simon marks
jewish primary school
תורה עם דרך-ארץ

Attendance POLICY 2026

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Simon Marks Jewish Primary School is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular *Newsletters*;
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by sharing individual and class achievements.

ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW

Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the 'parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

(a) to age, ability and aptitude

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

either by regular school attendance of otherwise.'

Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Learning Trust using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.
We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.
PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.
All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan. All PA cases are automatically made known to the Learning Trust School Attendance Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;

- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;

- Or, you can call into school and report to the office staff.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher;
- Refer the matter to the Learning Trust Education Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 85%.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from the Learning Trust. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Learning Trust.
Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the SAO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Learning Trust.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.50 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. The school is open to pupils at 8.45

Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in on time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave In Term Time:

Leave in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.
Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.
It is the opinion of the School Governors that holidays in term time are not desirable and leave of absence with not automatically or normally be granted.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for any leave must be made in advance and may be granted at the discretion of the school. At Simon Marks Jewish Primary School a maximum of 5 days in any academic year may be authorised. An agreed return date must be agreed at the time of request. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time, academic progress and the schedule of school events e.g. formal assessments.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.

- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS).

- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.

- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

From time to time exceptional circumstances may occur and application must be made to the Headteacher.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are shared in Newsnotes.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95**%** attendance.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made
.
Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in Newsletters and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Office staff- School admin officer (attendance notification)
Headteacher- Monitoring and follow up with School Attendance Officer

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.
All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Date of Policy /Review:

01/11/2027

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Simon Marks Jewish Primary School.

Signed:

Child's Name: Form: