



# Attendance Policy

Adoption by Governing Body

..... (Signature of Chair of Governors)

.....October 2019..... (Date)

To Be Revised .....October 2020.....(Date)



# Squirrels Heath Junior School Attendance Policy

## Introduction

It is essential that pupils attend school regularly and punctually if they are to reach their potential and benefit from the educational opportunities that are offered. Squirrels Heath Junior School is committed to working with parents to improve attendance and punctuality of all pupils.

## The Law

The law states that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. Neglect of this responsibility can result in prosecution, the penalty for which can be up to a £2,500 fine for each parent/carer. In extreme cases a custodial sentence can be imposed.

## First Day Absence

If a child is unfit for school, the parent/carer, should contact the school on the first day of absence, in person, by e-mail ([absence@shj.havering.sch.uk](mailto:absence@shj.havering.sch.uk)) or by telephone (01708 446472 option 1) before 9.30a.m. stating briefly the reason for absence. If we do not receive information regarding your child's absence, we will call you to ascertain the reason and to ensure your child is safe. If we are unable to reach you, we will ring the other contact numbers we have listed. If we are unable to reach anyone on the contact list, we will notify the Local Authority Children Services. When the child returns to school an explanation / medical evidence should be provided, Failure to provide an explanation/medical evidence will result in the absence coded as unauthorised.

## Appointments

Appointments (eg GP, dentist) should, where possible, be arranged outside of school hours. Where it is unavoidable and appointments have to be made during school hours, the school should be notified in advance. The appointment card or a note is acceptable. Parents are requested to minimise the amount of teaching time that the child will lose as a result of such appointments, by registering the child for the first lesson if the appointment is not until later in the

morning / afternoon and ensuring that they return to school as soon as possible following the appointment.

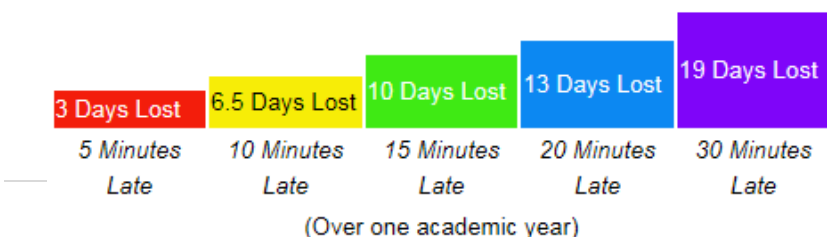
### Persistent Absence

When a child’s attendance falls below 95%, a letter is sent to the parent/carer to make them aware that their child’s attendance is causing concern. If the pupil’s attendance fails to improve, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who may contact the parents to discuss the issues surrounding low attendance levels. Persistent absence through illness will be followed up by the school nurse. Below is a table to show the impact persistent absence has on attendance:

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent days lost	Equivalent sessions lost	Equivalent weeks lost
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	2 weeks
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	4 Weeks
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	6 Weeks
80%	38 Days	72 Sessions	8 Weeks
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	10 Weeks
70%	57 Days	114 Sessions	11.5 Weeks
65%	67 Days	134 Sessions	13.5 Weeks

### Lateness

It is very important that children arrive in good time for school. The school gates are open from 8.30am and the bell is rung at 8.45am when pupils enter school and commence early morning work. The register is taken promptly at 8:50am each day. Children arriving after the register has been called will be marked late and must report to the school office. They will be asked to give a reason for their late arrival. Where a consistent pattern of lateness is identified, the issue will be discussed with parents. If the problem persists, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. Any pupil arriving after 9.20am will be marked as having arrived after close of registers and will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence. The table below shows the impact persistent lateness has on attendance:



## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

Authorised absences are those which the school agrees are unavoidable e.g. illness, or medical appointments.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school considers unreasonable and for which no 'Leave of Absence' has been applied for or granted. These could include minor ailments, shopping trips and birthday celebrations.

If your child is absent leading up to or following a school holiday, the parent / carer will need to provide medical evidence to cover the absence.

If a child does not want to attend school for any reason, it is important that parents/carers discuss the problem with the school at the first opportunity rather than keeping the child at home. The parents may also contact the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the matter.

## **Family Holidays**

**There is no entitlement to a leave of absence during term time.** If parents feel they need to take their child out of school, they should fill in a Leave of Absence form which can be obtained from the school office. The Headteacher will consider the reason for the request as well the child's progress and current attendance record. If the request is not granted, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Unauthorised family holidays will be reported to the Local Authority who may issue parents with a Penalty Notice. The Penalty is a £60 fine per parent, per child, rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days.

## **Stage/Television Productions**

Occasionally parents request absence for their child to take part in a stage or television production. Should a parent/carers wish to request this they should write a letter to the Headteacher requesting absence for their child, indicating how many school days' absence they require. This needs to include rehearsals, performance and travelling time. The Headteacher may then consult with the child's class teacher to find out whether the absence will have an adverse effect on the child's school work. The child's attendance record will also be taken into consideration.

If permission is granted, the Headteacher, parents and carers then need to apply to the borough for a performing licence for their child. A copy of the licence must be given to the school before an absence begins. Where absence has been granted it will be deemed as "authorised".

## **Strategies to Encourage Attendance/Punctuality**

- We monitor absence and lateness rigourously and meet with the Education Welfare officer every four weeks to discuss pupils who are causing concern.
- Parents are reminded regularly about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality through newsletters.
- Letters are sent to parents/carers when a pupil's attendance or punctuality is causing a concern.
- The importance of regular and punctual attendance is highlighted in assemblies.
- Attendance Cups are awarded weekly during whole school assembly to the class with the highest attendance percentage in lower and upper school each week. These awards are also recorded on our school website.
- A display in the school hall also shows each class' weekly attendance.
- Pupils with attendance above 98% at the end of the academic year will receive a certificate in assembly.
- Parents / Carers receive information about attendance and lateness in their child's termly report and End of Year Report.