

# CLOCKHOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy

### Mission Statement

**Our School – A family and a home for everyone**

**Working and Learning together to be the best that we can be**

### Our Vision

We are not just a school, we are home!

We lay the foundations for each individual's future and for dreams to be fulfilled - whatever they may be.

No two bricks are the same but are accepted for their uniqueness and are placed in their own special way to meet their needs.

The cement bonds us together as a family to keep us strong, stable and safe.

We are all safe and happy under one roof, we are protected from the elements and prepared to weather every storm.

The key to success unlocks the door to future achievements unseen before.

The windows show us the reflections of our future self as ready, respectful and responsible adults.

Collaboratively, together our home is decorated with challenge and the rooms are furnished with fun.

All around, a variety of trees grow naturally from the seed of success, with nurture and care anything is possible.

So we are not just a school, we are a home that provides a champion for all as well as timeless experiences and skills for a brighter future.

And that is why we are called Clockhouse.

Ring the bell, we're always here!

### School Aims

- To enable all children, members of the school community and the wider community to contribute to school life.
- To promote high standards and provide opportunities for all to achieve their full potential.
- To encourage a sense of self-worth and confidence empowering children to fulfil a contributing role in society.
- To create a diverse and challenging learning environment in which children are cared for and feel safe.
- To provide leadership and management which focuses on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of all members of the school community.

### Our Rationale:

At Clockhouse Primary School we believe that regular attendance is extremely important. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage and benefit from the educational opportunities that are available to them.

### Aims

At Clockhouse Primary School we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance (and punctuality) through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Governing Body**

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **Responsibilities of the School:**

As a school we have a duty to ensure that:

- All children attend school regularly and that the attendance of all children is rigorously monitored.
- Parents are aware of their legal responsibility to send their children to school regularly.
- All children arrive on time.
- Parents are informed of their responsibilities to let the school know if their child is going to be absent from school for what ever reason.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families in conjunction with the Attendance Officer.

Currently, at Clockhouse Primary School, the Designated Senior Leader is the Headteacher.

The School Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Leadership Team and where appropriate Class Teachers.
- Working with the school's Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families in conjunction with the Designated Senior Leader / Headteacher

The School Attendance Officer can be contacted via telephone – 01708 745972.

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office (by 9.10am – morning register / 1.20pm – afternoon register)

School Office Staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

### **Responsibilities of Parents:**

Parents / Carers are expected to:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and is on time
- Phone the school on the first day of absence after 8.00 and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide a note explaining the absence on their child's return to school
- The note should be given to the class teacher who will send it to the school office
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Inform the school office and request authorisation for their child if they are expected to have a planned absence e.g. hospital visit etc. If required, by the school, parents must provide medical evidence to support this absence
- Inform the Head teacher of any intended absence due to religious holidays

### **Responsibilities of Pupils:**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and on time

### **Recording Attendance**

#### **Attendance Register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and again at the start of the afternoon session. The register taken will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm.

### **Unplanned Absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff. See Appendix 1 for First Day Calling Procedures.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **Planned Absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents / Carers need to inform the school office prior to the appointment by phone, Class Dojo or by visiting the office in person.

We do, however encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence (see below).

### **Lateness and Punctuality**

Lateness is disruptive to education and as such will attract action from the school. Doors to the classroom will be closed after 9.10am and parents will need to bring their children through the office entrance and enter them in the late book. Pupils arriving after 9.10am or 1.20pm will be deemed as late and will receive a late mark in the register. Persistent lateness will be investigated similarly to absence. Arrivals after 9.30am will be recorded as unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning session unless an authorised reason is provided.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Along with absence the school closely monitors the lateness and punctuality of children for patterns. Where the school has concerns, this will be discussed with the parents / carers. The school works closely with the Local Authority and on their own to implement regular 'Late Gates'.

### **Following Up Unexplained Absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Follow the First Day Calling Procedures (see Appendix 1 below)
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent / carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer

### **Reporting to Parents / Carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels and will provide summary of attendance at least three times a year.

### **Authorised / Unauthorised Absence**

**In order to ensure and monitor regular attendance by all pupils Clockhouse Primary School will:**

- Keep attendance registers, which are marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. These registers must show whether an absence is AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. The accurate marking, preservation and security of these registers are the responsibility of the Headteacher. These registers may be used as evidence in court where parents are being prosecuted for attendance offences
- Work with the Local Authority and the Attendance, Behaviour and Traveller Support Officer to endeavour to maximise attendance and to support families who are experiencing difficulties
- Respect an absence that occurs as a result of a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the family belong

- Reserve the right to decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason offered by the parent
- Inform the parents / carers of children joining the school of our attendance policy and procedures.
- Adopt a rigorous first day calling procedure (see Appendix 1)

### **Authorised / Unauthorised Absence:**

**Authorised absences** are those which the school agree are unavoidable. This may include illness, family bereavement, school visits, dates of religious observance, medical appointments and absence for which leave has been granted. Absences of 5 days or more will require medical evidence (e.g. copies of prescription, hospital letter, medication)

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school considers inappropriate or unreasonable. These might include absence due to unauthorised holidays, excessive lateness, shopping visits, day trips out due to birthdays etc, and staying at home because siblings or parents are unwell.

An absence will be unauthorised until an acceptable explanation is received. If an explanation is not received or accepted within a week of the absence then it will remain as unauthorised.

If a student is absent prior to or does not return after a school half term/or term the parent/carer will need to provide supporting evidence to cover the absence.

### **Approval for term-time absence**

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The Headteacher serves the right to judge what is deemed to be 'exceptional' and this will be on a case-by-case basis. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Clockhouse Primary School will consider each request for leave of absence carefully and individually to determine its authorisation, but leave should not be seen as an entitlement. Requests should be made by the parent/carer and forwarded to the Headteacher at least 28 days before the period of absence.

Once the request has been reviewed, the parents / carers will be sent a letter which will provide the parents / carers with the outcome of their request.

### **Involvement of the Local Authority and Attendance, Behaviour and Traveller Support Officer:**

Clockhouse Primary School are well supported in their on-going drive to improve attendance levels by the Local Authority and by the School's Attendance, Behaviour and Traveller Support Officer.

As part of its monitoring role and support the Local Authority:

- Disseminate good practice through Strategic Attendance Policy
- Investigate unauthorised absences through the Attendance, Behaviour and Traveller Support Team
- Initiate a 'location of children' investigation when a pupil is removed from the school's admissions register because he/she has failed to attend school within ten days of their agreed return date.

If attendance continues to fall or remains an unresolved issue the school will work with the Attendance, Behaviour and Traveller Support Officer to try and resolve the problem.

### **Persistent Absence:**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

### **Special Requests:**

The DfE and Local Authority have made it clear that we are no longer able to grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school acknowledge that in some instances request for leave of absence is unavoidable. These may include family bereavement or personal unavoidable circumstances. In this instance the Headteacher should be notified immediately. The school will consider each request individually and carefully.

If leave is taken without authorisation from the school this will result in the leave being an unauthorised absence and the child's name being referred to the Attendance, Behaviour and Traveller Support Officer who may instigate a fine.

### **Legal Sanctions**

Neglect of parental responsibility with regards to ensuring regular attendance and punctuality may result in the Education Authority taking legal proceedings and a penalty notice being issued.

The Local Authority in conjunction with the school can fine parents / carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Penalty notices will be issued on a case by case basis when national thresholds are reached. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term). A session is half a day.

A penalty notice can be issued to each parent or carer liable for the attendance offence. This means if a child is residing with a parent and is taken on unauthorised leave with another parent or carer both would be issued with a penalty notice fine regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, the following will apply. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Offence**

**£80 fine** – will be issued and would need to be paid within 21 days, if payment not received within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160, and must be paid within 7 days. Failure to pay the fine of £160 will result in prosecution in the magistrates court.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Offence within 3 years**

**£160 fine** – will be issued and would need to be paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the fine of £160 will result in prosecution in the magistrates court.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Offence within 3 years**

Where a family is identified to be fined on a 3<sup>rd</sup> occasion within a 3 year period, these cases will be referred straight to the magistrates' court for prosecution.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### **Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

At Clockhouse Primary School we value the importance of recognising good and exceptional attendance as well as attendance which has improved. The school uses a wide range of strategies to celebrate this, which are regularly reviewed to ensure their continued effectiveness.

### **Procedures to monitor absence will involve**

- The Headteacher making the decision as to whether an absence will be authorised or not and the appropriate category assigned.
- First-day calling (phoning) the family of every absent child to enquire the reason for absence each morning if a reason has not been received by the school office.
- All phone calls made being logged and used for monitoring purposes.
- Sending out an initial letter to the family of a child if attendance falls below 96%. Any response will be noted for future monitoring.
- Issuing a letter where attendance has not improved following the initial letter being sent but still remains below 93%. This letter will inform parents / carers that the child's attendance will be referred to the Attendance, Behaviour and Traveller Support Service if it falls below 90%.
- The school requesting medical evidence should a child be absent for 5 days or more in one period.
- Congratulatory letter is sent out to parents if attendance is over 98% on a termly basis.

See Appendix 2 for the school's Attendance Strategy and Absence Escalation Process.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **Analysing Attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **Using Data to Improve Attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

The Headteacher, Governors and staff of the school will monitor the Attendance Policy annually in collaboration with the Local Authority and Attendance, Behaviour and Traveller Support Service.

*This policy has been reviewed and no individual or group are disadvantaged by the policy or process therein.*

Date Reviewed: **Autumn 2025**

Reviewed Date: **Autumn 2026**

Signed: .....Chair of Governors Date: .....

Signed: .....Headteacher Date: .....



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

## Clockhouse Primary School Guidance - First Day Calling

1. Get registers in promptly
2. Listen to absence calls, read absence emails (or however messages come in)
3. Bring together registers, 'lates' register, absence calls, any other information you might have about the absence of a child – produce the list of children absent with no explanation
4. Consider a double check in school before you start calling, ensure information on registers is accurate
5. Start first day calling for children absent without explanation, call everyone on the contact list until you get an answer.  
Leave messages if there is a voicemail option. If you have text message systems use them – but follow up with phone calls.  
You might get an overseas ring tone – is the family abroad but they haven't told you?

**Once you make contact, stop this 'first day calling' process - Continue to manage the unauthorised absence, using your attendance processes.**

6. Call the contact list at least twice.
7. By this stage, if you have a good contact list (4 numbers recommended) you probably have a reply.
8. If no reply at all from anyone on the contact list for the child
  - Does the child have additional agency support, such as a social worker?
  - Do you have any in-school intelligence?
  - Does anyone in school know the family?

No explanation from a supportive family is very worrying – so don't just concentrate on children who you already know to be vulnerable.

9. Make a prompt home visit.
10. Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, it is essential to take action without delay. If there is an immediate concern that a child is at risk of significant harm, a referral to the Local Authority Children's Social Care MASH should be made. If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police should also be involved.

If there is no immediate concern for the child, a referral to your attendance team will be required. If there is no response after a further 24 hours of trying to make contact to allow for family emergencies, contact the Local Authority Children's Social Care MASH Team.

MASH (and police, as appropriate) will triage your request and may carry out a welfare call as a result.

Ensure your parents are aware of this process, it may have a positive effect on your attendance figures.

## Clockhouse Primary School Attendance Strategy and Absence Escalation Process



The Attendance Strategy and Absence Escalation Process below is designed to ensure all stakeholders understand and follow the guidelines to ensure that all children have a high attendance rate and to ensure the re-engagement of children who are missing a significant number of days of education.

