to the school day and children can attend school from 8.45am. Registration takes place at 9.00am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present.

All attendance records are documented using Bromcom software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9.05am will have to register themselves in on the computerised entry system. Pupils will then be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Punctuality protocol

- Attendance Officer to monitor Bromcom and generate list of children who have been late each week. All letters/meetings etc. to be recorded on Bromcom
- Stage 1: children who have been late more than 5 times in a half term will be sent a letter making parents aware that punctuality/lateness is a concern

- Stage 2: once a letter has been sent, if no improvement occurs a meeting to be arranged with SLT lead/Attendance Advisor.
- Stage 3: Parents can be fined for persistent lateness

Please make sure your child is on time for school every day. Constant lateness is disruptive, and children miss out on important lesson information is they are late for school.

Please be aware that if children are late 15 times in a 5 week period a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 20 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the Local Authority is then obliged to prosecute. Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for a child who has been late for school.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence.

This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head of School has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. The Attendance administrator checks all of the registers from 9.10am to 9.45am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Absence protocol

- Attendance administrator to monitor Bromcom and generate list of children who are absent. All reasons to be recorded on Bromcom
- Stage 1: children who are absent on day 1 and reason is known to be recorded on Bromcom. If reason unknown, contact to be made with parents.
- Stage 2: On day 2 of absence, if no contact has still been made, SLT to be informed and child's emergency contact numbers to be contacted
- Stage 3: Day 3, if still no contact. A home visit to be undertaken by 2 members of staff (Deputy Headteacher / DSL plus 1) the visit will be made to ascertain the safety and well- being of the child and the reason for absence from school.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical

evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Children Missing From Education/Not in Receipt of Full-Time Education

Children Missing Education are defined as children not in receipt of full-time education (less than 25 hours per week). This involves a range of categories, including those formally recognised to be receiving programmes of alternative provision. In the event of a child falling into this category, the school will make all efforts to contact the family. Once these have been exhausted, a referral will be made to AWS and the Local Authority CME officer (Brendan.mulcahy@towerhamlets.gov.uk) who will log the family on the Missing Child Data base. A key person will investigate using parent's and child's details to trace the whereabouts. After 21 days the AWA will advise the school on what to do with the school place.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday or Extended Leave

The Governors' have adopted The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Policy of no holidays in term time, which is published on the school website.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In school we encourage parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home.

If this is not successful and the child's attendance has not improved then we will invite

Parents/carers in for an In School Panel meeting with a member of the SLT (Deputy Head 1-6, Head of EYFS for Early years), the AWA and the Attendance Officer. This giving the parents/carers the opportunities to discuss reasons for absence and the school to offer support or advice.

Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Attendance and Welfare Service.
The Attendance and Welfare Service (AWS) will issue proceedings/penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to AWS from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance.

The Attendance and Welfare Adviser visits weekly to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). They work with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

Our Attendance administrator has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Bromcom attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Deputy Head to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration

L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
	Authorised absence	
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day