



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

**Sinai Jewish Primary School**

March 2017

## Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For your children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The DfE set high expectations for attendance for primary age pupils.

Sinai's policies reflect our Jewish ethos and our commitment to every child. The ethos of Sinai places a high value on providing a full and effective educational experience for all pupils.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### The Law Relating To Attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

### Why Regular Attendance is so Important

#### ➤ Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

#### ➤ Safeguarding:

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

Attendance

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety

Access to the Curriculum

Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

### The Law Relating To Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

## **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### **Our Aim:**

The aims and objectives of the school's policy on attendance and punctuality are to enable maximum pupil attendance by encouraging parents to encourage their children to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by regular and punctual attendance at school.

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Sinai school expects primary age pupils to attend school for a minimum of 97% of the school year.

### **Specific Aims:**

- To encourage and assist all children to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To achieve and maintain 0% unauthorised absences.
- To reflect good practice in all matters concerning attendance and punctuality and foster key skills for later life.
- To fulfil the Government requirements regarding attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life.

The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and staff will liaise with home and other agencies about a pupil's attendance, when this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such.

Reports of attendance are issued to all parents/guardians as part of the annual report.

### **Principles:**

- A pupil should come to school every day and be on time;
- A pupil should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable";
- Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/guardians), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing;
- Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes;
- Unauthorised absences are those that Sinai does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not "unavoidable". Unauthorised absences include:
  - going shopping;
  - birthdays;
  - absences which have never been properly explained;

- pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- holidays taken during term time - the reason of the reduced cost of term-time holidays is outweighed by the detrimental cost to a pupil's education when missing school;
- Spending time with family.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Parents/guardians are advised of the importance of their children attending school and are encouraged to take their holiday during the break periods. The DfE has specified that parents/guardians should not normally take children on holiday during term-time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time. **The school does not authorise absence for holidays.**

Requests for absence during Year 6 will not be approved and is discouraged during Year 2.

Permission for absence may be granted in an emergency (eg bereavement) or for medical appointments, which are unavoidably in school time, provided a parent/guardian has made a request to the Headteacher by completing the Absence Request Form found on the School's website and sent it to School at least one day in advance of any medical appointment (unless made as an emergency appointment).

Please note that absence on the last day of term/early Friday closing counts as a full day if the pupil is not present for the taking of the register both in the morning and after lunch.

Should an absence occur when it has not been authorised, or no request has been made, this will be recorded as unauthorised. Any unauthorised leave may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued, or court proceedings to prosecute parents/guardians.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/guardians/ fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. It is the school's obligation to inform the Local Authority and the DfE of any child's attendance which falls with the PA parameters.

### **Absence Procedures**

#### **Contacting the School About Unanticipated Absences:**

Parents/guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If a pupil is prevented from attending, the school should be informed of the reason by 9.00am on the first day of absence. A pupil's explanation is not acceptable. The explanation of absence can be given through the following methods:

- completing and sending to the School the Absence Request Form found on the School's website
- telephone call to the School and leave a message on the automated system;

- verbally to the School Office;
- email to [absences@sinai.brent.sch.uk](mailto:absences@sinai.brent.sch.uk)
- in writing

giving details of your child's name, registration group and reason for absence. If your child is absent on grounds of illness, please provide details of the illness.

A pupil's absence will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

### **Contacting the School About Anticipated Absences:**

Parents/guardians should complete and send to the School the Absence Request Form found on the School's website. Permission for absence during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Headteacher after taking into consideration the nature of the request received.

Any absences where permission has not been sought in advance will automatically be recorded as an unauthorised absence, even if it is an absence that would normally be approved.

Requests for absence due to a simcha or for holiday during term time should be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested first day of absence.

Parents/guardians should not book flights or hotels until permission for the absence has been granted by the Headteacher.

### **Absence Through Long Term Illness or Injury**

Where pupils are absent from school for extended periods of time as a result of illness or injury, arrangements will be made for pupils to receive work. The amount of work and type of work will be dependent upon the age of the pupil. It will also be dependent on the pupil's illness. Each pupil's individual needs will be discussed with the parents/guardians and/or medical personnel, etc as appropriate.

The work will be set by the class teacher or in the case of hospitalisation by the hospital education service. The school will cooperate in providing necessary information to the hospital service.

Once a pupil has been absent from school for three school weeks and is at home, the School will work with the local education authority to try to ensure that the pupil has some home schooling.

### **Poor Attendance**

Attendance, including lateness, issues will be discussed at Parents Evenings with parents/guardians, if the School deem it to be unsatisfactory and a cause for concern.

The School's Attendance Officer, together with the Headteacher and other members of the Senior Leadership Team, regularly monitors attendance and will look at pupil records to identify where attendance is 90% and below.

If a child's attendance drops below the school target then the following action will be taken –

- If attendance drops below the school target of 97% parents will receive a letter indicating that this is the case and that attendance needs to improve.

- If attendance drops below 92% then parents will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher/Attendance Officer to discuss the reason for this and any necessary action will be agreed.
- If attendance drops below 90% then this will be classed as persistent absence. Parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and regular monthly meetings will continue until attendance improves.

If there is no improvement after the second monthly meeting, Local Authority guidance will be followed and a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

Teachers will also alert the Headteacher if the school identifies patterns of behaviour in relation to attendance and punctuality which may not bring their attendance below 90%, but is still a cause for concern.

The Headteacher will make a written referral to the Education Welfare Service if after meeting with the parents/guardians there still is no improvement in attendance and no satisfactory explanation. This may lead to the parents/guardians receiving a Formal Warning, Education Penalty Notice or being prosecuted in court.

### **Good Attendance**

Towards the beginning of the Spring and Summer term, an e-card is sent to the parents/guardians of all pupils who have 100% attendance, with no lateness, for the preceding term. For the Summer term, this is sent out at the end of that term.

For those pupils who have 100% attendance, with no lateness, for the entire school year, they will be commended during an assembly and a given a certificate.

### **Lateness**

Like absence, a pupil who is late for school will lose an opportunity to learn. Sinai endeavours to provide every pupil with a full and effective educational experience. This requires the assistance of parents/guardians and the pupils themselves in ensuring that the pupil attends punctually, and is ready to start the school day.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness**

School staff are on duty in the playgrounds from 8.00am.

The school day starts at 8.45am with soft entry beginning at 8.40am. We expect your child to be in the playground ready to come in at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.15am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach the school at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

All pupils who are late must report to the School Office where a note will be made of their name and time of arrival.

It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child may arrive late for a period of time because of transport difficulties or because of prolonged illness. The school would adopt a flexible approach in these instances and work with the child and parents/guardians to help in any way possible.

Persistent lateness is defined by the school as five or more days in a term. Unexplained, or unsatisfactory, persistent lateness will result in a letter being sent to the parents/guardians, reminding them of their responsibilities, and inviting them to discuss any issues with the school. Should the issue remain unresolved, and continue to be persistent, contact will be made by the School and the matter may be referred to the Education Welfare Service and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.



# Sinai Jewish Primary School

Getting your child **to school and on time** really matters. Did you know...

If your child's attendance during the school year is...	Your child would have lost approximately...	Or they would have missed approximately...	If your child's attendance during the school year is...	Your child would have lost approximately...	Or they would have missed approximately
95%	9 days	50 lessons	5 minutes	3.5 days from school	20 lessons
90%	19 days	100 lessons	10 minutes	7 days from school	41 lessons
85%	29 days	150 lessons	15 minutes	10 days from school	55 lessons
80%	38 days	200 lessons	20 minutes	14.5 days from school	82 lessons
75%	48 days	250 lessons	30 minutes	22 days from school	123 lessons
70%	57 days	300 lessons			
65%	67 days	350 lessons			

You should not take your child on holiday during term time. Please encourage attendance and punctuality to maintain school attendance.

**Remember Absence = Lost Opportunity**

Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has dropped below the school target of 97% and is currently \_\_\_\_\_. I am sure you are aware how important it is that all children maintain a good attendance in order for them to achieve their full potential in all areas of their learning and therefore ask for your support to ensure their attendance improves.

What does your child's percentage attendance mean?

Below is guidance as to how absence impacts upon attendance each term and over the year.

Attendance Percentage	Day missed over an average school term (approximately)	Days missed over a school year (approximately)
100%	0	0
95%	3 ½	10
90%	6 ½	20
85%	10	30

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

(Name)  
**Assistant Headteacher**

(Name)  
**Attendance Officer**

Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has dropped below the school target of 92% and is currently \_\_\_\_\_ which is of concern. I am sure that you are aware that attendance below 90% is now classed as persistent absence and may result in involvement from the Education Welfare Officer.

In order to ensure that we work together to improve your child's attendance I would like you to attend a meeting with me at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. At this meeting we will be able to look in detail at your child's attendance pattern and agree on a way forward to ensure that we see this figure improve.

If you are unable to attend the meeting stated above please contact the office to arrange a more suitable date and time. I am happy to accommodate work commitments and can meet outside of the school day if requested.

Yours sincerely

(Name)  
**Assistant Headteacher**

(Name)  
**Attendance Officer**

Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has dropped below 90% and is now classed as persistent absence. Their current attendance figure is \_\_\_\_\_.

Department for Education guidelines are very clear as to the process that needs to be adhered to when attendance falls below this figure. I would therefore like you to attend a meeting with me at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. At this meeting we will be able to look in detail at your child's attendance pattern and I will share with you detailed guidance as to what this now means for you and your child.

If you are unable to attend the meeting stated above please contact the office to arrange a more suitable date and time. I am happy to accommodate work commitments and can meet outside of the school day if requested.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

**Assistant Headteacher**

(Name)

**Attendance Officer**