

Al-Noor Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We believe that every child needs to be given the best opportunity to achieve at school. We believe that good school attendance is necessary for this.
- 1.2 If a child is often absent from school it has a deleterious effect on his/her development, academic progress and levels of concentration and motivation as well as causing disruption to the rest of the class. It is a simple exercise to see that:
- 90% attendance over a school year = 4 weeks' absence that year;
 - 90% attendance over 5 years of schooling = half a year's absence (20 weeks);
 - 90% attendance over a 10 year school career = one year of missed education (40 wks)
- 1.3 We believe it is our duty to do all we can to enforce good attendance and encourage parents to consider the effects of school absence on their children's welfare.
- 1.4 This policy has been written with reference to the statutory regulations detailed in School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, DfE, October 2014. This is based on the following statutory instruments:
- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

2. Procedures

- 2.1 Teaching Assistants in all classes, or in their absence the class teacher, take the register each day in the morning and in the afternoon.
- 2.1.1 The morning register closes at 8.30am and the afternoon register closes at 1.30pm.
- 2.1.2 Any child coming to school after this time will be entered as an unauthorised absence and their attendance logged by admin on the electronic register and printed register to facilitate headcounts and register in the event of fire drills and the like.
- 2.1.3 Registers must be taken before going upstairs to assemblies and on Thursday mornings, in the playground/park, before entering the school building, and digitised upon entry to school after tag rugby.
- 2.1.4 The codes used in registers are depicted in appendix A to this policy.
- 2.1.5 The school uses electronic registers; each class has its own tablet with which they take attendance, alternatively they can use classroom computers to do so. In the event of internet or computer failure – printed class list registers are available from office.
- 2.1.6 Each class attendance list will be printed off at 8.35am and 1.35pm in case of emergency evacuations by the school office. Late-comers after it has been printed will be manually added to printed sheet by hand and updated on the system according to relevant attendance codes. These will be filed at the end of day.
- 2.2 A daily and weekly percentage for pupils is viewable by admin and teaching staff for each pupil in every class on the electronic register system.
- 2.2.1 This log tallies absences and allows teaching assistants and the School Attendance Officer to identify pupils whose attendance becomes worrying as in section 3.
- 2.2.2 By weekly examination of attendance register data, the School Attendance Officer, Nazia Afzal, will flag pupils whose absence hits the thresholds listed in section 3. She

will then issue a letter to the parents of such children, or other such subsequent action.

- 2.2.3 The data from the tallies must be kept very carefully accurate and up-to-date. It will be used at the end of the year to calculate figures tracked and monitored by the Board of trustees as set out in section 8.

3. Absences

- 3.1 Parents are requested to call the school to explain absences on the first day of an absence and on each day of an absence thereafter. The school administrative staff member that takes the call will email this information to class staff.
- 3.2 If parents fail to inform the school of a child's absence, the teaching assistant for the child's class will ring home by day two of the absence to ascertain the reason for the absence. If the child is subject to a child protection plan, or has been flagged by the Headteacher or School Attendance officer as a persistent absentee, this call will be made on the first day of the absence. If s/he cannot get through to the family after two calls separated by an hour and accompanied by voicemail messages, s/he must contact the relatives cited as next of kin on school application and information forms in the child's file.
- 3.3 The teaching assistant will inform the class teacher and the School Attendance Officer, Nazia Afzal, and school senior leaders by email as soon as s/he has spoken to the family. If the reason is not compelling (e.g. if it is not of a reasonable length for one of the following categories: illness, medical appointment, hospital admission, death of a close family member, religious festival, school entrance exams, parental sickness/unavailability to drop child to school etc) then the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher, or other delegated staff member, will ring the parents of the child to explore the issues further and ask them bring him/her to school without delay.
- 3.4 When the child has returned to school but has not brought a note from his/her parents or the school has not received an email to explain the absence, the school will contact parents by email at first, requesting that they provide the school with a reason for the absence.
- 3.5 If there is no reply to the school's first stage email from parents then a second email will be sent.
- 3.6 If parents do not respond to the emails, the School's Attendance officer, Nazia Afzal, will call the parents to verbally request an email or note with a reason for the child's absence.
- 3.7 The school is required to take legal action against the parents of any child whose attendance is poor such as penalty notices, parenting orders, parenting contracts or even prosecution. If a pupil's attendance drops to **95%** at any time, parents will be informed in writing and requested to avoid any further drop and warned about the consequences. The teaching assistant will inform the School Attendance Officer, Nazia Afzal, by email, copying in the class teacher and senior leaders, giving any mitigating reasons for the figures. The School Attendance Officer, Nazia Afzal, will issue the letter to the parents.
- 3.8 If the attendance rate continues to drop and reaches **93%**, parents will be requested to meet immediately with the deputy headteacher to discuss the problem. The teaching assistant will inform the School Attendance Officer, Nazia Afzal, by email, parents will be requested to meet immediately with the deputy headteacher to discuss the problem copying in the class teacher and senior leaders, giving any mitigating reasons for the figures. The School Attendance Officer, Nazia Afzal, will issue the letter to the parents. All further absences will require supporting evidence in addition to a school letter explaining the absence. A further drop will be followed up by a phone call by the deputy head.
- 3.9 If the attendance rate drops to **90%** parents will be requested to meet immediately with the headteacher. The teaching assistant will inform the School Attendance Officer, Nazia Afzal, by email, copying in the class teacher and senior leaders and giving any mitigating reasons for

the figures. A further drop will be followed up by a phone call from the headteacher, with consideration for referring the matter to the local authority.

- 3.10 The school where required, will take legal action against the parents of any child whose attendance or punctuality is poor, such as penalty notices, parenting orders, parenting contracts or even prosecution.
- 3.11 The following categories of absences require the school (the School Attendance Officer after consulting with the Headteacher) to contact the local Education Welfare Services Department without resort to 3.7 - 3.9 above:
- 3.11.1 Pupils who have been absent without authorisation for ten days or more;
 - 3.11.2 Pupils who are about to be deleted from the admission register due to withdrawal for any reason, including Year Six leavers, (the LA must be formally notified in writing and the admissions register updated before the pupil leaves the school);
 - 3.11.3 Pupils who have been withdrawn by parents because they no longer live locally;
 - 3.11.4 Pupils suffering serious long-term illness;
 - 3.11.5 Pupils in custody;
 - 3.11.6 Pupils who have been permanently excluded.

4. Parental Role

- 4.1 It is essential that, as far as possible, pupils maintain full attendance throughout their programme of study.
- 4.2 It is also important that parents discuss any problems regarding attendance with their pupil's class teacher or the headteacher, who will be able to offer advice and guidance, insha'Allah.
- 4.3 Parents must report any forthcoming absences due to appointments in advance in a letter to the school office.
- 4.4 Parents must report any sudden illnesses by ringing or emailing the school office in the morning of the absence and giving in a letter or emailing the school on absences@al-noorprimary.co.uk explaining the full length of absence, when their child returns to school.
- 4.5 Parents must apply for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances in writing to the headteacher and wait for a reply before making bookings and arrangements (see para 6.2).
- 4.6 School attendance is also important because the law requires it. Parents are legally responsible for making sure their child/ren get/s a full time education. For most people this means registering the child at school and making sure they attend. Failing to ensure children's regular attendance at school is a legal offence.

5. Acceptable reasons for pupil absence

- 5.1 *Illness*
Parents are expected to provide medical evidence for a continued absence of five days or more.
- 5.2 *Medical appointments*
Parents are expected to arrange appointments as much as possible during school holidays, at weekends or after school hours. There will be times when this isn't possible but parents are requested to try to give as much advance warning as possible and take the appointment letter or card into school.
- 5.3 *Religious festivals*
The school is closed during all Muslim holidays and national and Christian ones. Pupils from other religions will be given no more than 3 days leave for each religious festival requiring absence.

6. Holidays

- 6.1 Redbridge Local Authority state that leave of absence during term time should not be granted unless in the most exceptional of circumstances. Governmental legislation informs this view. Holidays during term time are not permitted at Al-Noor Primary School but discretion (of the headteacher) will be applied to requests for leave in genuinely exceptional circumstances.
- 6.2 The headteacher will only authorise 5 days in any one year and strictly only on the basis of genuine difficulty.
- 6.3 If a child is absent for a period of time longer than this, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and section 3 will be applied.
- 6.4 If a child fails to return after 5 days and the school is unable to trace him/her at the address on school records then that child will be removed from the school roll and the Local Authority will be informed in accordance with the school's Admissions Withdrawal policy and section 7, Child Missing in Education.

7 Child missing from education

- 7.1 A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff members must carefully follow the school's procedures, as outlined here and in the pupil attendance policy, for dealing with children that are absent for long periods, or are absent without explanation, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- 7.2 The law requires the school to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils will be placed on both registers. The school will place pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupils will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education.
- 7.3 The admission register will be kept accurately and up to date. The school will regularly encourage parents to inform it of any changes whenever they occur to help the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.
- 7.4 The school will monitor attendance and address it when it is poor or irregular.
- 7.5 Where a parent notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, the school will record in the admission register:
- the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
 - the new address; and
 - the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.
- 7.6 Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, schools will record in the admission register:
- the name of the new school; and
 - the date on which the pupils first attended or is due to start attending that school.
- 7.7 The Pupil Attendance Officer, Nazia Afzal, will inform the local authority, as soon as the school is informed and before deletion, of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations¹, including if the child:

¹ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

- has been taken out of school by his/her parents and is being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school;
- has been certified by their GP, consultant physician or hospital, as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to return to school before the end of year six; or,
- has been permanently excluded.

This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

- 7.8 The Pupil Attendance Officer, Nazia Afzal, will also inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days, as close as conveniently possible to the 10th day of absence. The CME referral form must be completed and emailed to:

Peter Barclay or Chris Truelove
 Child Missing in Education Department
 London Borough of Redbridge
cme@redbridge.gov.uk
 Tel 0208 708 3838/0208 708 6047

- 7.9 When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the local authority must include: (a) the full name of the pupil, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register.
- 7.10 The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii). The school will also consider whether it is appropriate to highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing education, such as any safeguarding concerns.
- 7.11 The school will also notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification will include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made. When adding a pupil's name, the notification to the local authority must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil. The contact details are: London Borough of Redbridge Admissions Team, Email admissionsandawards@redbridge.gov.uk

8 Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 The board of trustees monitors and reviews this policy through its education committee. Summary absence data is garnered from attendance data and these statistics are carefully tracked and targets set for them each year:
- 8.1.1 The proportion of authorised absences for the previous academic year (whole year, first five half terms, first two terms)
- 8.1.2. The proportion of unauthorised absences for the previous academic year (whole year, first five half terms, first two terms)
- 8.1.3. The average number of sessions of total absence per pupil over the previous academic year (whole year, first five half terms, first two terms)
- 8.1.4. The average number of sessions of unauthorised absence per pupil over the previous academic year (whole year, first five half terms, first two terms)

8.1.5. The proportion of pupils absent for 10% or more over the first two school terms, first five half terms and the whole year, in the previous academic year (the percentage of persistent absentees at the school).

8.2 This policy will be reviewed every three years or as the need arises, for example due to changes in legislation.

8.3 Review Date: November 2021

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees by: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Version History

Version Number	Date
PAP.17-18.2	11/12/17

APPENDIX A

GUIDANCE ON MARKING SCHOOL REGISTERS

- The law requires taking regular school attendance. School registers must be marked at the start of each session, twice a day. It is a **LEGAL** document, to be filled in accurately. It is subject to inspection.
- Registration must end at **8.10am** and registers must be sent to school **office by 8.30am** in the morning and after half an hour at the start of the afternoon session.
- If the child arrives late after 8.10am without any valid reason, then the teacher must not mark the child present but insert an **L** in the register and save it.
- Teachers are not allowed to mark any pupil present after the register is closed and the register must be saved promptly. *(In case of bad weather, law allows us to leave the register open longer.)*
- **Legal requirement for amendments to the Attendance Register**
Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include:
the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

The electronic register does this by circling the attendance code with a black circle to indicate it has been amended, hovering on the code will show original entry, date of amendment, notes on the side will show the reason for amendment and the name of person making the entry.

PROCEDURE FOR ABSENCE NOTES

- If a child is absent and returns to school with no explanation the admin team will text the parents to remind them to send in an absence letter. Parents are allowed to email or write to the school explaining their child's absence. Telephone calls are acceptable as an alternative to an absence letter and must be marked in the register in line with the codes below.
- If an absence letter is given to the teacher then the teacher is required to **sign and date the letter and pass to the office for authorisation promptly.**
- If an absence letter is **emailed** to the school this will be printed and the reason for absence marked in the electronic register by admin. A note will be added to the electronic register and absence code amended by admin, viewable to the teacher.

Absence and Attendance Codes

Present at School

If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity approved by the school such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Code B: Off-site educational activity

Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Code R: Religious observance

Code S: Study leave

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative Codes

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure/ Different Term Dates for Different Pupils

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.