



Attendance and the medal scheme

School (Pooles Park) closed this afternoon for a half holiday granted for the distribution of the school prizes and Medals for the year

PP Girls' School Log book Oct 2nd 1896



Medals for good attendance at Pooles Park 1906-8 awarded to A. Wood

Attendance and the medal scheme

There is, in the school archive, a small box of medals. The medals are thus

Colour	Year on bar	Inscription	Awarded to	Awarded by
Silver	1904	Awarded to A. Wood (I) for punctual attendance during the school year 1904	A. Wood	School Board for London
Silver	1905	Awarded to A. Wood (II) for punctual attendance during the school year 1905.	A. Wood	London County Council
Bronze	1906.	Awarded to A. Wood (I) for punctual attendance during the year 1905-6 and three previous years	A. Wood	London County Council
Bronze	1907.	Awarded to A. Wood (II) for punctual attendance during the year 1906-7 and three previous years	A. Wood	London County Council
Gold	1908	Awarded to A. Wood (I) for punctual attendance during the year 1907-8 and six previous years	A. Wood	London County Council
Gold	1909	Awarded to A. Wood (II) for punctual attendance during the year 1908-9 and six previous years	A. Wood	London County Council

With it is an accompanying letter from Henrietta Wood..

71 Regina Rd N4
22.1.1976

Dear Mr. Hardwick,

Herewith the medals.

Thank you for your letter. Please do not trouble to acknowledge these. I hope they prove to be of interest in the years to come.

Yours very sincerely

Henrietta Wood

Attendance and the medal scheme

With the 1870 education act and a standardised system of local school boards, the old educational institutions were, with a single stroke, replaced. Each major administrative area had to set up a board to build and run schools. All children from five to thirteen had to go to school and it was also decreed that attendance would be mandatory, non attendance being punishable by law.

The schools were to be run on a grant, from central government, to be calculated on actual daily attendance figures and not on the size of the school roll.

Therefore, attendance, or rather the lack of attendance is, in the first ten years of Pooles Park, a constant headache for head mistress Miss Crees. Often she is pulled up by members of the Board on the attendance figures although it is often out of her control. On nearly every page of the Pooles Park Girls' School Log there is reference to a range of things that were adversely affecting the attendance figures:

- The weather – it would appear that parents kept their children away when the weather was rainy, hot, cold or snowy
- Illness – epidemics of measles, diphtheria etc
- The Lennox Road Mission Treat
- Fridays
- Mondays

Girls school log. 30th Aug 1877

Miss Crees notes that during the past quarter 12 girls have attended 50%, 10 made less than 60%, and 9 between 60-70%. "All these girls have been regularly visited and their parents repeatedly written to". She further notes (Sept 1878) "I find that many children are kept at home by their parents on Fridays". Of the children that do attend the head complains difficulties with getting their birth certificates.

Girls school log. 24th June 1879

Sometimes Miss Crees resorts to cunning in order to maintain the numbers and even admits to it in her commentary. For instance when there is a local fete which she knows will diminish the numbers attending; she closes the school for either an afternoon or couple of hours. Obviously total absence of all pupils through school closure does not add unfavourably to the statistics and thus the school's income!

It was not long before the various school boards realised that it was very much in their interests to encourage the regular attendance of pupils. Some school boards decided to reward regular attendance with picture cards and/or medals.

The School Board for London in 1886 decided to award a medal to every pupil attending school every time the school was opened during a complete school year. No exceptions were made, even one half days unavoidable absence due to illness was enough to disqualify a child from receiving a medal. A 100 per cent attendance record would not automatically mean the award of a medal; the head teacher also had to certify that the pupil's conduct had been good. Even the head teacher's word was not to be accepted without a certification of accuracy by the school managers. Although these conditions were very severe, a large, and ever growing, number of children got their medals.

Each week of good attendance earned a 'ticket'.

- A term completed with a full set of 'tickets' earned a 'Reward Card'.
- A School Year completed with a 'Reward Card' for each term earned a 'Medal'.

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- A School Year completed with the required examinations passed earned a 'Certificate' and, possibly, a 'Prize'.

Medals



The School Board for London, 1887 to 1904, and the London County Council 1905 to 1920 issued a range of medals and bars in various combinations of finish to encourage and reward regular attendance at their schools. Each year a pupil could earn another medal indicating 'perfect' attendance for from one to twelve years.

Certificates

The School Board for London, 1887 to 1904, and the London County Council 1905 onwards issued a range of certificates to pupils. A new certificate was awarded each year to show that the pupil had satisfactorily completed the examinations for that year to the required 'Standard'. Certificates were awarded each year for Standards one through seven. Other certificates were awarded for Scripture Knowledge, Swimming, Cooking and various other subjects.

Reward Cards

The School Board for London, 1887 to 1904, and the London County Council 1905 onwards issued many series of Reward Cards. Every pupil achieving the required standard of attendance and behaviour received a card each term. A pupil holding a card for each term of the school year was then entitled to an Attendance Medal. It seems that entitlement to a card was gained by earning a weekly ticket. A few of these tickets survive, but their use is not documented.