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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

At TARBIYYAH we acknowledge that parents of school registered children have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Therefore, permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Every half-day absent 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 each absence is always required.

Authorised and unauthorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason. This includes:

- Sickness
- Days of religious observance
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointment (half day maximum)
- Exceptional family circumstances
- Going to other schools for visits, interviews or examinations

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Holidays abroad
- Truancy
- The child doesn't want to go
- Looking after brothers, sisters and others
- Shopping
- Sleeping in
- One child is ill, so all are kept off
- Because it is the end of the week or the term
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to receive a mark in the register.

The school can fine each parent up to **£60** per child they take unauthorised leave during term time. The fine will be added to their total and collected with fees.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a 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 may make things worse.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority.

The EWO will also try to resolve the difficulties by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this officer can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for advice. They are independent of the school. Their telephone number is available by contacting the LA.

Registers

Registers are marked daily by the class teachers and entered electronically by the school administrator.

Registers will now be reviewed on a half termly basis to ensure attendance problems are noticed at the earliest possible opportunity. The following may suggest further investigation is required:

- Unexplained absences
- Patterns of non-attendance on specific days
- Attendance below 95%
- Repeated medical absences and patterns of illness
- Persistent lateness

Procedures and Accountability

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Illness and Other Legitimate Reasons

- If a child is unable to attend school, parents are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence by **8.00 am**. When the child returns, he or she must bring a written note in a sealed envelope labelled with the child's name, class and titled 'Absence note'. The absence note must be signed by the parent and a reason must be provided for each period of absence. The note must be handed into the class teacher.
- Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons.
- It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdresser's appointments, etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which take place during school time.
- If a child is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation for the absence by 9.00 am, the school administrator will contact the parent by telephone as a matter of concern.
- To ensure that all patterns of low attendance are identified, the Early Years Manager along with the school administrator will agree a course of action for all students with an attendance under 90%. The agreed action may include:
 - Closely monitoring the situation
 - Sending 'late letters' home
 - Arranging a meeting with the family
 - Issue a penalty notice

Holidays

- All holiday leave in term time is at the discretion of the Early Years Manager. Provided the request is made in advance using the **Holiday Leave Application Form**, which is available from

the school office. Leave for up to five days per school year may be granted, provided that the child's attendance record is otherwise satisfactory.

- Leave may be refused where children have already missed a lot of work or at crucial times of the year (e.g. during examinations). Requests for leave beyond 5 days will only be granted in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
- Children who take a holiday in term time will be expected to complete extra work to make sure they do not fall behind.
- The school can fine each parent up to **£60** per child per parent if they take unauthorised leave

Taking children off roll

All children who leave TARBIYYAH to attend another school will remain on roll until their admission elsewhere is confirmed. The local authority will be informed of the move.

Punctuality

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for that session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration which takes place at 08:30am, therefore children must arrive no later than 08:25 in order to be on time. If a child arrives after 09:00, the parent or guardian must sign them in at the front desk. The school administrator will keep a record of all children who are late in the 'late book'. This late book will be reviewed at the end of each week on a Friday and a 'late' letter will be sent home on a Monday the following week.

Any children who arrive after 08:40am on more than 3 occasions in a term, their parents will be called in for a meeting and an action plan will be put in place. If the problem persists, then the school reserves the right to remove the child from the register.

Any children arriving after 08:50am, will be fined £5 and this may be added onto their monthly fees statement.

Encouraging good attendance and punctuality

TARBIYYAH aims to raise the profile of attendance and punctuality through:

- Newsletters
- Certificates assemblies
- Displays around the school
- Children who achieve a full school year without absence to receive a special certificate

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

Annually the effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed, or when the need arises, and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be made.