

# Attendance: A Guide for Parents

## **1 When does my child need to be in school?**

Your child should be in school in good time for morning registration. All pupils must also ensure they are on time for afternoon registration or they will be marked as late or absent.

## **2 What happens if my child is late?**

Registers close at 9:30am. If your child arrives after 9am but before the time the register closes, they will be marked as late. If your child arrives after that, they will be marked as absent. If your child is late for a legitimate reason, they should bring a note.

## **3 Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we may phone you. However, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

## **4 What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- illness
- emergency dental/medical appointments
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement
- attending an interview for a school, service, etc
- family holiday (only when prior approval has been given – see question 7)
- extended family visits abroad (only when prior approval has been given – see question 8).

You should ask for permission in advance for your child to be absent from school, giving full details (See Appendix A) unless it involves illness.

In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate or other corroboration of any condition affecting your child.

## **5 What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc.

## **6 Will the school contact me if my child is absent?**

The school operates a first-day response for some absences: we may phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure pupils' safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

## **7 Can we take family holidays during term-time?**

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term-time, you should in the first instance, arrange an appointment with the Head Teacher. You should then complete an application form, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the holidays must be taken in term-time. The Head Teacher has the right to refuse permission, having given consideration to:

- your child's age
- the time of year
- overall pattern of your child's attendance.

The Head Teacher is highly unlikely to approve your child's absence if the timing of the holiday coincides with SATs.

## **8 I am thinking about sending my child on an extended trip overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?**

The school recognises that such trips are sometimes necessary and help children keep in touch with their extended family. Contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such visits do not take place during your child's SAT years. You need to first arrange an appointment with the Head Teacher and then complete an application form for extended leave of absence.

Be aware that an extended leave of absence is not always in your child's best interest. Children often find it difficult to settle back into school routines having been away for a long period of time and work that they miss out on while away cannot easily be caught up on.

## **9 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep, gets up in plenty of time each morning and has breakfast. Ensure he or she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child by your interest that you value their education.

## **10 My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Contact your child's Head Teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

## **11 What will happen if I am late in picking up my child?**

The Annunciation Catholic Infant School closes at **3:05pm** every day.

- If you know you are going to be late to collect your child contact the school immediately. Upon arrival you will be asked to sign the after-school late book and explain why you were late collecting your child.
- If your child is not collected at the end of the day, and you have not contacted the school to advise us, the office will endeavour to contact you at home and at work. If this is unsuccessful, a senior member of staff will be informed of the situation. To comply with legal regulations, a decision may then be taken to contact either **Social Services** or the **Police**.
- *Please remember that children worry about their parents' welfare and can become quite distressed when they realise that no one has come to collect them. If you need support contact your local library who should have a list of useful contacts within Barnet Council.*

### **The Education Welfare Officer is based at:**

Building 4,  
North London Business Park  
Oakleigh Road South  
N11 1NR

Tel: 020 8359 7684