



## **ABBEY WOOD NURSERY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

*(Reviewed March 2017)*

### **Philosophy**

The staff and governors of this school recognise the need to work with parents to promote good patterns of attendance for all children on roll. Although the children have not yet reached compulsory school age (which is the term of the child's fifth birthday), each family has chosen to apply for and accept a nursery place and will be expected to make full use of it.

We believe that it is extremely important to establish good patterns of attendance and punctuality for the following reasons:

- 1) To ensure that each child is able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them at the centre.
- 2) To support the formation of a sense of partnership between home and the school, giving a secure and friendly foundation to each child's experience of school.
- 3) To promote the formation of friendships with other children and the development of co-operative and collaborative behaviour.
- 4) To help each child become familiar with the patterns and routines of the day and develop a sense of confidence and security.
- 5) To establish good patterns of attendance at an early age and a sense that going to school is both important and enjoyable.
- 6) To ensure that the nursery provision at this school is well-used, in order that the resources of the school and of the borough are not misused.

### **School Procedures which are linked to attendance**

The school aims to build good relationships with all families. This helps staff to be aware of attendance problems at an early stage. The fact that each child is brought into their base room by an adult also ensures there are opportunities for following up reasons for absences. Staff are aware of the importance of giving parents the opportunity to give explanations for absences and of the need to ensure that children and families are given sufficient support during the settling-in phase. However, it is also important that we draw attention to the adverse effects of irregular attendance and that we encourage the proper and full use of all nursery provision.

### **Admission and Settling-In Routines**

The centre booklet is given to each parent stating the reasons for authorised absences from school and also the importance of establishing good patterns of attendance and punctuality. It also explains that some absences, such as for shopping, will not be authorised.

There are further opportunities for clarification of the Attendance Policy:

- At the Registration meeting.
- At the home visits.
- At the Open Day for New Parents and Children.
- During each child's settling -in time.
- At the meeting for new parents, held after half a term.

### **Information to parents concerning absences**

Information is contained in the school induction pack booklet. This information lists possible instances when absences **may** be authorised by the school. For example:

- Ill health or medical appointments or medical treatments.
- Family bereavement.
- Religious observation.

Individual advice and support is given to parents of children whose attendance is poor (below 96%) or irregular, or whose children are reluctant to attend or who have problems in bringing or collecting them. This is done:

- through prompt reminders to parents to give explanations for all absences.
- through the display and availability of copies of the school's Attendance Policy.

### **Procedures to follow up absences:**

- 1) The school expects to be informed of reasons for absence as soon as possible. We prefer to be contacted on the first day of absence, but parents should certainly be expected to let us know the reason on return to school. The school will make this expectation clear to all parents and follow up telephone calls will be made by the school office.
- 2) The class teacher is responsible for keeping accurate records of attendance in the register, following any guidance issued by the Department for Education and Employment and from the borough. The class teacher is responsible for asking parents for reasons for unexplained absences, on the child's return.
- 3) The class teacher is responsible for drawing the Headteacher's attention to unexplained absences and patterns of irregular absences.
- 4) The Admin staff are responsible for checking the attendance registers each week and for informing the Headteacher of any concerns and also the concerns of members of staff. She would normally make contact with parents by phone or letter or a home visit, preferring direct

contact whenever possible. A formal letter may also be sent, reminding the parents of their responsibility to keep the school informed and to make full use of the nursery place.

- 5) It is the Headteacher's responsibility to decide which absences are AUTHORISED and which are UNAUTHORISED (whether or not an explanation has been offered by the parent) using guidance from the Local Authority.

### **Support Services**

The school may ask another agency to become involved with a family whose attendance record is causing concern, or who may have related difficulties. The school will let families know of any other agencies they had contacted or intended to contact. These could include:

- The family's Health Visitor.
- The Social Services.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation Review**

The school will review this policy annually. We expect that, if the policy and the procedures are implemented, there will be improvements in the following areas:

- Staff awareness of the school's aim to improve attendance and punctuality and of their role in doing this. Governors increased confidence and knowledge about the school's procedures for promoting good patterns of attendance and punctuality.
- Parents' increased understanding of their responsibilities related to establishing good patterns of attendance and punctuality.
- Improved levels of attendance and punctuality for all children.
- Better communications via parents in letting us know reasons for absence.
- An improved understanding of what might constitute AUTHORISED and UNAUTHORISED absences by staff, governors and parents.