



BERRYMEDE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Osborne Road, Acton, London W3 8SJ

Phone: 020 8993 9053 Fax: 020 8896 0472

E Mail: admin@berrymede-jun.ealing.sch.uk

Attendance Policy

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'Be Happy, Be Healthy, Study Hard'



BERRYMEDe JUNIOR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



General Statement

At Berrymede Junior School we aim to ensure the achievement of high levels of attendance and punctuality by all pupils, which will enable pupils to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

Statutory Framework

Under section 199 of the 1993 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a pupil.

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. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

Rights and Responsibilities

Our Parent Support Advisor, Iman Mahmoud, monitors pupil attendance on a daily basis. However, maintaining and improving attendance levels at Berrymede Junior School is the responsibility of the whole school community, including pupils, parents and staff.

PUPILS

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons punctually and regularly. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support from their class teacher and from the Head Teacher and welfare staff.

PARENTS

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually and properly dressed and equipped. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible, by telephone or preferably in writing. A pupil's absence from school must be considered unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parents. Parents will be promptly informed of any concerns, which may arise over a child's attendance. A summary of the child's attendance record will be attached to his/her annual report at the end of the summer term.

Parents are requested, if at all possible, to avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. Parents whose first language is not English or who may have difficulty with written language will be offered appropriate support from school in the matter of communication.

SCHOOL

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff [not just teaching staff]. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absences, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Registers will be called as promptly as possible after 8.50am and again at 12:45. Pupil attendance and absence is recorded directly on to our Sims database.

Registers will close at 9.15am and 1.00pm respectively and pupils arriving after this time will be marked 'absent'. If pupils arrive after this time they should report to the school office; the PSA will subsequently amend the entry on the register. If a pupil is persistently late, the class teacher will discuss this with the parents to see if a solution can be found. If lateness persists, the Head Teacher will contact the parents to discuss the matter.

Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in school after the registers have closed and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the pupil has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

The PSA will inspect registers on a daily basis and will discuss any concerns with the Educational Welfare Officer during her monthly visits.

AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Other than illness or unavoidable medical appointments, pupil absence can only be agreed by the Head Teacher. This must be preceded by a formal application.

At Berrymede Junior we shall decide upon how an absence is to be recorded according to 'School Attendance Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence [DfE 1994]'. This states that:

Absence may be authorised if:

- the pupil was ill or 'prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil or pupil's parent belongs
- If there is no transport for the child to attend school e.g. industrial action, heavy snow fall, inclement weather
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending an open day at a secondary school or for a place at another school.
- the pupil is involved in exceptional circumstances

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings. [The guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances: it is in any case inadvisable for children of primary school age to be left in such a position].
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** special reasons [e.g. a birthday]
- the pupil is on a family holiday without permission

HOLIDAYS

Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time. Indeed parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday. If unauthorised absence is taken for holiday or any other reason, this will be reported to the local authority and you could be liable to a fine for taking your child out of school during term time.

PROCEDURES FOR FOLLOWING UP ABSENCES/LATENESS

The school has a policy of first day response to absence for targeted children where attendance is a concern. If no message has been received from a parent about an absent child, then the school will do everything possible to contact the home during the day to find out the reason for absence.

If a pupil is persistently [or intermittently] absent, the Head Teacher will write to the parents and set up a meeting at school to discuss the situation.

If a pupil is persistently absent [or late without explanation] and the school's efforts to effect an explanation have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer during her consultation visit.

Notes from parents will be kept in the child's file in the school office. All telephone messages regarding absence or lateness are to be recorded in the telephone messages book in the school office.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Berrymede Junior School seeks to offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and happy. We believe the school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late and that follow up action will be taken.

A broad balanced curriculum will be offered to all pupils, which is varied and flexible enough to meet the needs of all pupils, with learning tasks matched to pupil's needs.

Attendance data will be collected regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy and practice.

Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvements, in discussion with parents. Such targets will be monitored and reviewed by the Head Teacher, outreach workers and RWO.

Parents will be reminded regularly [via newsletters, the school brochure, parents evening, annual report to parents etc] the importance of good attendance.

Pupils who are absent for any length of time will [when appropriate] have work sent home for them, or set in advance, so that they should not fall behind or get out of the habit of good work habits.

The Head Teacher will make a termly report to the Governing Body on issues relating to attendance.

When appropriate, the school will liaise with other agencies [eg Education Welfare Service, School Psychological Service, Social Services, Child and Family Guidance etc]. When this may serve to support and assists pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties