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**1. STATEMENT OF INTENT**

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- 1.1 At Beis Yaakov Primary School we aim to provide a high quality education in a safe, caring and disciplined environment so that all pupils are able to reach their full potential during the primary phase and leave here with positive feelings about education and its value to them.

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**2. PRINCIPLES**

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- 2.1
- The Education Act 1996 states that all pupils should attend school regularly and punctually.
  - It is important that all parents and children know that the staff value good attendance and punctuality.
  - It is important that parents and staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the attendance of pupils.

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**3. INTRODUCTION**

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- 3.1 Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Beis Yaakov Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.
- 3.2 Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school and can be seen on our school website.
- 3.3 This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.
- 3.4 Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.
- 3.5 Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

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**4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

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- 4.1 This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.
- 4.2 Through this Policy we aim to:
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
  - Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
  - Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
  - Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.

- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

4.3 We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

### 5.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### 5.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### 5.3 Procedures

- Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:
- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any

absence and lateness.

- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Officer any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Barnet Local Education Authority and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES**

6.1 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.

### 6.2 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 Senior Leadership Team 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 inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

### 6.3 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the EWO service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

### 6.4 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 Book is completed
- 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 Headteacher
- Contacting parents regarding attendance

#### 6.5 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.
- 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, but only for persistent absences (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time on the pupil absence request form, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised. Please note that no arrangements should be made before an absence is 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.
- Ensuring that they sign their children in and out of school by signing the late book and the "signing in" book on the Reception desk. These refer to the lateness or children being collected early from school.

### **7. REGISTRATION**

- 7.1
- The school gate is open from 8.25 am until 8.50 am. Your child needs to be in the playground by 8.40 am at the latest when the bell is rung for registration.
  - Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed twice a day by the class teacher by 8.50 am and 12.50pm for Key Stage 1 and 1.15pm for Key Stage 2. (Attendance code / am. and \ pm. for pupils who are present).
- 7.2 All attendance records are documented using Integris software, which is supported and monitored by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### **8. LATENESS**

- 8.1 Once the doors are closed at 8.50am the only way to get into school is via the school's front door by the office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.50am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the register for each pupil as well as the electronic record in the office. (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15 am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).
- 8.2 Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently

come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

- 8.3 Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.
- 8.4 Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

## **9. ABSENCES**

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- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer system. 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 Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.
- 9.3 Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then the School contacts the parents requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

## **10. FIRST DAY CONTACT**

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- 10.1 Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers between 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware of why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

## **11. ILLNESS**

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- 11.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 11.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.
- 11.3 Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

## **12. PARENTAL REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR HOLIDAY**

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- 12.1 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. Absences requests must be made on the attached Pupil Absence Request Form.

### **13. ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE CONCERNS**

- 13.1 The school expects attendance of at least 96%.
- 13.2 It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely on parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and, therefore, where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim of improving attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.
- 13.3 The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to EWS from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.
- 13.4 In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.
- 13.5 The Education Welfare Officer visits the School, as required, to check and monitor attendance. He/she carries out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 85%). She works with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

### **14. MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

- 14.1 Our office staff has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Integris attendance software. Meetings are held with the Senior Leadership Team to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

### **15. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DEFINED**

- 15.1 Chasanahs:
- If the child has a Chasanah and Sheva Brochos week of a parent's brother or sister abroad or of their own brother or sister, up to 5 school days will be authorised depending upon the day of the wedding. Please note that if the family returns to London for local Sheva Brochos, the pupil must return to school.
  - If the child has a Chasanah and Sheva Brochos week of a parent's brother or sister or of their own brother or sister in the United Kingdom (outside of London and the immediate area), the same rules apply as for a Chasanah abroad mentioned above. Please note that if the family returns to London for local Sheva Brochos, the pupil must return to school.
  - If the child has a Chasanah and Sheva Brochos week of a parent's brother or sister in London, absence will be authorised from 11.00 am on the day of the wedding. For their own brother or sister's wedding in London, absence will be authorised on the day of the wedding only. In both cases, the pupil must arrive in school by 10.30 am. on the day following the wedding.

- For other Chasanahs however close, pupils may leave one hour before the end of the day and we will need to see the invitation first.

**[PLEASE NOTE: We will be monitoring the number of requests for absence for weddings and may not grant permission for pupils to leave early.]**

15.2 Bar Mitzvahs:

- If the child has a Bar Mitzvah of a parent's brother or sister's son or of their own brother abroad, up to 5 school days will be authorised.
- If the child has a Bar Mitzvah of a parent's brother or sister's son or of their own brother in the United Kingdom outside of London and the immediate area, up to 3 school days will be authorised.
- If the Bar Mitzvah is in London, then no leave of absence will be granted.

***COPIES OF INVITATIONS FOR ALL OF THE ABOVE MAY BE REQUESTED.***

15.3 Other Family Simchas:

- Whilst we of course, always want to support Simchas within our school community, any absences for any reason must be authorised beforehand. This includes absence requests for Vorts and engagements.


15.4 Shivas:

- Where there is a shiva in the immediate family, a pupil may be absent from school for a period of time which must be agreed with the Headteacher.

15.5 Other Requests for Authorised Absence:

- Requests for absence, outside of those reasons defined above, will be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into account the reason for the request, notice given, length of absence request and the likely impact on the pupil's education. We will also look at the child's record of absence and punctuality as well as her academic progress.

**PLEASE NOTE: NO FLIGHTS SHOULD BE BOOKED BEFORE AUTHORISATION FOR ABSENCE HAS BEEN GIVEN.**

<b>Ratified by the Governing Body</b>	
Signed:  <hr style="width: 80%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair of Governors</p>	Date: <u>27<sup>th</sup> November 2023</u>
<p><b>This policy will be reviewed on or before the following date: November 2024</b></p>	