



# Attendance Policy

Updated: June 2020

# Mayespark Primary School

## Attendance Policy



At Mayespark we believe that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. The school has adopted the Local Authority Attendance Strategy which can be viewed on 'Redbridge i'. This policy clarifies our internal roles, responsibilities and procedures.

### We aim to:

- Our attendance target is to achieve **95.8% or above in line with the national average.**
- Promote children's welfare and keep them safe
- Safeguard children's rights to learn
- Maintain parents'/carers' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Give our pupils the best chance of succeeding whilst at school

### Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attendance means better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attendance means it is easier to cope with routines and school work
- Regular attendance means learning is more satisfying
- Regular attendance means an easier transition to secondary school, and ultimately, the world of work, having developed positive habits in attending school every day

Creating a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility; parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff have a part to play.

**Rewards:** In accordance to the school's phased return plans and the updated risk assessment many of the rewards systems will not be able to take place due to social distancing measures and children not in their normal classes. Teachers will be able to give out good news notes and certificates to the children in their groups.

- An attendance cup is presented to the best attended group in KS1 and KS2 each week and is resented during our Achievement Assemblies;
- £2 coins are given to classes with the highest weekly attendance. This can be accumulated and 'spent' on resources for that class chosen by the children in collaboration with their teacher;



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- Each week the year group with the best attendance will have access to playground equipment and games on an extra day in the following week;
- In the Autumn term Reception children receive individual certificates and attendance stickers if they have attended school all week;
- Children throughout the school are awarded with a medal for excellent attendance as follows: bronze for 1 term, silver for 2 terms and gold for 3 terms;
- A class attendance 'league table' will appear in the monthly newsletter and sent to parents and carers

**Punctuality: (In accordance to the phased return plans child's start times will be staggered. A member of the senior leadership team will be posted at each of the four entry points into the school and will be able to discuss with parents any punctuality concerns. Persistent lateness during the phased return period will be addressed by the Deputy Head or attendance officer)**

Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world. Good punctuality needs to be started from the earliest age (from Nursery and Reception).

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Pupils arriving late disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for children and can also encourage absence.

- All children are encouraged to come straight into school at 8.55am and all doors will be closed promptly at 9.00am to ensure the safety and security of every child and adult in the school
- On days when the weather is wet the doors will open at 8.50am and will be closed promptly at 9.00am
- It is essential to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance
- All pupils that arrive late will be marked in the register with either an 'L' (late) or 'U' (unauthorised absence) code
- The time of arrival is recorded and this could be used in evidence in the event of court action and/or for issuing fixed penalty notices
- If you bring your child to school late you must take them to the main entrance, **they must not enter the school via the outside classroom door for safety reasons**



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- In cases of persistent lateness a Headteacher can apply to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice, though a notice will not normally be issued unless the child concerned has had 7 or more lates in a half term (this would normally be over a 6 week period) **During the phased return period parents will not receive a penalty notice for lateness.**

**Late collection at the end of the day: (In accordance to the phased return plans there will be staggered end times to the day for each year group and four different collection points. If children are not collected during their allocated collection times they will be taken up to the hall to await collection)**

- Children must be collected each day by 3:15pm. Parents who are regularly late picking up their children will be monitored and may be fined or referred to social services
- Children attending after school clubs must be collected at the specified time, otherwise the child is at risk of losing their privilege to attend the club
- Uncollected children will be referred to a place of safety

#### **Pupils can help by:**

- Going to bed when their parents/carers tell them and ensuring that they have had a good night's sleep
- Doing their best to get up in the mornings and get ready quickly for school
- Getting their book bags, uniform, shoes, PE kits etc ready the night before
- Presenting at school ready to learn having eaten breakfast

**Parents and Carers can help by: (Government guidelines state that parents should notify the school if their child is unable to attend so that staff are aware and can discuss with them. Contact with the school should be made via a telephone call to the attendance officer rather than in person. If a child displays coronavirus symptoms parents should not bring their child to school and seek medical testing immediately)**

- Telephoning the school on your child's first day of absence and every day there after of absence before 9.00am
- Bringing your child to school every day and on time unless there is an unavoidable reason for absence e.g. illness or a one-off family emergency (day trips, birthday celebrations, meeting family members are not reasonable reasons to miss school)
- Arranging medical/dental appointments out of school hours or in school holidays
- Discussing any problems with regular attendance (or if your child is reluctant to come to school for any reason), with the class teacher or Headteacher
- Sending in a written note explaining your child's absence on their return (please note that this does not constitute as medical evidence)
- Keeping the school informed by phone during prolonged absence due to illness



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- Providing medical evidence for absences caused by sickness from the 3<sup>rd</sup> day onwards
- Not keeping children at home for minor coughs and colds – these absences will be closely monitored and medical evidence may be required if absence is deemed excessive

**The class teacher will: (In accordance to the school's phased return plans all communications between a parent and the class teacher will be through a telephone call and not in person)**

- Greet all children positively in the morning, speaking to them by name, ensuring they feel welcome
- Foster a caring and considerate environment where your children feel safe and valued irrespective of their attainment
- Develop positive partnerships with parents
- Mark the register at the start of each school session, recording absence with the correct code
- Ask the child why they have been absent and check how they are feeling on returning from an absence
- Ask the parent of a child who has been absent for an explanation
- Share any concerns about progress and attainment that could be linked with poor attendance and punctuality
- Encourage and explain the reasons why excellent attendance is important
- Encourage good punctuality by being a good role model to the children and by celebrating good class punctuality

**The school will: (in accordance to the school's phased return plans the Deputy Head and attendance officer will contact the parents of non-attenders for wellbeing checks. Members of the senior leadership team will continue to call children of vulnerable families on a weekly basis. Attendance figures will not be published in pupils' end of year reports)**

- Follow up unexplained absences on the 1<sup>st</sup> day with a Group Call Text in morning and this will continue on a daily basis
- Make a telephone call home if there is no response to the text
- Conduct or request welfare checks through the Educational Welfare Service
- Provide a form which will be sent home for completion if no response is received from parents/carers so we can find out why your child was absent
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, school website and on Facebook
- Arrange for the Attendance Officer to meet with parents to discuss concerns and offer support when needed



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- Report whole school attendance data to governors termly
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his bi-annual school reports
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance, through letters and school based meetings
- Provide Parent Forums focused on attendance and punctuality
- Refer your child's attendance to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance drops to **93%** or below.

### **Persistent Absence:**

A child is deemed as Persistently Absent (PA) if they have 10% absence or more - this includes authorised absences. Absence at this level considerably affects children's education and parents' and carers' full support and co-operation is needed to address this.

**The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will: (If contact between the school and parents becomes a concern then the school will request the Education Welfare Officer conducts a home visit. Parents will not be fined for non attendance)**

- Make contact with our parents/carers where there is concern regarding the attendance of a child.
- Welcome parents/carers contacting him or her themselves to ask for help or information.
- Give independent and impartial advice. (Contact details are available from the school office)
- Try to resolve any situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Educational Welfare Service can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the name of the London Borough of Redbridge in the Magistrates Court (which will result in a criminal record for the parent/carer).

**Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school (not by you the parent) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why we must have a letter or a phone call from the parent/carer to inform us about any absence.**

### **Authorised Absence:**

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if your child is ill (backed up with medical evidence). Religious observance absences will NOT be authorised for more than 3 days annually and these must be recognised festivals or celebrations rather than family tradition. Family bereavement absences will be considered on an individual basis.

For medical absences (from the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of sickness onwards) we will request a letter from your doctor or we may ask you to bring in a prescription or the bottle or packet from prescribed medication.



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## Leave of Absence:

The school has a **zero tolerance policy** towards term time leave in line with the Local Authority, the government and the Governing Body of Mayespark. The Headteacher will only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance and where she is satisfied that there are **exceptional circumstances to justify the request**. In these cases no more than 3 days will be granted per school year for any pupil. **Term time visits abroad to see relatives will not be authorised under any circumstances.**

Please be aware at Mayespark Primary there are over 100 applications for term time leave made every year. While parents and carers may feel their own circumstances are exceptional, the request will be considered in line with other requests for leave of a similar nature.

**Sanctions for an Unauthorised Leave of Absence without Permission: (Penalty notices or court action will be enforced during the phased return period)**

Redbridge LA will issue penalty notices for leave of absence taken without the permission of the Headteacher as a supplement to the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 Education Act 1996 or section 36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school. This may be for:

- A) 12 unauthorised sessions in any half term
- B) Leave of Absence taken without the permission of the Headteacher

**After 12 unauthorised sessions you will receive a penalty notice currently set at £120 per child, per parent, and will risk losing your child's school place. Subsequently, consideration will be given for the matter to be investigated by the Education Welfare Service and possible legal action.**

Whilst your child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they may be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance must be discussed between the school, parents/carers and the child. If you think your child is reluctant to attend school for any reason then please contact the school so we can support you and your child to improve attendance.

## **Responding to Continued Non-Attendance: (Extract from Redbridge Attendance Strategy (Reviewed September 2017))**

- *The Education Welfare Service will consider the use of "Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)" when it is deemed that legal intervention is needed. The purpose of ESO's is very clear, that of improving school attendance through supporting parents to exercise their parental authority. An ESO places a child or young person under the supervision of the Local Authority for a prolonged period and empowers the supervising officer to direct parents and children in matters relating to school attendance. These are implemented under the Children Act 1989.*
- *Further investigation into the causes of the non-attendance must be carried out in cases of continued absence. Consideration should be given to those factors, which may influence attendance at school. Bullying, school refusal, parentally condoned absence, disaffection and learning difficulties are just a few of the many reasons children have given for continued absence from school.*
- *Once the investigation has discovered the cause of the pupil's absence from school, it is important to negotiate a return to school programme that everyone is committed to, including the pupil, their parents, class teacher(s) and any support agencies. Without an agreed, well structured programme the pupil is likely to feel insecure about their return. Particular support in language, literacy numeracy or for special education needs should be identified and a plan made for their inclusion in the return to school programme.*



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*All programmes named above can be targets used in a 'Parenting Contract' overseen by the Local Authority.*

- *In very exceptional circumstances the 'return to school programme' might consider whether it is appropriate for the head teacher to apply modification or disapplication from the National Curriculum for individual students. Arrangements to modify or disapply from the National Curriculum must comply with regulations made under The Education Act 2002 and for the purposes of the strategy must comply with the relevant legal framework in force at the time.*

*Returning to school after an absence can be difficult for some pupils. A great deal of persuasion by parents, EWO or teacher may have taken place to get the child to agree their return to school programme. Often considerable courage is being shown by the pupil. Therefore pupils need to feel secure in the knowledge that their return will be handled sensitively by staff.*

*In these circumstances considerations will be given in supporting the young person for example; work being sent home for a fixed period.*

- *Governors have a valuable role to play in establishing the importance of attendance at individual schools. They help schools to focus upon the need for a clear policy on attendance. The LA recommends that governors receive termly reports on attendance for this purpose. Governors should support the initiatives, which are taken by a school, to promote good attendance by monitoring the relative success of such measures.*

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#### **Leavers:**

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, you are asked to:

- Inform the school's admissions administrator when your child will be leaving Mayespark Primary School
- Complete a Mayespark school transfer form, so we know which school your child is transferring to and where to forward educational information, to ensure a smooth transition.

#### **Children Missing Education:**

If your child leaves our school and you have not given us the above information, and we cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education (CME)**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services and the CME Officer.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

#### **Legal Note:**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on best practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. The Schools Education Welfare Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

**We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.**

**"Every lesson counts"**



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## Appendix A

### List of Absence Codes

B	Educated off site (not dual registration)
C	Other Authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration (attend elsewhere)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision)
F	Extended Family
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not medical/dental)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental
N	No reason yet provided
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-Compulsory school age absence
Y	Enforced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll



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**Mayespark Primary School Attendance / Absence Procedure Flowchart**

**Pre –referral (PR)**

**Child absent and no contact**

**1<sup>st</sup> day absence text message to be sent by Attendance Officer (AO) to parents/carers if no message has been left by them**

**AO will call parents/carers who do not respond to text messages – especially families where vulnerability has been identified**

**(A welfare check may be requested via the Education Welfare Officer EWO)**

**All calls and messages will be logged**

**AO to email Safeguarding Lead and in his absence, Safeguarding Deputies of any identified vulnerable children and families who are absent or late to school**

**(If child or family is on CP Plan the Safeguarding Lead or Deputies will contact Social Worker if no contact was possible or unsatisfactory reasons are given)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> day absence (where still no contact), AO will contact families again and if necessary pass on to Deputy Headteacher (DHT) to make a call home - AO to update register and log call**

**AO will monitor attendance daily and on Monday for the previous week and if below 93% with no valid reason will send letter out**

**Letters will also be sent to children with attendance below 90% where parents are not providing satisfactory information or valid reasons backed up by evidence**

**Below 90% where no improvement after school letter referral to Education Welfare Service  
Actions can be:**

**Home Visit**

**School Based Meeting**

**Warning letter**

**Legal Review Meeting**

**Penalty Notice Fine**

**Prosecution/Education Supervision Order**

## MAYESPAK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Goodmayes Lane, Ilford, Essex IG3 9PX Tel: 020 8599 2263

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Web: [www.mayesparkprimaryschool.org.uk](http://www.mayesparkprimaryschool.org.uk)  
<https://www.facebook.com/mayespark>

Head teacher: Mrs. E. Davies



Date:

### **RE: ATTENDANCE (95% or below)**

To the Parents/Carers of: .....

Dear.....

It has been brought to my attention that .....’s attendance so far this year is unsatisfactory and is currently.... %

.....has been absent ..... days so far this school year.

It is absolutely vital that children attend school

every day. Research indicates that there is a strong link between attendance and attainment and we are convinced that ‘every lesson counts’.

We accept that the occasional absence due to sickness may at times be unavoidable. However, it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly and is on time.

Your child’s attendance will continue to be monitored and we hope to see an improvement in this area.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Davies  
Head Teacher

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<https://www.facebook.com/mayespark>

Head teacher: Mrs. E. Davies



Date:

## **Re: No Improvement on Attendance (93% or below)**

Parents/Carers of: ..... Class .....

We have continued to monitor.....attendance, but since our letter dated to you on the.....we have seen no improvement to your child's attendance record.

.....'s attendance remains at an unsatisfactory level of just.....% and ..... 's has missed a total of.....days from school since the start of the academic year.

As I have previously explained, it is absolutely vital that children attend school every day. Your child will have missed important learning and concepts while being absent. Research indicates that there is a strong link between attendance and attainment and we are convinced that 'every lesson counts'.

We accept that the occasional absence due to sickness may at times be unavoidable. However, it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly and is on time.

**Please be advised that no further absences will be authorised unless supported by medical evidence (e.g. hospital appointment letter, copy of G.P. prescription etc.)**

We hope to see an immediate and sustained improvement in.....'s attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Davies  
Head Teacher

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..... attendance remains at an unsatisfactory level of just.....% and .....has missed a total of.....days from school since the start of the academic year.

As I have previously explained, it is absolutely vital that children attend school every day. Your child will have missed important learning and concepts while being absent. The law requires parents to make sure their children (compulsory school age) receive a full time education suitable to their age, ability and need. Therefore it is your responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly and is on time.

We accept that the occasional absence due to an emergency or sickness may at times be unavoidable.

**The school will be discussing this absence record with the Education Welfare Advisory & Support Service Ltd, and you will be contacted by the EWO officer.**

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Davies  
Head Teacher

## COVID 19 – changes to our attendance policy June 2020

The government stated that to ensure the safe opening of school five tests had to be adhered to:

1. *Making sure the NHS can cope*
2. *A sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rate*
3. *Rate of infection decreasing to manageable levels*
4. *Ensuring supply of tests and PPE can meet future demand*
5. *Being confident any adjustments would not risk a second peak that would overwhelm the NHS.*

Changes to the school's attendance policy is in accordance with Government recommendations and guidelines from the following documents:

1. *Coronavirus (Covid 19) guidance for schools and other educational settings.*
2. *Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)*
3. *Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings*
4. *Opening schools for more children and young people: initial planning framework for schools in England*

To prepare for the safe return of pupils the school has conducted a thorough risk assessment to minimise the risk to children and adults.

The following precautions have been taken:

- Underpinning all the school implements is the importance of hygiene and handwashing; on arrival at school and frequently throughout the day.
- There will be a good supply of hand sanitizer that will be used when the children are outside or where necessary indoors.
- Children will be encouraged to use tissues when they sneeze.
- If a child develops coronavirus symptoms, they will be sent home to self-isolate for 7 days. Other members of the child's household should self-isolate for 14 days. If the child tests negative they can return to school. If they test positive the rest of their class will be sent home to self-isolate.
- Children will not return to their normal class or taught by their class teacher. Instead they will be placed into groups of 6-8 children to minimise contact with others. They will remain with their group for the duration they are in school.
- Outdoor learning will be increased.
- Children will be able to access the school via a designated entry point where they will be asked to queue two metres apart. One parent will be allowed to accompany the child to one of the four internal gate.
- Parents will not be allowed to have physical contact with teachers.

A comprehensive cleaning programme is in place therefore the school will not be remain open for the whole week.

On the school shall be opening for our pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Start time</b>	<b>Finish time</b>	<b>Finish time if having lunch</b>	<b>Days attending school after start date</b>
Reception	9am	12.15pm	12.30pm	Monday to Friday
Y1	9.30am	12.45pm	1.00pm	Monday to Friday
Y6	10am	3pm	N/A	Monday to Thursday

The government strongly encourage children and young people in the eligible year groups and priority groups (such as children of critical workers) to attend, as requested by the school, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions).

Parents should notify the school as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff are aware and can discuss any concerns with them.

Parents will not be fined or prosecuted under the Education Act should they choose not to send their child(ren) to school or for lateness.

Non-attenders in years R, 1 and 6 will receive well-being phone calls from the Deputy Head teacher and attendance officer throughout the phased return process

Class teachers in years N, 2,3,4 and 5 will call families on a regular basis for well-being checks and to offer assistance with home learning.