

Ambler
Primary School and Children's Centre

Policy

Attendance and Punctuality

December 2015



Next review with Safety, Service and Communications Committee: December 2017

This policy is subject to ongoing change and will be updated as and when required.

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1. Why are attendance and punctuality so important

Introduction

Good attendance and punctuality is important if children are to get the most out of their education. Children who are late miss out on important work at the start of the school day. Children who miss a lot of school obviously miss lessons and therefore do not make progress that they should.

The borough of Islington and Governors of Ambler are keen to ensure good attendance and punctuality.

There is a proven connection between success at school and high attendance. For further reference, please visit: www.ioe.ac.uk/Final_EPPSE_cogs_KS3_RB.pdf

It is particularly disruptive to learning if a child has numerous short absences. Children who are late arriving to school in the morning miss the start of the first lesson and find it difficult to tune in to what is going on, and as a result their learning suffers. Good punctuality is an important life skill. Indeed, in the world of employment poor punctuality becomes a disciplinary issue.

When outlining how we drive attendance at Ambler, we are referring to all classes from reception to year 6. However, the approach in reception slightly differs due to the children's young age. Issues with attendance in reception appear to stem from a combination of factors such as: concern and lack of clarity about what illness should prevent children attending school, and attendance is not seen as a priority over, say 'last chance' holidays in term time. Staff at Ambler work to challenge these misconceptions and support and encourage parents in reception to improve their children's attendance and develop good life skills and attitudes to learning in order that they can achieve more...

2. Legal Framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable —

- a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
- b) to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age —

- a) when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and
- b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year —

- a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- b) if they attain that age on that day, or
- c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

3. How do we promote good attendance and Punctuality?

Attendance at Ambler is driven and maintained by the Governing Body, School Leadership Team, Teachers and Support Staff, Parents and carers and children. Below is an explanation as to what happens at Ambler in regard to lateness and absence.

As part of the attendance and punctuality policy here at Ambler, attendance and lateness is monitored on a daily, weekly and termly basis.

Daily procedure

Children must be in school by 8.55am to take part in morning exercise.

Registers close at 9.30am. If children arrive after 9.05 they are marked into the InVentry system by the parent as 'late' and they need to provide a reason -

If children arrive after 9.30am they are marked in the register as a **U** which means unauthorised **i.e. marked as being away**. Each day, the registers are entered directly by the class teachers onto SIMS, and 'lates' and 'absences' are recorded. A second register is taken after lunch and entered in the same way.

If the parents /carers are ill and are unable to bring children to school we expect that, where possible, other arrangements will be made to bring the children to school. If an unusually difficult situation arises it is important that parents contact the school and we will try to support the family in these circumstances. We deal with every situation on a case-by-case basis.

If a child is ill, parents are asked to phone the school **asap**. If they are unable to do this, then we ask for a letter of explanation on their return. We also follow this up with a phone call. If we do not receive an explanation of absence, then a letter will be sent out to parent/ carer asking for a reason for the absence. We expect children to attend school when suffering from routine childhood ailments e.g. colds, coughs and tummy bugs, unless they are clearly unable to do so and we provide an indoor play space for children who are well enough to attend school but not well enough to run around outside.

In nursery registers are taken twice daily to monitor and encourage good attendance and appropriate use of nursery places.

In reception – the classes are encouraged to have the 'best' attendance and the winning class are awarded with the attendance teddy for the week!

Follow up procedures

Letters are sent out each week to parents whose children have arrived to school late **more than once** in a week.

Attendance and punctuality is followed up by the Head, who reviews follow-ups fortnightly, and the office staff, by way of a phone call if we are concerned about the level of lateness or any unexplained absences that have been occurring and supported by the learning mentor.

Where no improvement occurs, a meeting will also be arranged to support any families with the matter. If there is no improvement with regard to attendance and punctuality, then we will have no other alternative but to refer the matter to the borough of Islington's Education Welfare Service.

Weekly promotion

There is a weekly whole-school assembly where the classes which achieve or exceed the target get extra playtime and those classes achieving 100% have a class celebration.

Weekly Attendance is displayed in a prominent board displayed in the main entrance.

Termly promotion

At the end of each term children who have achieved between 98- 100% attendance are recognised and rewarded in assembly and are entered into a raffle for book prizes. In the summer term the final raffle includes exciting prizes like bikes, scooters, ipods etc. In addition, each term the class with the highest attendance is rewarded with the attendance cup.

Termly letters are prepared and sent out to EVERY family to draw their attention to their child's attendance. If all is well – they are congratulated, however if there is a concern follow up meetings are arranged.

Periodically the head, governors and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) conduct a late gate.

We hold periodic coffee mornings to clarify our attendance expectation and invite nurses, other relevant health professionals and the EWO to support parents to understand about the importance of attendance, what constitutes 'sick' enough not to attend school, and what the implications of non-attendance and lateness are.

4. What is the role of the class teachers in keeping attendance registers?

Teachers play a really important part in driving attendance. Registers are taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session and entered directly onto School Information management System (SIMS). Teachers should ask children/parents to provide written reasons for absence and send these to the office to be entered.

Attendance at Ambler is everyone's business!

5. Who leads on promoting attendance and punctuality?

There are four individuals who have key roles in promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality:

- Senior Admin– Checks the registers, first day of absence phone call, follows up any unexplained absences.
- Head – Fortnightly looks through follow ups and makes contact with individuals we are concerned about. Meetings can then be made to support families and follows up on termly letters..
- Education Welfare Officer –Particularly poor records are referred to the EWO and they will work closely with parents and children to improve their attendance and / or punctuality. When improvement is not achieved penalty notices and court warnings may be issued

The Education welfare service will issue a Penalty Notice for persistent lateness under the following circumstances

1. The pupil has developed a pattern of persistent absence - 12 late marks over any 6 week period.
2. The school has previously informed the pupil's parent/ carer, in writing, of this new policy, making clear the definition of persistent absence and the legal consequences.

6. What happens if a parent / carer wants to take a child on holiday or an extended family holiday during term time?

Parents should note that:

- **Each request** will be considered individually and in line with the Authority's and Governors Attendance Policy. The head teacher will not usually authorise holidays except in exceptional circumstances (such as bereavement).
- Parents and carers must ask permission in advance and in writing to the head teacher who will respond to the request in writing. All requests for holiday leave during term time, must be made to the Head teacher **before** arrangements to travel are made
- The absence for a holiday will be noted and if unauthorised and extended the information will be passed on to the Education Welfare Service and a penalty notice will served. **It is important that children are in school every day.**
- If your child does not return to school on the date we have agreed we must refer the absence to education welfare and we may take away your child's place in school

7. Medical or dental appointment

We encourage parents to book appointments at the end of the day or after 13:30. We understand that a few clinics only operate within restricted hours and in this case we encourage parents or carers to bring their child to school, collect them for their appointment and bring them back to minimize missing key points of learning.

6 What is an authorised and an unauthorised absence?

There are two main types of absence **authorised** and **unauthorised**:

- **Authorised absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be out of school, or school has accepted a justifiable explanation for an Absence (DFES Sept 2003 guidance)

If a child has an illness or injury and it is clear that they were unable to attend school it will be authorised by the school.

Where there is persistent absence and it is a concern, the absence for illness may not be authorised without a doctor's letter.

- All other absence is **unauthorised**. Parents do not authorise absence – only the school can do this.

At Ambler attendance is everyone's priority and we promote that every day counts and every minute matters!

As well as learning good habits for life, being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year