



Khalsa
VA Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Khalsa Primary School – Southall

Attendance Policy

Introduction

At Khalsa Primary School, we aim to achieve a high level of attendance. We also aim to continually raise awareness with parents, carers and pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. In order to achieve this, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted on as quickly as possible.

Aims

Khalsa Primary School aims to:

- Maintain excellent punctuality and attendance at high rate
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- To work together with Education Social Worker (ESW) to maintain good attendance, securing help for pupils with problems

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children's attendance at school as required by law (ref Section 7, 1996 Education Act). Please refer to Department of Education website for more information.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/7>

Principles

It is a legal responsibility of every parent / carer to ensure that their child attends school regularly and it is an offence to condone absence from school without just cause.

It is a major school aim that children at Khalsa Primary School should enjoy learning, experience success and develop their full potential. The aim of the attendance policy reflects this, recognising that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of our pupils.

Good attendance is one of the single best predictors of pupil attainment. Poor attendance at primary school is often an indicator of future difficulties and of the future risk of poor attainment, disaffection, behaviour problems and involvement in crime. We therefore place a high priority on developing positive attendance patterns for all pupils

Expectations

Khalsa Primary School expects that all our pupils will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day as stated in our Home School Agreement which parents are asked to sign when their child starts school.
- Carry out any work provided by Khalsa Primary School during an authorised leave period.

Khalsa Primary School expects that parents will:

- Endeavour to keep health and dental appointments out of school hours when possible.
- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school.
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child / children attend school.
- Parents should contact school, by 9:30 am on the first day of absence, whenever their child is unable to attend school, and send in a letter or email confirming dates of absence and the reason for absence when their child returns to school.
- Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence. The Head Teacher has the right to refuse authorised attendance in accordance with LA guidelines.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from Khalsa Primary School:

- To provide an effective, efficient yet supportive system for monitoring attendance
- To reach and maintain excellent levels of attendance
- Action on any attendance problem notified to the school.
- Referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate.
- To have a named leader who has the overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance

Key staff

Ms. P.K. Sehmi (Headteacher) – Overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. Identifying vulnerable groups and individuals through monthly data analysis

Mrs. K. Sungoo (Attendance Officer) – Responsibility for daily attendance procedures, including registers and communication with parents.

Mrs. J. Pooni – Communication with LA and parents for unauthorised and / or persistent absences

Registration

Pupils are expected to be in school on time for registration for both morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are marked at 8.45 am and either 12.30 or 1.15pm throughout the school (depending on lunchtimes).

Children who arrive on or after 8.45 am must report to the school office accompanied by an adult to sign the late book, a late mark will be recorded in the register.

If a child is absent from school the parent / carer should telephone or email by 9:30 am explaining the reason for the absence. Absence without an explanation will be followed up by the Attendance Officer.

If a child is absent and no call has been by 9:30 am, the Attendance Officer will ring the contact number or text to enquire about the child's absence.

It is a legal requirement that all absences be authorised. Unexplained absences are unauthorised as we cannot determine the reason for absence as a parent could be considered to be working contrary to the law and school policy.

Punctuality

- Parents need to ensure that children arrive at school no later than 8.35am so that they are in the classroom ready for registration at 8.40 am
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are imperative
- Children arriving late can be disruptive to the whole class and can be embarrassing. We take view there are no late children, only late parents
- The school entrance will be locked at 8.45 am
- Arrival after 8.45 am will be recorded in the late book in the school office
- If a child is late on three or more than 3 occasions in 1 term than a letter will be sent to parents. If the lateness persists then a meeting would be held for the parents to meet the Headteacher to discuss the situation and to find a way forward
- At the end of the day, it is the parents' responsibility to pick their child up on time at 3.20 pm
- Persistent lateness by parents to collect children on time will be referred to the Local Authority

Monitoring Attendance

As a school, we will monitor the attendance and punctuality of individuals and key groups. Data will be analysed on a monthly basis to identify any issues to be addressed.

Persistent absence

Persistent absence will be taken up by the Headteacher who will contact parents in order to see if there is a specific difficulty with which the school may be able to help. If parents are having difficulties in getting a child to school it is helpful for the school know about it sooner rather than later so that we may be able to assist where appropriate.

Where a child has an appointment during a school day their child should come to school for the remainder of the day leaving only for the time of the appointment. Advance notification is required to go off site during the day.

Medical/Dental appointments

All appointments should be made out of school hours. However, if an appointment has been arranged the school needs to know in advance. Evidence such as an appointment card, text or letter needs to be provided to the school office.

Absence – Information for all parents

Pupils are expected to attend school for the full academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

There are two types of absences:

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example: if a child is ill. Due to illness the child should not come to school if they have the symptoms of diarrhoea, vomiting and fever (above 38c).

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absence”. Examples of unauthorised absence are: Waiting on a delivery, going shopping, attending a wedding, sleeping in after a late night etc.

Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory the absence is unauthorised. Where there is no improvement in attendance a referral is made to borough’s attendance team for further action.

Holiday Absence

Parents are not expected to apply for holidays for their children during school term time. They are expected to take holidays during school breaks. It is a common misconception that parents have the right to take their children on holiday for 10 days in the school year.

In line with recommendations, we have a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave except in outstanding cases when it will be in the personal gift of the Headteacher unless delegated by the Headteacher to another person e.g. Deputy Headteacher. Parents will be asked to provide evidence of their reasons for the request. Exceptional leave does not include weddings and social functions. Please note that where there are exceptional documented circumstances, the Headteacher can authorise the leave but does not have to do so. Whether or not to authorise leave is solely at the discretion of the Headteacher. If the parent decides to go abroad without the permission from the Headteacher from the fifth day of leave a fine can be issued from the Local Authority.

The fine for unauthorised leave in term time is £120 but if paid in 21 days is reduced to £60. This is administered by the local authority, in the case of Khalsa Primary School, the London Borough of Ealing. If the fine is defaulted, the parents can be prosecuted at the magistrates court for the unauthorised absences where fines are significantly increased.

A pupil's absence during term times can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they also are less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which must be avoided.

If leave of absence is taken without consultation and authorisation of the Head teacher the absence by definition is unauthorised. This may result in the pupils being removed from the school and referred to the Borough's Attendance Team.

Khalsa Primary School will respond to non-attendance in the following ways:

Daily absence procedures

Day 1: Contacting parents by telephone on the first day of absence if no reason has been received.

Day 2: If there is no response to the first contact, a text message and email will be sent to parents requesting an explanation. The school will also seek information from other sources, such as friends or other family members.

Day 3: If there is still no reply, a letter will be posted requesting an explanation. Repeat telephone calls will be made to all contact numbers held for the child. The school office will make other 'reasonable enquiries' in line with the school's child protection/safeguarding procedures. These include:

- A home visit (to be authorised by the headteacher)
- Telephoning the schools of other siblings (if known)

For full details of the reasonable enquiries that will be made following these steps, please see the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

If a pupil is identified as vulnerable, or there are safeguarding concerns, the headteacher can authorise an escalation of the above steps. In the case of a Looked After Child, or a child on a Child in Need or Child Protection plan, social services will be contacted on day 1.

Persistent absence concerns

The attendance of individual pupils is monitored closely and we have a target of 96% attendance for all pupils. The below steps will be followed in order to try to prevent persistent absence:

1. When a pupil's absence falls below **96%**, a letter will be sent to parents advising them that their child's attendance is concerning and needs to improve.
2. When attendance levels fall to **90%** or below, parents will receive a warning letter and be invited to a meeting with a member of the school's attendance team. During this meeting, a target will be set for improving the child's attendance. Parents will be informed that if attendance does not improve, there will be a referral to the Borough's attendance team.
3. If, after four weeks, the child's attendance does not improve, parents will be invited to meet with the headteacher to explain the ongoing absence issues and be given a final warning and target for improvement.
4. If, after four weeks, there has been no improvement, a referral will be made to the borough's attendance team.

Taking a term-time holiday will automatically result in a fixed-penalty notice being issued and parents will be invited to meet with the headteacher regarding attendance (see section on Unauthorised Absence).

Leavers

If a child is leaving, parents will be asked to complete a simple questionnaire to help us which school their child will be transferring to, the reason for the transfer together with any other comments that the parent wishes to record.

Involvement of the Borough's Attendance Team

The Borough's Attendance Team plays a major role in attendance and the information given is by the guidelines of the Local Authority. All school concerns on attendance and punctuality are referred to Attendance Team not simply due to relatively low attendance figures but if there are also patterns. Taking unauthorised holidays during term-time, would trigger a referral to be made to the Attendance Team and a fine to be issued. Court action may also be taken, in the case of persistence absence.

Promoting Good Attendance – a whole-school culture

We maintain a whole-school culture, which promotes the importance of good attendance and punctuality. We believe that this positive, supportive culture is vital to maintaining high levels of attendance and good links between school and home. To do this, we:

- Ensure that parents are aware of the expectations for attendance and punctuality when they enroll their child
- Have clear, rigorous systems in place for checking daily attendance and following up on absences
- Encourage parents to share any concerns with us which may have an impact on their child's attendance
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance by classes and individuals, by presenting certificates and badges and sharing this information in the school newsletter.
- Have a daily morning club, so that parents have more flexibility to drop their child off before the start of the school day.
- Have a wide range of after-school clubs, so that children can be collected at 4.30pm on those evenings.