

N  **R T H W E S T**
L O N D O N J E W I S H D A Y S C H O O L

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

2. EXPECTED ATTENDANCE LEVEL

3. THE SCHOOL DAY

- a. Registration
- b. Codes
- c. Punctuality
- d. Following up on lateness

4. ABSENCES

- a. To request an absence in advance
- b. To notify the school of an illness/emergency appointment
- c. Long term absence due to illness
- d. Travel before Shabbat or Overseas
- e. Year Six visits to Secondary Schools

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Class Teacher
- b. Head Teacher
- c. Administration Staff
- d. Parents
- e. The School

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Attendance Codes

Appendix B: Daily absence email

Appendix C: Letter for half termly attendance below 90%

Appendix D: Letter for half termly attendance above 90% but below 95%

1. INTRODUCTION

School attendance is subject to various educational laws and this School Attendance Policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE). This Policy will be revised annually. Any updates to attendance from the Department for Education's 'School Attendance' document will be circulated to all stakeholders.

This policy should be read in line with the:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying policy

Children thrive in a structure of stability and consistency. Poor attendance disrupts the stability of routine and is detrimental to the child achieving their potential. The staff carefully plan lessons and absences are counterproductive towards the child's learning. This disrupts the whole class as a community working towards a common goal of class learning.

If your child's attendance falls significantly below the required level, or there are unauthorised absences, you will be invited to discuss their attendance with the Head Teacher or a senior member of staff.

If you feel you need some support in improving your child's attendance or punctuality, please discuss this in the first instance with the Class Teacher, the Head of Key Stage and then the Deputy Head Teacher or the Head Teacher.

For families where attendance levels remain low after we have made contact with them, we are obligated to refer these cases to Brent's Educational Welfare Service (EWS). Please be aware that in a small minority of cases where attendance does not improve and there is no justification for continuing absences, the EWS may instigate legal proceedings to secure a student's regular attendance at school.

In educational law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their compulsory school aged child at their registered school unless the absence has been authorised.

2. EXPECTED ATTENDANCE LEVEL

We expect your child to attend school every day, however the minimum expected level is 95%. Good attendance is important because regular attenders:

- Make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Find school routines, school work and friendships easier to manage.

- Are more successful in transferring between Primary and Secondary Schools.

3. THE SCHOOL DAY

School gates open at 8.30 am. Pupils may enter the playground at that time.

a. Registration

The school day begins and registers open at 8.50am and close at 9.30am. Afternoon registers open at 1.30pm and close at 1.45pm (earlier on a Friday in the winter).

b. Codes

Entries into the register will be done in accordance with the National Attendance Codes which comply with regulations (see Appendix A). These enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absences in consistent way and are also used to collect statistics through the school census system.

c. Punctuality

Any child arriving at school after 8.50am should be brought into school via the School Office entrance and must be signed in the late arrivals folder by their parent/carer. A child who arrives at school between 9.15am and 9.30am will be marked with Code 'L' in the register. A child who arrives after 9.30am will be marked with Code 'U' in the register, which is an unauthorised absence (see Appendix A for codes).

If a reason is given for a late arrival, designated school staff will decide whether to authorise the absence. It is the school and not the parent who authorise absences.

Entries in the late book will be transferred to the computerised registration system daily by the School Office.

There may be circumstances in which the Head Teacher could authorise late arrivals after the register has closed, e.g. bad weather and road closures.

d. Following up on lateness

Children who arrive late on a regular basis will be monitored. Parents whose children are regularly late for school, will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with the parent/carer to bring about an improvement in punctuality.

4. ABSENCES

Parents must provide an explanation for all absences from school. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence.

a. To request an absence in advance

To request a planned absence please email absences@nwljds.org.uk at least two weeks in advance. The Head Teacher will decide whether to accept the reason given and to authorise the absence.

b. To notify the school of an illness/emergency appointment

If a child is unwell or has an emergency medical appointment the parent/carer must call the School Office or email absences@nwljds.org.uk by 9.30am with a reason for the absence, for each day of the absence.

If a child is absent and we have not been informed of a reason then the parent/carer will receive an email from the school requesting a reason for the absence. If no reason is provided for the absence it will be recorded as unauthorised (Attendance Code O). If a reason is provided then designated school staff will decide whether to accept the reason given and to authorise the absence.

c. Long term absence due to illness

If a child is absent from school for more than three days the school may request medical evidence such as a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Schools have to regularly inform the Local Authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have missed 10 school days or more without the school's permission.

d. Travel before Shabbat or Overseas

We recognise that from time to time, your family will wish to celebrate a family simcha and spend Shabbat away from home. Wherever possible overseas trips should be taken during the School Holidays. If you do need to travel during term time, please email absences@nwljds.org.uk at least two weeks prior to the absence and the Headteacher will decide whether the absence can be authorised.

e. Year Six Visits to Secondary Schools

Learning in Year Six is a priority as it lays the platform for Secondary School, however we believe the children should be involved in the decision regarding which Secondary School they will attend. Year Six pupils will therefore be authorised to be absent at the Head Teacher's discretion, as will children from other cohorts. Please inform the Class Teacher and Head Teacher as soon as these dates are known so that lessons can be planned and adapted accordingly. In exceptional circumstances the Head Teacher may allow more absences to 'tour' potential schools.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

a. Responsibilities of the Class Teacher

- Keeping an overview of class and individual pupil's attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Head Teacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Following up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

b. Responsibilities of the Head Teacher

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absences including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring pupil's attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the EWO service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussions with the school's EWO.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absences.

c. Responsibilities of the Administration staff

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Contacting parents of absent children where the School Office has not been notified of a reason.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance and reporting concerns to the Head Teacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance below the expected level.

d. Responsibilities of the Parents

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (section 7 of the Education Act 1996).

- Ensure the child/children are punctual for registration.
- Contacting the School Office on the first morning of absence due to illness.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments arranged during school time.
- Providing a letter from a doctor for an absence of more than three days due to illness.

- Making requests for an absence during term time only if unavoidable.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

e. Responsibility of the school

It is an offence for the school to permit an unauthorised absence. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as an unauthorised absence and could be subject to legal action.

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To record attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give details of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated a reason with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes an authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the Brent LA/EFA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Head Teacher.

APPENDIX A

Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved education activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/descriptions)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Approved education activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved education activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Authorised absence
O	Absent from school without authorisation	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved education activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved education activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved education activity
X	Not required to be in school (i.e. non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

APPENDIX B

Daily absence email

Dear Mr/s (insert Parent's name),

I am writing to you because (child's name) is not in school today. Please contact the School Office as soon as possible to notify us of the reason so that this will not need to be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

To report a same day absence (such as illness) please call the School Office by 9.30am on 0208 459 3378. All other absences should be requested by emailing absences@nwljds.org.uk at least two weeks in advance.

Kind regards,

The School Office
North West London Jewish Day School
Tel: 020 8459 3378

APPENDIX C

Letter for half termly attendance below 90%

Dear Mrs (insert Parent's name),

Re: (insert Child's name)

Attendance, to date, this academic year: _____%

I am writing to inform you that children's minimum expected level of attendance is 95% and we remind you that we expect your child to attend school every day. There are many legitimate reasons for absence, however currently your child's attendance is below this level.

It is clear that children thrive when they have the stability of continuous uninterrupted attendance. Their results are at the optimum which gives them pride and self-esteem and their social development is better as they have more time to make friends and learn within the School environment.

I am therefore writing to you at this stage, informing you that we will closely monitor your child's attendance over this next half term.

If their attendance level remains low I will write to you again inviting you to meet me so we can discuss how to help improve their attendance.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Miss J Caplan
Head Teacher

APPENDIX D

Letter for half termly attendance above 90% but below 95%

Dear Mrs (insert Parent's name),

Re: (insert Child's name)

Attendance, to date, this academic year: _____%

I am writing to inform you that children's minimum expected level of attendance is 95% and we remind you that we expect your child to attend school every day. There are many legitimate reasons for absence, however currently your child's attendance is just below this level.

It is clear that children thrive when they have the stability of continuous uninterrupted attendance. Their results are at the optimum which gives them pride and self-esteem and their social development is better as they have more time to make friends and learn within the School environment.

I am therefore writing to you at this stage, informing you that we will be closely monitoring your child's attendance over this next half term.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Miss J Caplan

Head Teacher