



## **Clara Grant School**

### **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

All children have a right to be educated. At Clara Grant Primary School, we believe that regular school attendance for children at school enables them to develop academically, personally and socially for each child. Children learn effectively if they attend school regularly. We recognise that raising the level of achievement for all the children in school depends upon raising and maintaining a high level of attendance. It is important, too, that children arrive to school on time so they do not miss any part of their learning and to start the day well.

Many children feel embarrassed or uncomfortable at having missed the beginning of the day. It is also important that the child is picked up promptly at the end of the day as it can be quite distressing for the child to be left while all their peers have gone home. As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, Clara Grant School places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

#### **If your child cannot go to school:**

Please make sure that the absence is absolutely unavoidable;  
Let the school know the reason why as soon as possible;  
If your child is ill, tell the school what is wrong and when your child may be back at school.

#### **You should not allow your child to miss school:**

- to care for brothers or sisters
- to translate for family or friends
- to go shopping
- to spend long weekends away
- to go on holiday
- to go on trips abroad.

Children with attendance of 90 per cent or less are classified as having persistent absence and will be the subject of rigorous follow-up and close monitoring by their school. As a parent, you face serious consequences if you do not ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time. You could receive a penalty notice (a fine) or be prosecuted. The local authority may also consider applying to the Family Proceedings Court for an Education Supervision Order.

### **RECORDING ATTENDANCE**

Schools have a statutory duty to record attendance. Teachers record attendance electronically twice daily: 9-910am and straight after lunch. Attendance is recorded on the school Management Information System (MIS). At Clara Grant we use Integris as our MIS.

If a child arrives late they are required to sign in electronically. This information is then transferred into the school MIS system. If teachers are unsure about any aspect of recording attendance, they should seek the advice from the DHT.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. As parents often ring the office when a child is absent, office staff and teachers maintain a dialogue about the attendance of children. Class teachers are required to find out about absence from the child and or parent, and inform the office once they know. They should also have a dialogue with children who are late or absent rather than let the event pass unnoticed. A member of the Office staff will contact the parents of absent children on the morning of absence, in order to code the absence accurately and find out about the return to school. The Office staff liaise closely with our attendance and inclusion consultant (AIC), and with the Borough Attendance and Welfare Advisor (AWA), who is in fortnightly – interventions are recorded in the Attendance Tracker and held in a password protected document.

To record safeguarding information, the HT and DSL, Learning Mentor, Parent Worker and Attendance and Inclusion Consultant all have access to a central database of information which they keep updated as events progress.

2. Office staff, teachers and the DHT will refer to the AWA or the AIC to follow up any absence that have dropped below 90% (persistent absence) or where there are safeguarding concerns. Patterns are noted, and appointments made to discuss the issues surrounding individual children's attendance. In most cases, improvements are immediately forthcoming.
3. Where they are not, there are three possible avenues of progress:
  - To offer support, and gateway other services which can help with complex family circumstances.
  - To issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN)
  - To issue a Court Warning Notice (CWN) and if there are no improvements, initiate legal action

## **ABSENCES**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the MIS. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence, school will contact parents/carers and if no contact can be established in person or via phone calls, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (Attendance Code O). If this continues, parents will be required to have a meeting at school or a home visit will be conducted by the AIC or AWA.

## **MOTIVATION**

We reward good attendance at Clara Grant School. Teachers of course note improvements in any child's attendance in their class by comments, stickers etc. We also award an attendance cup each week in our whole school assembly to the class in each Key Stage with the best attendance. We have an attendance board for winning class' mascots. This has raised the profile of good attendance across the school, and has resulted in healthy competition. Each winning class member also receives a school sticker classifying them as an "attendance champion". As mentioned above, 100% attenders also receive an end of year certificate.

## **ROLES AND 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.

### **Class teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- 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 offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Informing the SLT where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted and sent by email to the office.
- Discussing attendance issues at parents' evenings where necessary.
- Informing the office, by email, of any advance warning of an impending holiday in term time from either the child or parent/carer.

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.

### **Attendance and Inclusion Consultant / Attendance and Welfare Advisor/Parent Liaison**

Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues (Rushnara)

Monitoring individual attendance to assess appropriate intervention (Boddrull Islam)

Making referrals to the Attendance and Welfare Service (Boddrull Islam)

Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's AWA and local school committee (Boddrull Islam and Karen Symons)

Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence. (Karen Symons and Boddrull Islam)

Working in conjunction with the School Safeguarding Team to ensure appropriate safeguarding practice is adhered to when assessing children's absence.(Karen, Rosetta and Boddrull)

Visiting the home of children when contact cannot be established over the phone or where there are safeguarding concerns (Boddrull Islam)

### **Administration staff**

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.

- Ensuring the Absence/Late are recorded accurately on the school MIS.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- 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 offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the HT / AIC / AWA.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.(Rushnara)
- Initiating legal procedures on behalf of the Local Authority – (AWA only).
- Informing the class teachers, by email, of any impending holidays in term time of any of their pupils or for the need for online learning if eg a child cannot attend as their parent is too ill to bring them.

## **Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence and for every day of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- 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.

## **Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday**

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Head teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Head teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Evidence of the exceptional circumstance must be provided to the school 10 days in advance of the leave being taken. The evidence must show why the trip must be taken on those dates and not in the school holidays. If no evidence is provided then the leave will be unauthorised and the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice or initiate court action.

## **Glossary:**

**HT** Head teacher

**DHT** Deputy Head teacher

**SLT** Senior Leadership Team

**AWA** Attendance and Welfare Advisor

**CT** Class teacher

**AIC** Attendance and Inclusion Consultant

# **Covid-19 Attendance Policy Addendum (September 2021)**

Attendance at The Clara Grant Primary School was made mandatory again from Monday 7th September 2020 for children from Reception to year 6.

It is therefore expected that, pupils will be able to return to school this September 2021, however:

- Some children with underlying health needs may be advised to continue with their home learning as the risk to their health is too great
  - A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they live with someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) and they are unable to bring them to school. Where a period of self-isolation ends, we would then expect a pupil to return to school unless medical evidence suggests otherwise.
  - If rates of the disease rise in Tower Hamlets, it may be necessary for children (or family members) to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer them access to online/home learning. Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

Regular attendance codes will be used to record school attendance. Absence from school can be authorised in the following cases (It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised):

- Sickness (please ring on each day of sickness related absence);
- Medical appointments – please provide an appointment card/letter;
- Exceptional family circumstances;

In order to define attendance and absence correctly during this period, the follow extra-ordinary codes will be used on registers:

All Year groups will be coded on registers as either

- / (present)
- X (not attending in circumstances related to Covid-19),
- 0 (EHCP but deemed not appropriate to attend)
- I (Covid and nonCovid illness)
- M (Medical),
- C (authorised absence),
- O (unauthorised absence).

We will also record those pupils who are not attending in circumstances related to Covid-19 on our Covid Tracker to monitor their return date.