



## La Petite Ecole Française

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Directrice de l'école: Camie Steuer

Directrice Administrative: Sarah Silvestre

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

If a child is sick or will be late to school we require that parents inform us before 9am by either email, verbally by phone or by leaving a voicemail message with the school office. It is a legal requirement in the UK for all pupils to attend school from 5 years old onwards, so any absence (even under 5s) other than illness needs to be authorised in advance by the Head Teacher ([headteacher@lapetitecolefrancaise.com](mailto:headteacher@lapetitecolefrancaise.com)).

KCSIE 2023 states that pupil absence for a prolonged period of time could be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. The school needs to develop a whole school culture of high attendance. Accurate admission and attendance registers, regular analysis of attendance and absence data to identify pupils who need support. It is vital to have strong relationships with families and work together with the local authority.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. La Petite Ecole Française fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, and therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school (even those under 5 years of age) and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school and is also available on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and staff at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

#### Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and management in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

#### Through this Policy we aim to:

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- Get the best achievements from pupils by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness with parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

**We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:**

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils and staff on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

**Definitions**

**Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

**Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

**Procedures**

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, parents and pupils.

- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service of RBKC any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the Local Authority (RBKC) and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Deputy Head (or the Head Teacher) who is responsible for monitoring attendance.

## **Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### **Class teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Taking a class register every morning and recording the reason for any absences
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Deputy Head where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness, if age appropriate
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Authorising or not authorising absence requests
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

### **Deputy Head**

The Deputy Head is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- Emailing parents regarding attendance issues

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## Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence by 9am by email, over the phone or by voicemail.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## Registration

The school doors open at 8.45am until 9.00am. Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance in the class register. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.05 am. The Deputy Head visits each class in the morning at 9.05am to check if any pupils are missing. If a child is unexpectedly absent, the Deputy Head will contact the parents by 9.30am for an explanation.

**Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.**

## Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9.00am the only way to get into school is via the school office.

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive an email advising them of the school's concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

## ABSENCES

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence by 9am. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. Authorised absences are recorded in the class register. Unauthorised absences are recorded on the office computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. **The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.**

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will contact the parent requesting an explanation.

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## **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. The Deputy Head checks with all the teachers at 9.05am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

## **Illness**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

## **Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday**

With effect from September 2013 the Government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, staff and management to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via emails which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to EWS from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or Local Authority (LA) to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.