



## **Policy for Attendance Columbia Primary School**

### **Responsibilities**

The member of the leadership team responsible for attendance is Julie Fountain who is the Assistant Head responsible for Inclusion and Safeguarding. She works with the Headteacher, the learning mentors, the operations team and the Local Authority Attendance and Welfare Advisor to promote good attendance.

### **Overall Aims**

- to make clear the expectation of regular attendance and punctuality;
- to raise levels of attendance and punctuality;
- to encourage regular attendance and punctuality by promoting a positive attitude to school;
- to develop links with parents and carers in order to foster a joint concern about their child's attendance and punctuality.

### **Key Principles**

Pupils should attend school, on time, every school day unless they are ill. Regular attendance and punctuality are extremely important. Pupils need to attend regularly and arrive on time if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular attendance and punctuality improves a pupil's chances of achievement and success at school and in life.

### **We believe children's attendance is encouraged when:**

- the school provides an environment in which pupils feel secure, stimulated and successful;
- procedures are in place to monitor attendance and punctuality;
- attendance and non-attendance have explicit consequences;
- parents / carers and the school work in partnership.

### **Key Principle**

**We believe children's attendance is encouraged when the school provides an environment in which pupils feel secure, stimulated and successful. This happens when:**

- teaching staff work together in order to plan for and deliver a stimulating and relevant curriculum in line with the schools teaching and learning policy;
- procedures that build a safe and secure atmosphere, which allows for diversity and in which pupils are protected, are embedded in systemic practice and daily routines;
- systems are in place to ensure that the environment is clean, pleasant and welcoming;
- a fair and effective behaviour policy, which deals with bullying or insulting behaviour of any kind, is in place;
- good behaviour and achievement, both academic and non-academic, are praised and celebrated on an individual and whole school level.

### **Key Principle**

**We believe children's attendance is encouraged when procedures are in place to monitor attendance and punctuality.**

- The school has a computerised registration system linked to the office management system (RMIntegris). The office staff check and process attendance at the end of each week. Teachers fill in the registers online every morning and afternoon and save the information to the management information system. The absence codes are filled in daily by office staff or learning mentors when reasons for absence are known (see below).
- The staff also keep a record of the pupils who are absent on a fire register which is kept in the office.
- The learning mentors check registration daily and telephone the homes of children from nursery to Year 6 who are absent from school without a reason. They meet children who are late for school, ask them why they are late and amend the registers. Children who are more than 10 minutes late should always go to the office to get their attendance marked in the register system.
- Teachers continually monitor attendance and punctuality and regularly remind children of its importance. Concerns about attendance or punctuality are raised with the senior leadership team (SLT).
- Learning mentors meet regularly with the Attendance and Welfare Advisor. The Attendance and Welfare Advisor is allocated to Columbia through a service level agreement between Columbia School and Tower Hamlets Children's Services. They monitor patterns of absence and also investigate unauthorised absence where the reasons given are unsatisfactory. S/he makes phone calls, sends letters and makes home visits. The Attendance and Welfare Advisor follows a code of conduct and practice that is agreed with the Local Authority.
- Children with persistent absence (attendance of 90% or below) are tracked by the school and local authority. Steps are taken by the school (see key principle 4) to support parents to increase their child's attendance.

### **Key Principle**

**We believe children's attendance is encouraged when attendance and non-attendance have explicit consequences.**

- Each week the class on the middle floor and the class on the top floor with the best attendance are presented with an 'Attendance Cup' in a whole school assembly.
- Children who have had good attendance (attendance at or above 96%) They take this certificate home to share with their parents. Also, the class with the best attendance figures gets a special certificate at the end of term.
- Standard procedures are followed when a child is absent from school:
  - o Teachers complete the online register in class. They indicate which children are present and leave those children who are absent as not selected.
  - o If parents/carers have notified the school, office staff or learning mentors record the reason for absence in the register system.
  - o Children who are up to 15 minutes late will be recorded in the late book by the learning mentors and added to the register by the office staff. Children who arrive after that point will be added to the register by the office staff when they arrive.
  - o If the parents have not already contacted the school, Learning Mentors or office staff seek an explanation for the absence as soon as possible. Learning Mentors will phone the home that day.
  - o Any unexplained absence will be reported to the Headteacher that day.
  - o If a satisfactory explanation is given, the absence is recorded as authorised and the correct absence code recorded.
  - o If a satisfactory explanation is not given the absence is left as unauthorised.
  - o If there are concerns about absences the teacher alerts the Assistant Head responsible for Inclusion and Safeguarding or the Headteacher. The Headteacher or Deputy will decide whether it is necessary to make a home visit or referral to the Attendance and Welfare Advisor
  - o Parents may be asked to come into school to discuss their child's attendance with the Attendance and Welfare Advisor
  - o Learning Mentors or Office Staff will enter the reason for an absence in the register system using the following, standard, codes:

B – educated off site (NOT Dual Reg)  
C – other authorised circumstances  
D – dual registration (attend elsewhere)  
E – excluded (no alternative provision)  
G – Family Holiday (not agreed)  
H – Family Holiday (agreed)  
I – Illness (NOT medical or dentist)  
J – Interview  
L – Late (before register closed)  
M – Medical/ Dental appointments  
N – No reason yet provided for absence  
O – Unauthorised absence  
P – Approved sporting activity  
R – Religious observance  
S – Study leave  
T – Traveller absence

- U – Late (after register closed)
- V – Educational visit or trip
- W – Work experience
- X – Non-compulsory school age absence
- Y – Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Z – Pupil not on roll

- o If children have 6 sessions or more unauthorised absence or are late for 20 or more sessions in a term, a penalty notice may be considered (see Tower Hamlets' Penalty Notice Protocol and Tower Hamlets' Leave in Term Time Policy).

### **Key Principle**

#### **We believe children's attendance is encouraged when parents / carers and the school work in partnership.**

- Parents and carers of children admitted to school are asked to support regular attendance and punctuality, by signing the School's Home-School Agreement.
- Parents are made aware of procedures to be followed when a child is absent from school, which is:
  - o Parents/carers should inform the school of any absence on the first day of absence. They should state the nature of the illness or reason for absence and when the child is expected to return to school.
  - o Parents/carers can inform the school of their child's absence by a telephone call, a note, a letter, an email or by coming into school to speak to the class teacher or to the office staff.
- Children who have good attendance are presented with an individual certificate during a school assembly. They take this certificate home to share with their parents.
- Parents are made aware of the Governors' (and LAs) stance on family holidays and extended trips:
  - o The Governors do not give permission for holidays during the school term and parent/carers should always arrange holidays to coincide with the school holidays.
  - o In very exceptional circumstances the Governors, via the Headteacher, may agree to a short period of absence.
  - o Parents are asked to sign a school form applying for school leave and agreeing a date of return (please see Tower Hamlets Leave in Term Time Policy)
  - o If the child does not return to school within the agreed dates it may result in them losing their school place.
- If a child's attendance is persistently absent (has attendance below 90%), there attendance is considered a concern. Where a child's attendance or punctuality is identified as a concern, the school will work in partnership to find the cause of the problem and support the family to improve the attendance. This might involve:
  - o Home visits (following a phone call)

- o Offering breakfast club
  - o Discussion between school and the family
  - o Making temporary arrangements if there is a short term issue
  - o Providing support from a learning mentor in school.
- If a child's continues to have poor attendance and punctuality a referral will be made to the Tower Hamlets Attendance and Welfare Service in line with Tower Hamlets policies and government legislation.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body:	
Position:	Date:
<p>Approved in October 2022 by the Curriculum and General Purposes Committee on behalf of the Governing Body of Columbia School.          To be reviewed in September 2025 unless any statutory documentation is published which supersedes this policy.</p>	