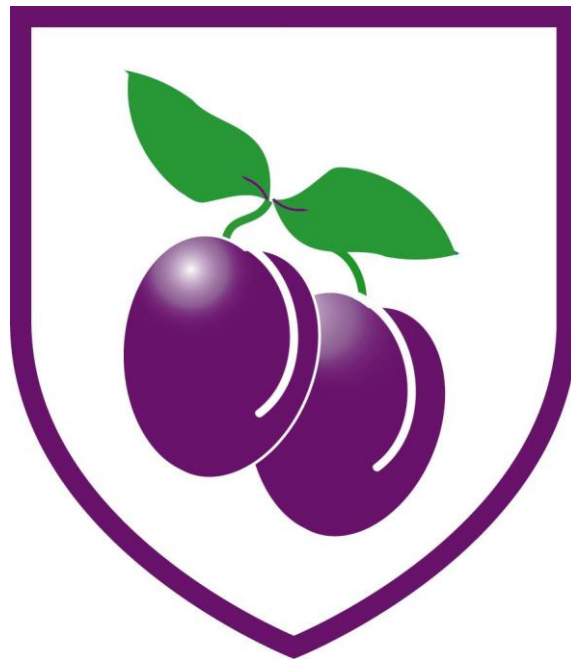


# Plumcroft Primary School

Universal high expectations

Knowing every child

In pursuit of excellence



## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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### Introduction

For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually and this policy sets out how we together will achieve this.

In order for any attendance and punctuality policy to be effective it must be consistently applied throughout the whole school, by its staff, pupils', parents and carers.

### Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupils' absence disrupts teaching routines which may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal and parental responsibility, permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued or Court action/prosecution.

Research has shown that regular attendance and good punctuality are key factors in students achieving their full potential at school. For every drop of 10% attendance there is an average drop of one grade at GCSE.

### EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Although being absence cannot always be helped as we all do become ill from time to time, please take a look at the table below to show you exactly what your child could be missing.

365 DAYS IN A YEAR	190 SCHOOL DAYS IN TOTAL	ABSENCE
100% attendance	190 days	0
95% attendance	180 days	2 weeks
90% attendance	171 days	4 weeks
85% attendance	161 days	6 weeks
80% attendance	152 days	More than half a term
75% attendance	143 days	9 + weeks

### 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 newsletter and website
- Encourage good attendance throughout the year

## **Safeguarding**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly.

Safeguarding the interest 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.

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

## **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

- To age
- To any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

## **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 such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. 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

This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

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 makes things worse.

## **Leave of absence in term time**

Taking leave of absence in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as another absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking 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. Because of the damage to your child's learning caused by this. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday.

All applications for leave in exceptional circumstances must be made in advance and are sanctioned at the discretion of the Headteacher. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any attendance concerns. Full details of our policy and procedures are available on our website and from the school.

## **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% 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 parents' 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 students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral/attendance system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Advisory Officer and some cases may lead to a Pre-Court Conference where a decision may be made to prosecute if a child's attendance is of a continuing concern, or a parent could be issued with a £120 penalty notice (per parent per child).

## **Absence Procedure**

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence

**The school's reporting absence procedures are:**

- First day calling
- Letters to parents
- Home visits
- Sign post pastoral support and external agencies where needed
- Pre referral meetings
- Possible referral to Attendance Advisory Service if your child's attendance is 90% and below

## **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. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we have always got an up to date number and an extra emergency contact.

## **Greenwich Attendance Advisory Officer**

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, the school may refer to the Greenwich Attendance Advisory Service. The Schools Attendance Advisory Officer will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absence persist the Greenwich Attendance Advisory Service can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Greenwich Attendance Advisory service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 020 8921 8510.

## **Lateness**

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

## **How we manage lateness**

The school day starts at 8.40 a.m. and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

At 9 a.m. every day we operate a late through the gate system and any student who is late will be monitored.

Registers are marked by 9 a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30 a.m. registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice or court action if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the School's Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your son/daughter to school on time.

## EVERY MINUTE COUNTS

As well as being absent from school affecting your child's development, being late also has a big effect. Please see the table below.

<b>Lateness = Lost learning</b>	
<b>(figures below are calculated over a school year)</b>	
5 mins late each day	3 days lost
10 mins late each day	6.5 days lost
15 mins late each day	10 days lost
20 mins late each day	13 days lost
30 mins late each day	19 days lost

### **School targets, projects and special initiatives**

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

The minimum level of attendance and punctuality for this school is 95% attendance and we will keep you updated about progress to this level through the school newsletter.

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 students can be amongst the best in the authority.

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,

### **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:-**

Richard Slade – Headteacher

Barbara Hannant – School Attendance Officer

A member of the Royal Greenwich Attendance and Advisory service.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish absence figures to parents.

Equally parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

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.