



September 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

### **Working Together to Improve Attendance**

Welcome back to everyone following the summer break, and a special welcome to families who are joining Richard Cobden Primary School for the first time.

Each September, we remind our families about the importance of regular school attendance. Good attendance is now more important than ever, as school attendance across the country is still not as good as it was before COVID. All schools have a Target of at least 96% attendance for the year, and we need your help to achieve this.

The Department for Education (DfE) requires schools to do all they can to support every child and family to attend school regularly and to follow up any concerns quickly. The Department has issued new guidance: [Working together to improve school attendance.pdf](#) for all schools and we will continue to strive to do all we can to achieve our attendance target of 96% for the year ahead. However, we can't do this alone and really do need your help and support.

We will continue to work in partnership with parents/guardians and also services such as the Local Authority to make sure support is offered, where needed, and to make sure parents/guardians are fulfilling their parental responsibility to bring their child to school every day, unless they have a valid reason for not doing so.

Attached, please find our latest leaflet on attendance and please also make sure you read the attendance page on the school's website. Please ask a member of the leadership team or the school office if you are unsure of any of the guidance or information we have published.

**Quite simply, children do better at school if they attend regularly.** It is surprising how quickly a few absences add up: a child with 96% attendance has actually missed nearly 10 days of school. The full attendance policy is on the school's website but here are the most important bits for you as a parent/guardian:

- **Ensure your child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.**
- **Notify the school as soon as possible when your child has to be unexpectedly absent** (e.g. sickness). Parents/guardians must contact the school, ideally by 9am, on the **first** day of their child's absence and then each day afterwards. This is an important part of safeguarding children. If your child is not at school in the morning and you haven't told us to expect this, then the school must check that your child is safe. Please respond to any messages we leave and make sure we always have the most up-to-date contact number for you. You can tell the school that your child is absent by phoning the school on 0207 387 5909 and leaving a message that includes your child's name, class and the reason for your child's absence.
- **Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.**
- **Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.**

For more details of the above, please read the information on our website and the attached leaflet.

**Punctuality is also extremely important - Lateness disrupts learning.** If your child arrives at school after 9am, they will be registered as 'late' and you will need to sign them in using the late book in the school office. Lateness beyond 9.15am will be counted as an absence for the morning session and this will be unauthorised unless the school receives an acceptable reason. If your child is often late, the school will contact you to discuss this.

**Reminders of Timings:** Many families have a time of 9.00am in their minds when thinking about arriving at school. It has to be **earlier** than this because **lessons start at 9.00am**. If you are only arriving at 9.00am, you are late! Improving punctuality is often just a quick fix. In most cases all that needs to happen is for you to bring your morning timings 15 minutes earlier.

<b>School Gates Open:</b>	<b>08:45 am</b>
<b>School Gates Close:</b>	<b>08.55am</b>
<b>Children in class for registration:</b>	<b>08.55am</b>
<b>Lessons Start:</b>	<b>09:00am</b>

We will be working with the children in school to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality and we will be setting up class and individual awards for children with excellent attendance and punctuality.

**Guidance from the DfE: Is my child too ill for school?**

There is some guidance for parents through the following link. It will help you decide whether or not your child should attend school when they are ill. Please remember, if your child has a temperature, they should stay at home but for other minor colds and coughs, bring them to school and we will make sure we keep a close eye on them. If a child is every really unwell at school, we will always call you. Chatting to us at the school gates or the school office to let us know is always helpful.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

**Monitoring attendance and punctuality:**

Children's attendance and punctuality is regularly monitored. Parents/guardians will usually be contacted if a child's attendance drops below 96% or if they are persistently late. Letters will be sent and you will be invited in for a meeting to discuss your child's attendance and punctuality. The school works closely with the Local Authority and advice is taken where there are concerns about a child's attendance.

Please read our leaflet for further information and let's pull together to do everything we can to meet our attendance target of 96%.

We are delighted to get this new school year under way and we thank you for your continued support.

Best Wishes,  
Gail Carlyle  
Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Lead