



RFPS Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1. Introduction

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. Rugby Free 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.

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 on our school website.

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. It also takes into account the updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2023 which now includes a section on attendance and children missing from education.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Trustees at our school, work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning and also often struggle with their friendships and social, emotional and mental health. 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.

2. Aims and Objectives

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.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality

Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic, diagnosed 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 Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff 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 dealing with difficulties
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance

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
- Working with outside agencies to support parents.

3. Definitions

3.1 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

3.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

The absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent

Failure to notify the school of your child's illness will result in an unauthorised absence

An absence, which school have clear evidence is in fact a holiday, will also be unauthorised

- An absence, which goes on longer than that which has been authorised, will be unauthorised



- An absence which we have good reason to believe is not as stated e.g. saying the child is ill but then child returns to say they have been on holiday and school gets international dialling tone etc.
- An absence when we have offered to collect the children and the parent has declined.

An absence when it is regarding parental/carers ill-health and not the child's unless exceptional circumstances

4. 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, trustees, 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 Warwickshire Attendance Service, any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve
- To report attendance statistics to the PCAB, Trust, LA, Ofsted and the DfE where requested
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Leadership Team and/or Family Support Worker
- Teachers to raise attendance concerns at parents evening, parent meetings (when appropriate e.g. discussing concerns over learning) and put attendance on all school reports.

5. Responsibilities

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.

5.1 Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Completing the registers twice daily in an accurate and timely manner
- Having an awareness of pupils' poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers
- Informing the Leadership Team and FSW 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 on the register
- Discussing attendance issues at parent evenings/meetings where necessary

5.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Being firm in stance when it comes to absences and leave requests
- Organising the contacting of families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the PCAB and Trust
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- Notifying/referring to Warwickshire Front Door (Social Care) when we believe that the attendance of a child is a significant safeguarding concern
- Liaising with outside agencies to support with attendance e.g. GP, Social Worker, school nursing team

5.3 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
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home during the school day and how many minutes of school they are missing
- 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
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance
- Following safeguarding procedures if attendance/lateness is seen to be a child protection concern e.g. couldn't contact parents



5.4 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers (not other family members) are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by child illness, attendance at a medical appointment or an authorised absence previously agreed by the Headteacher
- Contacting the school office on every morning of absence and giving the office a reasonable explanation e.g. type of illness
- 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. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary, and giving school at least 14 days notice is possible (without the 14 days notice it will likely be recorded as unauthorised).
- 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
- Always endeavour to take holidays in the school holidays and make appointments after school or in the holidays
- Being honest with the school about reasons for the absence
- Ensuring that pupils are consistently on time for school

6. Registration

The gates open at 8.35am for all pupils. The gate is locked at 8.50am and we expect pupils to be on time for school. Any child who arrives after the gates have closed will need to enter school through the school office and parents/carers must fill in a form to ensure accurate registers are taken and the reason for lateness is recorded.

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 by the class teacher by 9.00am in the morning and by 10 minutes after the end of the pupil's lunch time e.g Year 1 and 2 finish lunch at 12.45pm so registers must be taken by 12.55pm. If there is a child missing in the afternoon register that was here in the morning, the teacher must find out the reason for the child not being there immediately. The office should have communicated with the class teacher if the child has gone home at lunchtime. The registers are submitted electronically via BromCom. If the internet is not working, or other reason, teachers are to send completed fire list registers to the school office.

All attendance records are documented using Bromcom MIS software. 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.



7. Lateness

Once the gates are closed at 8.50am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school after 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 electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 8.55am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

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.

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.

8. Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on every 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.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the electronic register. 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.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter 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)

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 from 8.50am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. If we have not heard from the child's parents as to their whereabouts by 11am this will be reported to a DSL as a safeguarding concern.

8.1 Illness

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.

If a child has been away from school for 5 consecutive days (including weekends) the school will conduct an unannounced home visit to check on the child's welfare. The school reserves the right to carry out this home visit earlier in the absence period than 5 days if they feel there are concerns around the absence or the child is already classed as a persistent



absentee (has attendance of below 90%). The home visit will likely to be unannounced due to the difficulties in giving a specific time due to availability of staff as two members of staff will need to visit.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

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. After the child has been away from school for 7 consecutive days (including weekends), we will ask you to provide a doctor's note for this time. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries. In the event of school not being satisfied with the evidence we have been given, this may be recorded as a safeguarding concern and may be passed on to Integrated Front Door (Social Care).

8.2 Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. These circumstances have to be very exceptional e.g. funeral of close relative. It is normal practice for school to ask for evidence e.g. wedding invite.

9. Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%. Good attendance is 98%+

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school journey. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the trustees to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school, we rely upon 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. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school may refer on to Warwickshire Attendance Service and to our Targetted Attendance Casework officer. In cases where we believe there is a safeguarding concern linked to the low attendance e.g. parental mental health needs or unusual amounts of illness, we will seek advice from Front Door (social care) and may send in a Multi-agency concern form (MAC) to them to investigate further. Low or unexplained attendance could trigger the need for an Early Help Pathway to be started with parents consent.

Termly letters will be sent to parents of children who are persistently absent, with attendance less than 90% or pupils who are late on several occasions. These are sent to all pupils, even those who may have reasons for the absence.



9.1 Monitoring Attendance

Office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on our MIS software, Bromcom. Regular meetings are held with the Family support worker and Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns, looking at patterns/trends and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents. Attendance is also discussed in weekly safeguarding meetings, Senior Leadership Team meetings and staff meetings and that's because attendance of pupils is everyone's responsibility.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Trust or before if there are major changes to policy or practice.