
Policy on Attendance and Punctuality

September 2024

Pardes House Primary
School

Headteacher: Rabbi J Sager

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Rationale

It is important that all parents and children know that the school values good attendance and punctuality. Regular school attendance and good timekeeping ensure that children have full access to their National Curriculum/Kodesh studies and all areas of school life. The expectation of this school is that school attendance apply equally to both statutory school days as well as Cheder days and Sundays.

Parents should also understand that regular, daily school attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils, including their safeguarding and their welfare.

In Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. (Working together to improve school attendance, DfE 2024).

Purposes of this policy

- To improve attendance and punctuality;
- To help prevent disruption to the learning environment caused by lateness and absences;
- Children should acquire good habits of punctuality which will be needed throughout their school life and in the adult world of work;
- To meet legal requirements;
- To make parents aware of their legal obligations and requirements;
- To ensure children do not regularly miss important areas of the curriculum.

Statutory Framework and Implementation:

- The Education Act 1944 states that 'all pupils should attend school regularly and punctually'.
- Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states that 'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parents are guilty of an offence' (*Appendix 1*).
- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A Letter or telephone message from a parent does not, in itself, authorise an absence. We ask parents to make application in writing on a special leave of absence form if they wish to take their child out of school for any purpose.
- If the Headteacher (statutory school days) or Menahel (Sunday and Cheder days) is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered, the absence is authorised. Permission is never given at the time of public examinations. It is not customary to give time out during term for holidays although we are aware that in a school like ours, there are numerous family celebrations for the boys to attend, possibly during school time. Term dates for the following academic year are published well in advance.

- Leave of absence is not an automatic right and is solely at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents are advised to check with the school and Chair of Governors if exceptional circumstances force this request. (*Please see Pupil Absence Policy for further information*)

General guidelines

- At the beginning of the academic year, a letter will be sent home reminding parents of the start and finish times of the school day and their legal obligations to ensure children attend regularly (i.e. daily) and punctually.
- Parents will be informed about other relevant information i.e. holiday dates, INSET dates, regulations regarding holidays in term time, authorised/unauthorised absence, the necessity to inform the school of absences and to request specific absences.
- Reasons for absence can be explained in a variety of ways, i.e. note, telephone call, in person.
- The school operates a 'First Day Response' system where parents will be contacted on the morning of an absence to ascertain the reason for this.
- The Headteacher should be informed if a class teacher is concerned about absences, both authorised and unauthorised, or regular late arrivals.

Specific responsibilities

Headteacher/Office/SBM:

- Will ensure that the registers are kept accurately and that absence figures are submitted as required.
- Will clarify authorised or unauthorised absences with the parents or carers, class teacher and pupils.
- Will send specific letters to parents and carers if a pupil's absence gives cause for concern.
- Will ensure that the registers must be held in school for 3 years.

Class teacher / rebbe:

- Will complete registers in good time: morning and afternoon.
- Will monitor absences and follow them up after two days
- Will keep absence letters for the whole academic year that the child is in that class.

Parents or Carers:

- Will notify the school as soon as possible if a child is absent through sickness or unavoidable cause.
- Will try and avoid making dentist or medical appointments for their child during the school day.
- Will apply for permission in advance (at least a week) and before booking if a child has to be away during term time for a family celebration.

Pupils:

- Will be made aware of the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school.
- Will talk to staff if there is anything which is making them unhappy at school and could reduce their willingness to attend.

Governors:

- Will look into cases where attendance is poor or where a parent is insistent that a length of time is given which is against school policy.

Punctuality

- Registers close at 8.55am and are returned to the school office.
- Any child arriving at school from more than half an hour after registration closes will be marked with an unauthorised late. Any pupil that has 10 unauthorised lates within a 10-week period, which can span over 2 terms, may be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice from the London borough of Barnet, further to consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer. Such fines start at £80, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days. From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period. Any second notice will automatically be charged at £160.
- Any child arriving at school after 9.25am is determined to be absent from school without permission. This will be addressed with the parents.

Leave of absence

- We are a school full of simcha (family celebration). We are also a school where a number of our families have at least one parent born in another country. We are aware that there will be occasions where parents wish to take their children out of school for a Simcha. The school does its best to acquiesce to such requests but parents are asked to consider the impact on children missing their learning. This is especially involving a simcha taking place abroad or out of town.
Parents should also be aware that there is a limit to how many absence for Simchas can be authorised so parents are asked to be judicious in this regard.
- If parents wish their child to miss school for a simcha, they are expected to complete an online 'Pupil Absence Request Form', in advance of the date required. Without this, the absence is recorded as unauthorised, even if it would have been authorised if the form had been completed beforehand.
- It is school policy for teachers and Rebbe's not to prepare and send work with a child that is absent due to a family simcha.
- Further information regarding leaves of absence can be found in the school's 'Pupil Absence Policy'.
- Any pupil with 10 unauthorised absence sessions (5 days), which can span over 2 terms within a 10-week period, may be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice from the London borough of Barnet, further to consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer. Such fines start at £80, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days. From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period. Any second notice will automatically be charged at £160.

Following up with parents

- In the event of persistent lateness for school and/or persistent absence, the Headteacher will arrange to meet with the parents.
- This issue will also be brought to the attention of the school's Child Protection Team, as a matter of parental neglect.

- A member of the school's Child Protection Team will speak with the class teacher and Rebbe to ascertain any educational and behavioural impact seen with the child, due to these issues.
- In the event that the issue persists, the Headteacher will arrange a further meeting with parents, but also with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer present.
- If lateness and absence issues remain unresolved, the matter can be brought to the attention of the courts and may include prosecution.

Further Guidance

- Further guidance regarding school attendance can be found at:
<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2024/07/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance-19th-Aug-version.pdf>
- Further links regarding attendance can be found in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Signed:

Date: September 2024

Review: September 2026

APPENDIX 1

LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

MARKING OF ATTENDANCE REGISTERS

The pupil's Registration Regulations 1956 provide that there must be an attendance register for each form or class. It must be marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session at which secular instruction is given.

The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 state that schools must distinguish in the registers between authorised and unauthorised absences of pupils of compulsory school age.

Attendance Codes

Below is the list of available DfE attendance codes when recording attendance. The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence.

School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience

Absent Codes

Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)

J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)