Plaistow & Kirdford Primary School
Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body
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1. Aims

At Plaistow and Kirdford Primary School our overall attendance is good. This is achieved through our inclusive approach and ethos and through close work with our families who are supportive in ensuring that children attend regularly and arrive punctually. We recognise that every day in school is vital and any time away from school results in lost learning and opportunities. Our school team is committed to ensuring that every child has the support they need in order to attend school.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance.

This policy outlines the obligations and expectations for school and families to support all children attending school as well as procedures and routines that should be followed.

2. 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body 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

This policy and attendance will be monitored by the Teaching and Learning Committee. The Full Governing Body will receive regular updates regarding attendance.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Lead on attendance across the school
- 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

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader will work closely with the headteacher to

- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- WIth the headteacher and class teachers devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- With the headteacher, provide regular reports to governors, teachers and leaders
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families that makes it as simple and as easy as possible for excellent attendance.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Susanne Tappenden and can be contacted via 01403 871 275 or office@plaistowkirdford.com

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes as directed, and submitting this information to the school office via the schools information management system: bromcom.

Class teachers are responsible for raising concerns they may have relating to attendance or change in pattern to attendance either with the DSL for attendance or the Head teacher.

3.5 The Office Team

The school's office team will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Alert the DSL for Attendance and Headteacher to any absence or change in attendance that raises a concern.
- Contact parents/carers when a child is absent and school has not been notified as to the reasons for absence.

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Support the school's view that every day in school is important and that school is only missed on rare occasions.
- Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Know that every day in school "counts", provides opportunities for important learning, making friends and playing and that they should only miss school on rare occasions.

- Confident in talking with a member of the staff team if they are finding it difficult to be in school.
- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 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 the first session of each school day and again at the start of the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- 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 9.00am on each school day. Children arriving after 9.05am will be recorded as having arrived late.

The register for the first session will be taken between 9.00am and 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.30. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm.

4.2 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 team (see also section 7).

Absence should be reported by contacting the school via telephone: 01403 871 275

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, a member of the senior leadership team will contact the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as an appointment letter, 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.

If a child has an attendance level of below 90% a member of the senior leadership team will contact parents/carers to see how the school can support in order to facilitate a quick return to school.

4.3 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 should request a planned absence via the school website: https://www.plaistowandkirdford.org/school-absence-form

However, we 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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

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

Registers will be taken at 9.05am. Children arriving after 9.05am will be marked as late. For children arriving after 9.30am this will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

At primary school, being late is not usually the fault of the child and can be unsettling and distressing for the child concerned. Children are expected to arrive in school and on time. When a child is late, this should be followed up, initially by the class teacher with the parents/carers. If a pattern of lateness begins to emerge then a meeting with the parents/carers should be arranged by one of the senior leadership team.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may seek further advice from The Integrated Front Door for safeguarding or the police.
- Confirm 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 making a referral to the Integrated Front Door for additional support with attendance.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. A letter regarding attendance will be sent at the end of Autumn and Spring term. Attendance information will be included in children's annual reports in the summer term.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 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'. These exceptional circumstances would be judged on a case by case basis by the headteacher through discussion with the family. 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 school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated at the earliest possible time. If not enough time is given to discuss the absence with the family it may be recorded as unauthorised. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Visits to other schools to which children might be moving
- Music examinations
- Sporting events

This list is not exhaustive and all applications for authorised leave are considered individually.

5.2 Legal sanctions

At Plaistow and Kirdford we work with the local authority to ensure that all children attend school regularly. In some instances where a child accrues 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence (a session is either a morning or afternoon) within a ten week period the local authority may impose a fixed penalty notice. The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Fixed notice penalties are served to parent or parents/carers responsible for ensuring that their child attends school. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Plaistow and Kirdford we recognise that every child has their own story and work to support them individually where we notice a decline in their attendance. We work closely with parents and carers to identify any potential causes or reasons as to why their child's attendance is impacted and put into place strategies that enable the child to feel confident and secure in attending school.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Inclusion Leader and Headteacher meet once a month to review every child whose attendance is either below 90% or showing a downward trend towards 90%. For each child that is below 90% a plan of action is discussed that will support in improving that child's attendance. This could be direct 1 to 1 work, deployment of Learning Mentor/ELSA support, supporting parents or consulting with external agencies for advice and additional support.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data monthly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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.

Explain any other procedures your school has for targeting unauthorised absence. For example – meetings, letters, closer monitoring.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by The Inclusion Leader and Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- RHSE Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day