



# Leopold Primary School

## Attendance Policy 2023-2024

### **Aims of policy**

At Leopold School, we recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and Pupil attainment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that pupils attend regularly and be on time every day. 20% absence is the equivalent to one day's absence, every week throughout the school year. 20% absence over 5 years is the equivalent to a whole year missed.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy ethos is to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

### **Our Target attendance for 2023-2024 is 97%**

How we will achieve this:

- To provide support and guidance to parents and pupils
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school and communicate this effectively to pupils, staff, parents and governors
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data
- To promote and reward regular school attendance at whole school, class and individual level

Whole school assemblies identify the class with best attendance and punctuality. At the end of the year children with 100% attendance are awarded a special certificate.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governors**

- Set an attendance target for the school at the beginning of each school year
- Support the Executive Head Teacher in managing requests for pupil leave of absence and take the position that families have “no automatic right” to such leave
- Decide the start and finish time of the school day and determine the dates for the school’s term and holiday dates

### **School**

- To be open to all pupils for 390 sessions each school year
- Ensure that the daily register of pupils attending school is taken
- Designates a member of the Senior Leadership Team to monitor and report on attendance
- Have good communication about attendance matters with parents through our newsletter, parent’s evenings and school assemblies
- Provide parents with dates of school terms and INSET dates at the beginning of each academic year
- Monitor and review the systems and policy annually
- Analyse the attendance and punctuality data and present findings, patterns and trends on a regular basis to Governors, parents, Senior Leadership Team, teachers and children
- Transfer and receive pupil records in line with the local policies and procedures

### **Parents**

- Ensure their child attends school regularly, with a minimum of 97% attendance
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time each day
- Ensure the school has their current contact details
- When moving house contact the school, let school know if they no longer require a place for their child, with the date that they will be leaving. A Pupil Leaving Leopold School form will need to be completed by the parents. Any child who leaves the school and their whereabouts are unknown will have their details passed to the Educational Welfare Service and be reported as CME, Child Missing in Education.

## **The Education Welfare Service (EWS)**

- Ensure that parents meet their responsibility
- Visit the school on a regular basis to advise staff on managing absences, making appropriate referrals and to meet with parents
- Can seek legal redress and use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions to secure pupils’ attendance if a parent fails in their duty. The EWS service is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school or by contacting Brent Council.

### **Pupil absence**

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

- Parents or careers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during school day
- Unexplained absences
- Children who arrive at school after registers have closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

### **Persistent absentees**

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across a school year for whatever reason.

### **Absence procedures**

Parents must contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Parents can contact the school's office, complete an absence form or email the school. The School will contact parents if their child is absent and if they have not received a message from parents. If absences persist we will invite parents to meet with school designated person for Attendance and/or refer to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance falls below 90%.

### **Regular Pupil Sickness**

If a child is regularly absent due to sickness a parent may be invited to school to discuss their child's absences, this discussion may include the Inclusion manager, EWO, School Medical Welfare Officer/ Welfare Officer and School Nurse. The school may request a parent to provide medical details from their doctor before continuing to authorise further absences.

### **Religious Holidays**

Parents may apply for permission for a child to be absent from school on the day of the religious festival, so that children can enjoy celebrations with their families. The schools are unable to sanction leave of absence for longer than one day. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if parents take children out for more than one day. Only religious festivals recognised by Brent Local Authority will be sanctioned.

### **Holidays in Term time**

There is no automatic entitlement in law for time off in school time. The schools are closed for 14 weeks of the year and parents are expected to use this time for taking holidays and visiting family abroad. All requests for leave of absence MUST be made in advance before making a booking by completing the request form. Leave in exceptional circumstances may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher.

Leave will NOT be granted during term time under the following circumstances:

- When a pupil is just starting school
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When pupil attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- Where a pupils' attendance rate is already below the school target of 96% or will fall to that level or below if holiday is taken. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the schools or in excess of that agreed will be classes as unauthorised and will be reported to EWS.

Children taken out of school for unauthorised leave during term time risk losing their school place and also risk receiving an Educational Penalty Notice. Our school has the full support of our Governing Body and the local authority in this matter with the Executive Head teacher's decision being final with no right of appeal.

### **Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

We have high expectations of attendance for children with SEND and there should be no reason why children with SEND have different levels of attendance. Children with SEND may require a higher proportion of medical appointments as a result of their particular needs. As with all children, parents should be encouraged to make appointments out of school time whenever possible. Children with a statement of SEND will have attendance reviewed annually as part of the statement review process.

### **Children on Long Term Leave due to Illness or Disability**

Occasionally some children have to be away from school over a long period of time due to illness or disability. We will ensure that if they are well enough they can continue their education either in hospital or by arranging home tuition.

### **Dental & Medical Appointments**

Wherever possible, parents should make every effort to arrange medical or dental appointments during holiday periods or at the beginning or end of the school day. An appointment at the beginning of the school day should not result in a whole day's absence from school. Proof of appointments is required before leave is granted.

### **Bullying**

Our schools do not condone bullying by any member of staff, parent or pupil. If bullying does occur, it will be dealt with as a very serious matter. No child should feel they cannot come to school for fear of being bullied.

### **Safeguarding Children**

Please see our Safeguarding Policy for further information.

### **Punctuality**

We encourage good punctuality and celebrate good class punctuality every week. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child is late for the start of the day they can miss work, vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt the lessons and it can be embarrassing for the child

Good time keeping is a valuable life skill which will help our children as they progress through school life and out into the wider world.

Children who are persistently late will be invited to a meeting with the Designated Person for Attendance and Inclusion.

### **How we manage lateness**

We expect children to be in the playground by 8.30am, when they go straight to their classes. The formal school day starts at 8.45am, when registration begins. If your child arrives at school after the start of registration time, but before the end of registration time, they will be given a late mark; the code for this is 'L'. This means the school will accept the explanation given for the late arrival as valid and reasonable e.g. a late bus, a car breakdown, a one-off family difficulty. If your child is late due to exceptional circumstances, no action will be taken. If your child is frequently late with the same or similar explanation, the school will ask to meet with you to identify any issues that are causing your child to arrive late at school.

Registers are recorded electronically; every reason for absence has a special code. Registers are closed at 9.00 am. If children arrive after that time they will receive a mark 'U' which show them to be on site but will count as unauthorised absence. If the problem persists, parents could face the possibility of an Educational Penalty Notice. If the child has a Persistent late record, parents will be asked to meet with the designated staff responsible for Attendance and/ or EWO. Pupils who are late must be registered electronically at the front office. Children should be collected from school at 3.15pm. If a parent is late collecting their child they should ring the school offices in advance. Any parent who regularly collects their child late will be invited to meet with the designated staff member. In very serious cases of children being left late at school, the child may be deemed to be abandoned and will be reported to the authorities such as social care or the local police.

Signed by Chair of Governors.....date

Signed by Headteacher..... date

Signed by Attendance lead.....date

