



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2023 - 2024

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Person(s) Responsible:	Headteacher Mrs Woods (Governor)
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***This policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)***

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## Working together to improve attendance

We have reviewed our policy to reflect best practice as highlighted in the non-statutory guidance: [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

We will work with partners to:

### EXPECT

We aspire to high standards of attendance from **all pupils** and parents/carers and strive to build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



### MONITOR

We use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



### LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, we will discuss this with parents/carers (and pupils as appropriate) to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how we can best work together to resolve them.



### FACILITATE SUPPORT

We aim to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



### FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we will work with the Education Welfare Officer to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



### ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## Introduction

At Biggin Hill Primary School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

Biggin Hill Primary School is a happy school. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about each child's welfare. As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, the school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents/carers.

This policy provides the framework within which all staff, parents/carers, children, carers and external agencies can contribute to the development and maintenance of a learning environment with high attendance and punctuality. It is Biggin Hill Policy not to authorise holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## Aims of the policy

We aim for all our children to have 100% attendance but we recognise that some absence due to ill health or other circumstances can be unavoidable.

We aim:

- To promote good attendance by encouraging children to attend school and to be punctual
- To reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- To act early to address patterns of absence
- To establish a clear system for maintaining high attendance and excellent punctuality which is communicated clearly to the school community
- To encourage children to attend school and to be punctual
- To have an effective administration system for monitoring and intervening with issues relating to attendance and punctuality
- To offer parents and carers advice and support on the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- To work closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to tackle persistent absenteeism

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

## Expectations

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the children at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

The [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance - GOV.UK](#) summarises the attendance responsibilities for parents/carers, schools, academy trusts and governing bodies, and local authorities. These are outlined in the working together to improve school attendance guidance.

We expect that children will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school on time (by 8:45am every day).

We expect that all parents and carers will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- To be fully supportive of the School with regard to attendance and punctuality as part of signing up to the Home-School Agreement
- Follow the School procedures for dealing with attendance through making contact with the school of the first day of absence
- Support the school by not requesting authorised absence for holidays during term time and minimising where possible all other unauthorised absence, for example dental appointments during the school day.

We expect that school administrative staff will:

- Oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- Contact parents/carers by telephone on each day of absence when a child fails to attend school and when no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence
- Encourage good attendance
- Record all reasons for absence in the register using the correct codes.

We expect that class teachers will:

- Complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice a day
- Inform the Attendance Lead of any concerns.

We expect the Family Liaison Officer to:

- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of children who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's expectations with regard to regular and punctual attendance as directed by the Attendance Lead
- Work with families who are having difficulties in ensuring regular and punctual attendance by offering a program of support and access to other services.

We expect the Attendance Lead and Senior Leadership Team to:

- Co-ordinate and monitor the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the School

- Refer irregular and unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Raise the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality, for example, through the assembly programme and the reward systems that are put in place
- Analyse and act swiftly in response to report data on attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that the learning environment on offer to students, through the curriculum, personalised learning, behaviour policy and reintegration procedures, create the foundations for excellent attendance and punctuality and low levels of fixed term exclusions
- Ensure that School expectations in regards to this policy on attendance and punctuality are communicated clearly to all stakeholders
- Carry out home visits on any child who has been absent for 5 days with no contact from a parent or carer, or sooner if the school is concerned for a child or parent's welfare in any way
- Work with families and support and encourage them to improve attendance and provide incentives and rewards for improved attendance.

We expect Governors will:

- Annually review and agree the Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Annually agree to attendance targets
- Take a lead role in supporting the School in the implementation of its approach to attendance and punctuality especially in our response to parents/carers in supporting unauthorised absence.

## Timings of the School Day

Following consultation with parents/carers and staff during the spring term (2022-23), the school day has been extended by 15 minutes for the 2023-24 academic year to meet current requirements. This has been achieved by reducing the drop off at the start of the day and changing the time of the morning register to 8:45am. The school gate will now be open from 8:30am each day.

### Entry to school

The school gates are opened at 8:30am and children enter classrooms immediately through the external doors. The gates are closed at 8:40am. Children arriving between 8:40 and 8:45am will be let in through the gates by a member of staff and should enter their classroom via the external door.

### Registration

Registers are taken promptly once children are in class (at 8.45am). Any child arriving between 8.45 and 9.30am will be recorded in the Late Book by a member of staff on the gate and will be coded as L (LATE BEFORE REGISTERS CLOSE). Their time of arrival and reason for lateness will also be recorded in the Late Book.

Registers close at 9.30am, after which if children arrive for the session, they are coded as U (LATE) which is an unauthorised absence. Any child arriving after 8.45am should register with a member of admin staff in the office, their name will be recorded in the Late Book if this is 9.30am or later it will be recorded on the register as an unauthorised absence.

## Absence

Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child(ren) attends the School on a regular and full-time basis. Every half day absence has to be classified by the School as either authorised or unauthorised. The School must record the reason for any half day absence. Unauthorised absence such as truancy will lead to sanctions being taken against students or in exceptional cases, extended periods of unauthorised absence may lead to a referral to the Local Authority for legal action being taken against parents/carers.

Under normal circumstances, the only reason a child should miss any lessons is if they are too ill to attend. This is an example of an authorised absence, i.e. children have missed a morning or afternoon session for a valid reason. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes keeping children away from lessons unnecessarily, truancy and absences, which the school considers to have not been properly explained.

## Grant for Leave of Absence

### Holidays in term time:

Holidays during term time are not permitted as there is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. The School holiday dates are published a year in advance and we therefore do not see any reason for parents/carers to take their child(ren) out of school during term time. Holidays will not be authorised during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendments 2013 state that Headteachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances (see below).

### Exceptional circumstances:

Family holidays are not considered to be exceptional circumstances. Applications can be made by parents/carers for **Leave of Absence** on compassionate grounds to enable a child to attend a wedding, funeral, religious observance etc. Such applications will be considered by the Head Teacher. In the case of an application for compassionate leave of absence being received, it will only be considered if the child has an attendance rate of 96% or above in the previous 12 months and will not fall below 96% as a result of taking leave. This applies to each child in a family. Please note that leave for weddings and funerals is one day only and additional holiday will not be authorised.

Some requests for holidays may also be considered on the grounds of medical or special educational needs.

Where possible, requests must be made in writing to the Head teacher and the leave of application form completed not less than two weeks before the intended period of leave. A form will be returned to the parent/carer clearly stipulating if approval has been given. If approval has been given it will be

made clear that it is only given in these exceptional circumstances and that **no** further requests will be considered.

Any requests for a leave of absence that is not authorised will be communicated to parents/carers in writing. The communication will include a paragraph, making it clear to the parents/carers that Biggin Hill Primary School will ask Bromley Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for every unauthorised holiday of five days or more. A Penalty Notice is a fine imposed where a parent fails to ensure that their child is in education or has an unacceptable period of unauthorised absences. The penalty notice is £60 (per child, per parent) that must be paid within 21 days increasing to £120 to be paid within 28 days.

## Rewards

The School encourage regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a stimulating working environment
- By responding promptly to a child's parents'/carers' concerns
- Providing incentives (Wheel of Names) for having 100% attendance for a 5 day period - this will be done each week so as not to discourage those whose cumulative attendance is below this figure
- Providing whole school incentives for daily attendance above 96%
- Providing class certificates for daily class attendance that is 98% or above
- Monitoring and displaying class and whole school attendance so that it is a focus for the whole school community

## Responding to Parents/Carers when a child is absent

When a child does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- All parents/carers are asked to contact school if their child is absent. This should be done for each day of absence by telephoning, by email or using [Studybugs](#). This information will be passed to the class teacher
- Each morning the answer phone is checked and any messages of absence are recorded on the child's record using Arbor
- On the first day of absence if a child is absent and there are no messages a phone call will be made and a text message will be sent to establish the reason for the absence. If there is no reply a message will be left and the school will continue to try to call them throughout the morning. A follow up email may also be sent.
- Monitoring children, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance and arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the EWO if the irregular attendance continues.

If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer (and other emergency contacts). If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers or invite them into school to discuss the child's absence. The school will tell parents/carers that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the



EWO. If a child is absent for 5 days and no contact has been made by their parent or carer, a home visit will be carried out. A home visit will be carried out sooner if the school is concerned about the child or parent's welfare. If a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan a home visit will be carried out immediately and the social worker informed. If a child is subject to Child in Need Plan advice will be sought from the social worker about whether or not to undertake a home visit.

- We expect that children should have a consultation with their GP if their absence is longer than two days. The School may request to see an appointment card, prescription or similar.
- Persistent non-attendance, where absences cannot be justified in law, may result in the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices in accordance with the Local Authority's penalty notice protocol. In addition, the School will support the EWS in prosecutions brought under Section 444 Education Act 1996, or in applications in the Family Proceedings Court for Education Supervision Orders.

## Registers

If a child persistently arrives at school after the close of the register, consideration will be given to (a) the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice in the sum of £60.00 or (b) a referral to our EWO for a prosecution. Lateness not only affects the learning of the student in question, but also affects the learning of others.

Teachers and office staff are mindful of the fact that school registers are "legal documents" and as such, should be maintained responsibly and marks entered with accuracy.

All data relating to attendance will be kept for a minimum period of three years from the last date of entry.

## Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform school as soon as possible. A child will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the child will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The child's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Reasons for a child changing school will be reported to school governors as part of the Head Teacher's report. This is to enable any trends, such as "high mobility" to be identified. According to the Education Act, any child who has unauthorised absence for 20 consecutive days can be removed from the school roll under certain conditions. The school reserves the right to exercise this aspect of the Education Act, should circumstances dictate.

## Communication

A child's individual attendance record is reported to parents/carers as part of the child's annual school report. Parents/carers are notified of their child's current attendance percentage during the intervening period, if the child appears to be "at risk" of falling below 96% attendance.

When communicating with parents and carers regarding attendance we use the traffic light system:

- Red - attendance below 90%
- Amber - attendance between 90 and 96%
- Green - attendance above 96%

We monitor the attendance of all children in school and attendance concerns are discussed weekly by the attendance team with the EWO. The following actions may be taken for children with poor attendance:

SLT phone call	If a child's attendance is causing a concern or they are at risk of becoming persistently absent (below 90%) a phone call will be made by a member of SLT.
Letter 1	Informing parents/carers of below 96% attendance resulting in attendance being monitored by the school.
Meeting	Before letter 2 is sent, parents and carers will be invited into school to discuss attendance and ways in which they can be supported and incentivised to ensure that it improves.
Letter 2	If the child's attendance fails to improve. Request for medical evidence of any further absence with an invitation to discuss the situation should the parents/carers so wish.
Letter 3	If no improvement and no evidence provided leads to a referral to the Education Welfare Officer and invited to attend a meeting at school.

All parents and carers will receive an attendance summary for their child at the end of each term. This includes where the child's attendance falls on the traffic light system.

Parents or carers can log into Arbor to get information on their child's individual percentage. Partner agencies may request attendance information from the School. This will be provided to bona fide partners, as part of our commitment to safeguarding the children in our care.

Information on whole school absence is given to parents/carers in the School Prospectus. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

At the Open Afternoons for children about to enter reception, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents/carers and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on

time is also emphasised, especially for young children who can be upset if they are the only ones left.

Parents/carers are asked to share any worries their child might have. Sometimes little things upset children resulting in them not wanting to come to school. Parents/carers need to be aware of this. The school's Inclusion Officer can advise, or signpost parents/carers to support partners.

New parents/carers are asked to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, so that their child's education is not disrupted. Children are admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups and all parents/carers requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Head teacher or the Deputy Head teacher. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance is highlighted along with other school routines.

## Concerns

The Educational Welfare Officer meets with the Attendance Lead each week to discuss attendance issues, and offers advice and support. Letters are sent to the parents/carers of children whose attendance falls below 96%, to remind them of the school's attendance aims and to inform them of their child's current percentage.

Subsequent letters are sent if no improvement is seen. At this point parents/carers may be invited to attend a meeting with the EWO. The purpose of this meeting is to ascertain whether there is an underlying difficulty, issue or reason for the absence. This meeting can lead to referral to The Inclusion Officer, The School Nurse or a Common Assessment Form being completed. parents/carers may be asked to supply "evidence" that an absence has a specific cause, such as a prescription or hospital appointment letter. This is a voluntary sharing of information between school and parents/carers.

Similar letters are sent to the parents/carers of children with a significant number of lates, particularly when there is a regular pattern to the late arrivals.

## Truancy

All the staff at Biggin Hill Primary School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Head teacher is notified, who then contacts the parent, either by phone, or by visiting the home address and advising the Educational Welfare Officer. parents/carers are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Head teacher talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

## Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by the attendance lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1 - The registration system

The School will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records. The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

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<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

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<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2 - The law

### 1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
  - [b] To any special needs he may have.
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

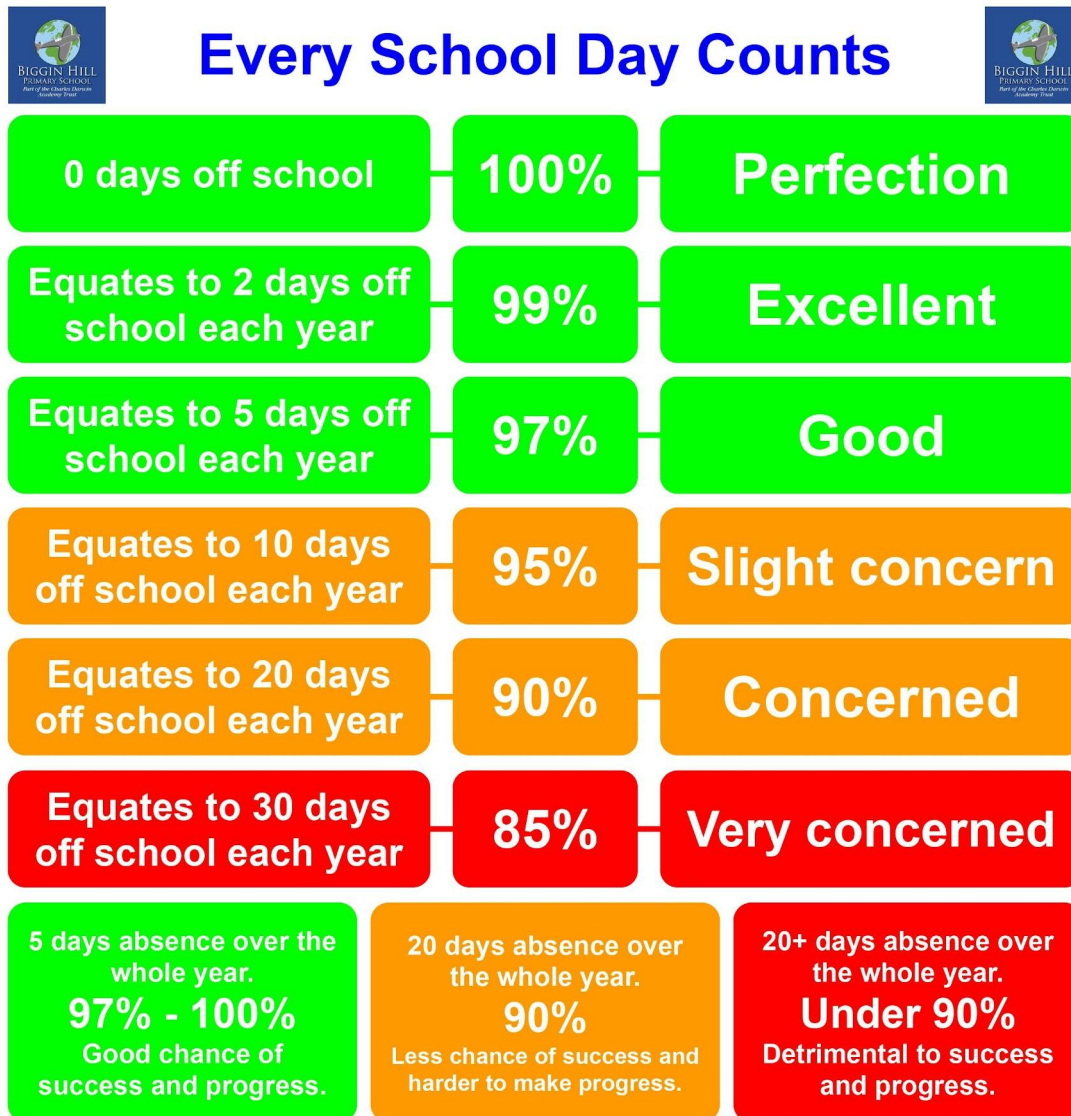
Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:  
The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006



## Appendix 3 - Traffic light system for attendance

A child's attendance is graded using the following traffic light system.



## Every Minute Counts

**LATENESS = LOST LEARNING**

(Figures below are calculated over a school year)

5 minutes late each day	=	3 days lost!
10 minutes late each day	=	6.5 days lost!
15 minutes late each day	=	10 days lost!
20 minutes late each day	=	13 days lost!
30 minutes late each day	=	19 days lost!



**Be at the  
classroom on  
time and ready to  
learn!**