



# TOTTENHALL INFANT SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

April 2019

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## **Legal Framework**

### **Education Act 1996**

*If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.*

- ❖ If a parent fails to register a child of compulsory school age at a school and does not intend to educate the child otherwise than at school, the LA will serve the parent with an Attendance Order under Sections 437-439 of the Education Act 1996.
- ❖ If a pupil who is registered at a school fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason, and attempts by the EWS and school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the EWS will, unless there is statutory defence, take legal action against the parents before the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or by applying for an Education Supervision order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children's Act 1989.
- ❖ If, after taking legal action, the child still fails to attend school regularly, the EWS will keep the case open and will, if deemed appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.
- ❖ In cases where the parents withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the EWS will promptly begin legal proceedings on the grounds that no further course of action is available.
- ❖ The school, Local Authority or Police can issue parents with a Penalty Notice if their child does not attend school. The fine is a fixed fee of £60 per adult, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid after that but within 28 days. Both parents can be fined for the same period of non-attendance. Failure to pay can lead to prosecution for non-attendance.

## Introduction

We strongly believe regular attendance is linked to higher achievement. Arriving at school on time each day will enable your child to make the most of the rich learning and social experiences Tottenham has to offer. This is especially important during the early years at school. Habits of regular attendance and good time keeping need to be established early on and will benefit your child for the rest of his or her school career and throughout life.

Our ethos aims to ensure that all pupils at Tottenham feel valued and welcomed, that pupils feel their attendance at school is important and that they will be missed when they are absent or late.

Our Attendance Officer regularly monitors and analyses attendance registers and liaises directly with parents and Education Welfare Services about any pupils of concern. Regular training to support class teachers on the completion of registers is provided along with induction training for new class teachers. The Attendance Officer also reports termly to the Governing Body and is available to offer support and advice to parents and carers on any issues related to attendance.

## Strategies and Rewards

At Tottenhall we have clear strategies and rewards to promote and celebrate good attendance:

- ❖ We encourage open communication with parent through every day contact, telephone calls and letters. We encourage parents to meet with us to enable us to clearly understand and support their concerns about family/health issues, which may affect their child's attendance.
- ❖ We meet with parents of new pupils to discuss our attendance policies
- ❖ We focus on the Early Years pupils through home visits and open evenings we discuss and emphasise the importance of good attendance.
- ❖ Every week 3 Bumblebees are awarded to the best class attendance in Year 1, Year 2 and Reception together with a Certificate for the highest class attendance in each year group.
- ❖ Yearly attendance awards also include a prize. Children with ongoing medical conditions/complex needs may never reach 100% because of absences that can't be avoided. This is taken into consideration to make the children feel included and reward them accordingly.

## Registration & Attendance Procedures

- ❖ All requests for absence/holidays during term time must be put in writing to the Headteacher giving details reasons why the absence is needed. The Headteacher will liaise with the Attendance Officer and look at each case individually before reaching a decision. Holidays during term time are very rarely authorised.
- ❖ Parents will be informed by form or letter whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- ❖ Only the Headteacher, not parents, decides on how to classify any absence.
- ❖ Parents who take holiday during term time that has not been authorised by the Headteacher could be issued with a Penalty Notice. Failure to pay the fine may result in prosecution for non-attendance, which could mean of fine of up to £2,500, a community sentence or even imprisonment.

### Lateness

- ❖ Punctuality is taken seriously at Tottenhall and by the Education Welfare Service. We regularly monitor lateness and will address the issue with the parent/carer either by phone or letter, offering advice and support.
- ❖ Class teachers will also inform the Attendance officer of any pupils who are continually late so a letter can be sent to parents and any issues resolved.
- ❖ The Attendance Officer is at the gate every morning and locks the gate at 8.55am. All pupils who arrive after the gate is closed should report to the school office before being taken to their class.
- ❖ Registration closes at 9.15am. Pupils who are late **BEFORE** 9.15am (i.e. between 8.45am and 9.15am) will be marked as an authorised late. Pupils who are late **AFTER** 9.15am will be marked absent (this indicates an unauthorised late).
- ❖ Unauthorised lateness will lower the child's attendance level. The Education Welfare Officer routinely monitors our registers and is authorised to check any pupil's attendance at any time. In cases of continued lateness, they may contact the parent/carer directly.

- ❖ Reminders are put in newsletters about start and finish times of the school day and about term time absence

### **Every Day Contact**

- ❖ Parents should call the office before 9.30am every day the pupil is absent (except on a long term medical absence with written medical evidence) explaining the reason for the absence. Parents should also produce a written note if possible, giving dates and reasons for absence. Should medical evidence not be provided the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Medical evidence includes Doctor's note, prescription and prescribed medicine bottle.
- ❖ Absence for shopping trips, birthdays, appointments for parents/siblings, weddings or helping out at home will not be authorised.
- ❖ When a pupil is absent without a message the Attendance Officer will phone the parent/carer **every** day of the child's absence to establish the reason for the absence (except in the case of the aforementioned long term medical absences).
- ❖ Children suffering from vomiting and diarrhoea will be requested to keep the child off school for a period of 48 hours since the last episode to prevent other children contracting the illness.
- ❖ The school produces reports every term and should your child's attendance drop to below 90% parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Headteacher and Attendance Officer to discuss any family/medical issues that are affecting attendance and to explore strategies to improve attendance.

### **Deletion from Roll**

- ❖ When a registered pupil fails to attend school for a period of four weeks and all efforts by the Education Welfare Office and School have been unsuccessful in tracing the child, they will be deleted from roll and will have to re-apply for a place. If the school is full it is more than likely the pupil will be placed on a waiting list.

### **Pupils not collected at the end of the School day**

- ❖ It is important that pupils are collected promptly at 3.15pm as teachers regularly have meetings to attend after school and cannot supervise

pupils who have not been collected. It can also be distressing for young pupils when they are not collected on time.

The London Borough of Enfield has very clear guidelines on how to deal with children not collected at the end of the school day.

Parents should call the school in advance if they know they are going to be late and inform the school what time they will be arriving to collect their child.

If the school has not been contacted by 3.25pm the Attendance Officer will contact the parent on the emergency contact numbers provided. Details of the conversation will be recorded. If the parent has not responded to the school's call and one hour has elapsed since the end of the school day, the school will make a referral to Children's Services. This contact will alert the Service that a child may need to be accommodated to await collection by their parent.

The school keeps records of children collected late. If parents persistently collect their children late from school, we will send a letter to them explaining our concerns and copy it to Children's Services and Police Youth and Community Section.

If the child is to be collected by someone else then parents should call the school office before 3pm and advise who is collecting their child. If the school does not receive a message the child will not be allowed to go with the adult until the school can contact the Parent.

We hope that parents will work with us to ensure that all pupils are collected on time at 3.15pm



## How Parents Can Help

- ❖ Bring your child/ren to school every day in plenty of time for morning registration at 8.45am.
- ❖ Ensure your child/ren are collected promptly at 3.15pm.
- ❖ Ensure you contact the school office if you are going to be late collecting your child at the end of the school day.
- ❖ Ensure you contact the school office before 9.30am **every day** your child is absent explaining why they are not at school.
- ❖ Ensure you contact the school office before 3pm to advise who is collecting your child if you are running late or cannot collect.
- ❖ Provide medical evidence, where necessary.
- ❖ Arrange medical appointments outside of school hours as much as possible.
- ❖ Do not keep children off school on birthdays, shopping/family days out, weddings, appointments for parents/siblings etc.
- ❖ Do not take holidays during term time.
- ❖ Meet with the Attendance Officer to discuss any concerns about your child's attendance as soon as possible.