

Cannon Lane Primary School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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RATIONALE

Cannon Lane Primary School promotes good school attendance and punctuality for every child and we are committed to upholding every child's right to an education and to be the best they can be. Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. School attendance is also a component of safeguarding children and their right to be safe.

The Education Act 1996 states that all pupils of compulsory school age should attend school regularly and punctually. We know that any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence and/or lateness will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines/timetables and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis and punctually will be considered as a safeguarding matter (Education Act 2002, Section 175). Therefore it is important that all parents/carers and children know that the school values good attendance and punctuality.

Cannon Lane Primary School is a Rights Respecting school, therefore at the heart of this policy is the United Nations Charter of the Rights of the Child. The following articles underpin our drive to ensure all children are benefitting from regular attendance at school :

Article 1 – The Rights are for all children

Article 3 - All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for the child.

Article 28- Children have the right to a free primary education

Article 29 – Education should develop each child's talents and personality to the full.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of staff. To help us all focus on this, the school will:

- Report your child's attendance and punctuality rate in our annual reports
- Celebrate good and improving attendance in school; rewarding individual and class achievements
- Contact parents/carers should a child's attendance fall below 95%
- Maintain open and regular communication between families of children with persistently low attendance rates

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality Harrow Local Authority will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where it becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply with the School Attendance Order (Section 43 of the Education Act 1996) or failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 44 of the Education Act 1996).

Understanding types of absence and procedures

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 Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Entrance exams and interviews

If your child needs to attend entrance exams or interviews the school must receive written notification at least two weeks in advance of the interview/exam date. A dedicated request form is available from Cannon Lane Primary School office. A copy of the appointment letter from the host school should be included. Children attending exams or interviews in the morning or afternoon are required to attend school for the remaining portion of the day. In most cases absence for examinations (including music examinations) will be authorised.

Religious observance leave

Cannon Lane Primary School is proud of the diversity of our school community and we support parents who wish to nurture their children within a faith tradition. Harrow guidance on authorising absence for religious festivals stipulates that one day absence will be authorised by the school to facilitate the participation in religious festivals. This authorised day is the day on which the festival falls. **Absences during days before or after the festival date will be unauthorised.**

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This type of absence can lead to Harrow Council using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark on the class register
- Shopping, looking after other children or taking a day off to celebrate birthdays
- Taking a day off to see a relative
- Day trips and holidays in term time

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 addressed by the school, the parents and the child together. Cannon Lane Primary school is committed to working with parents in order to improve attendance. Assistant Headteachers are available to discuss any concerns parents may have about attendance.

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling and we expect parents not to take 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.

Headteachers may NOT grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The decision to authorise leave in term time for exceptional circumstances is at the discretion of the Headteacher. It is important to understand the circumstances when leave in term time will not be agreed by the school:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods or examinations
- Where a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 95% or, will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave in term time

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as an Education Penalty Notice.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) - a pupil 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'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all attendance and 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 within the school and parents will be informed of this immediately. PA cases are tracked and monitored carefully through the school's our pastoral system.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Harrow Attendance Officer.

Absence Procedure for Parents/ Carers

In the event of your child being absent from school parents/carers must:

- Contact the school before 9.30a.m. on each and every day they are absent. School office phone number is **020 8866 3536 PLEASE DO NOT INFORM THE SCHOOL OFFICE BY EMAIL – ONLY BY PHONECALL.**
- Send a note to school with your child on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence. You must do this even though you have telephoned us as we need a written record of the absence

Absence Procedure for school

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you each day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.30 a.m.
- Invite you to discuss the situation with the Assistant Headteacher if absence persists
- Refer the matter to the Harrow Attendance Officer if attendance falls below 90% in cases where the matter cannot be resolved between the parents/carers and

the school. In this case Harrow Attendance Officers can use sanctions such as Education Penalty Notices (EPN) in the Magistrates Court. Full details of options open to reinforce attendance at school are available from the School Office or the Harrow Attendance and Welfare Officer at Harrow Civic Centre or on the website at http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/17/school_and_college/1115/education_welfare_and_attendance_for_school_aged_children

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the School Attendance Officer themselves to ask for help/information. The School Attendance Officer is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Harrow Civic Centre.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they may miss work and will not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child who is late and may encourage absence.

How we manage lateness: The school day starts at 8.45am for children from Year 3 to Year 6 and at 8.50 for children from Reception to Year 2. Children may wait in the playground for school to start from 8.30am. We expect your child to be in the school playground by the appropriate time. School Registers are marked by 9a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

In accordance with the Regulations, school Registers are closed at 9.30 a.m. 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 if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher to resolve the problem. However, you can approach the school at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows Local Authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Harrow Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices will be made available for schools, parents, carers and other interested parties. The Local Authority will impose penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution on parents for unauthorised absence and may also be issued where parents allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

Please visit Harrow website for more information:
http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/17/school_and_college/1115/education_welfare_and_attendance_for_school_aged_children