



## **PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY**

### **AIMS OF THIS POLICY**

- To improve the overall attendance of children at Rose Green Infant School
- To improve children's attainment through their good attendance
- To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school, including parents, pupils, teachers and governors

To achieve these aims, we are committed to the following:

- A welcoming, stimulating and safe learning environment where all staff feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential
- High expectations of our pupils and all staff
- A broad, balanced, stimulating and relevant curriculum
- A culture where we recognise and celebrate achievements in all areas of school life
- High quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies matched to the needs of the children
- A range of resources that are effectively used to support and challenge learning
- The provision of experiences that will develop our pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding and understanding of race, equality and diversity
- Support, guidance and training for all those who teach and work with our children
- Developing and maintaining links with our wider community

### **THE ROLE OF THE PARENT**

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents parent(s) or the carer with whom the child resides.

Parents have a legal duty to make sure their children attend school regularly and that they arrive at school on time. It is the parent's responsibility to tell the school as soon as possible why a pupil is absent and to provide any further information that the school needs to confirm that absence if appropriate.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously, however each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

## **REGISTERS AND ABSENCE**

The class teacher will record the attendance of the children at the start of the morning and the afternoon sessions. Once the registers have been checked, and if no communication has been received, the school will endeavour to contact the parent of any absent child to ascertain that they are safe. If contact cannot be made by 12 noon with the parent and there is concern for the safety of the child, then the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team and /or MASH may be contacted.

Telephone messages and emails will be accepted as notification of absence and a written summary of the message will be kept on the register.

## **SICKNESS ABSENCE**

At Rose Green Infant School we closely monitor short term sickness absence. If we have concerns over the amount of sickness absence and/or it becomes clear that a pattern is emerging, we will ask to meet with parents to discuss further, in order that we can identify how the situation can be resolved and attendance improved. We ask that parents ensure their child returns to school as soon as possible after an episode of illness. **After a bout of sickness and / or diarrhoea, children may not return to school until 48 hours after the last episode.**

## **UNAUTHORISED LATENESS**

The school day begins at 8.50am and anyone arriving after the register has been taken but before 9.30am will be recorded as late. The register at Rose Green Infant School closes at 9.30am. Arrival at school after that will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Once a child reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week school period (each session is a morning or an afternoon session) a referral will be made to the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

If a child is absent from school without authorisation for 10 or more school sessions (half days) in a 10 school week period (accrued or consecutive) a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made.

Disputes with the school or claims of bullying are not permitted reasons for absence; absences due to these reasons will be unauthorised.

## **FAMILY HOLIDAYS**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 set out that holidays in term time cannot be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. Following consultations with the Governing Body, it is the decision of Rose Green Infant School that the Headteacher will not authorise holiday in term time except in exceptional circumstances (e.g.

that a parent is in the police, armed forces or works for the NHS and has been directed to take leave at a certain time). If 10 or more school sessions are missed as a result of unauthorised holiday, a referral will be made to the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

The definition of holiday for the purpose of this policy is any absence of half a day or more that the child is away from school for any reason other than those which are deemed as acceptable (see Leave of Absence below). This includes not only going away for an extended period of time but also day excursions e.g. to theme parks and half day absences for reasons such as getting a head start on traffic before a weekend away.

If a parent chooses to disregard school policy and takes holiday in term time, there will be no warning given and a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made to the PE:I Team for their consideration once the absences meet or exceed 10 sessions.

Although we do not authorise holiday, Rose Green Infant School has a legal obligation to safeguard its pupils and should know where they are during each school day. If a parent chooses to take unauthorised holiday, we would appreciate them notifying us of this intention so we do not need to initiate safeguarding procedures which will involve the PE:I Team and possibly other authorities.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise leave of absence in specific circumstances;

- Participation in approved and supervised activities at other schools e.g. sports, music.
- Medical or dental appointments, **although parents are encouraged to make routine appointments out of school hours wherever possible**
- Religious Observance for days set apart for that purpose by the religious body to which the family belongs.

Leave of Absence can also be granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances include compassionate leave in situations such as bereavement and serious illness. Each request will be considered individually, taking into account the nature of the request, the frequency of requests, if advance notice was given (when appropriate), pupil attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Leave of absence forms can be obtained from the school office. The Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be authorised absent from school if leave is granted in exceptional circumstances.

## REWARDS

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured, which leads to significantly improved educational outcomes over time.

### Individual incentives.

Where positive impact is required for specific children, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the

parent has made to secure the child's attendance. Individual rewards are sometimes employed as an additional incentive where appropriate; these are designed according to the child's particular need.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Attendance data will be looked at weekly by our attendance officer and fully reviewed half termly by the Headteacher, to establish patterns of irregular or poor attendance. This will include children with:

- Frequent incomplete weeks
- Monday and Friday absences
- Frequent lateness
- Periods of extended absence
- Periods of unauthorised absence
- All children with attendance below 90%

Following this half termly review, parents will be contacted in person or by letter to raise the concerns and a meeting may be requested. Ongoing concerns will be discussed with the Pupil Entitlement Team and it may be suggested that other agencies become involved to support the family in improving attendance.

Focus group and whole school attendance data is shared termly with the Governing Body; individual pupil data remains confidential.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare, we will consult with West Sussex Social Care in line with our Child Protection Procedures.

Reviewed: September 2020  
Next review: September 2021

### Appendices

*Extract from Leave of Absence Form*

*Attendance and Absence during the COVID-19 pandemic*

## **Guidance on Absence Requests**

Page 2 of leaflet given to parents who request an absence from school:

**Parents DO NOT have an automatic right to take a child from school for holiday purposes.**

Please see below for additional information on exceptional circumstances.

Absence during term time should be the **exception** and not the rule. Each Headteacher has the discretion to decide whether or not to authorise each individual request in relation to the

Governing Body's Policy on attendance, which is published on our school web site.

If a child is kept away for longer than the period agreed, the additional time will normally be treated as unauthorised. Similarly, if a child is taken away without prior written permission, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

**Unauthorised holidays will be referred to the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team, who will consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. If issued, a fixed Penalty Notice applies for 10 or more unauthorised sessions of absence (5 school days). If paid within 28 days it is £60 per parent per child. After 28 days, it goes up to £120 per parent per child.**

Schools are not legally required to provide homework for a child absent on a family holiday during term time.

All unauthorised absences will be recorded on the child's annual report and may be investigated by the Pupil Entitlement:

Investigation Officer on monitoring visits to the school.

- **Exceptional circumstances may be that a parent is in the police, armed forces or NHS and has been directed to take leave at a certain time.**
- **It may be that the family is experiencing a life threatening or emergency situation.**

## Appendix 2

### **Attendance and Absence during the COVID-19 pandemic**

As a result of the full and then partial closure due to COVID-19 from 23 March to 20 July 2020, attendance was not statutory for this period. From the start of the autumn term 2020, pupil attendance is again mandatory for children of statutory school age and the usual rules on attendance will apply including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

### **Returning to School**

All pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies and where the absence has been authorised by the school (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, has been told to quarantine, is absent for a necessary and authorised religious observance etc.).

We understand that some children, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as diabetes. This may also include some pupils with EHC plans.

A small number of children will still be unable to attend school in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19). Engaging with the NHS Test and Trace process means that cases can be identified and action taken - this means if your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to [get a test](#) and you should inform school of the results of that test.

If your child is unable to attend school for this reason or because you consider they may have other risk factors, you should contact the school so that we can understand your situation and discuss what support is in place in school and how you can access education at home resources (remote learning). Some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). This may also apply to some pupils with EHC plans. The school may contact the SEND and/or School Nursing Teams for advice and support, and we may require medical verification or other relevant documentation in order to assess risk. Please see [current advice on shielding](#)

If your child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer access to education at home resources (remote learning). We will monitor engagement with this activity to ensure learning is being accessed appropriately. This may also apply to some pupils with EHC plans where parents will be involved in the planning of a child's return to school.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised, although we would ask that best endeavours are made to get children to school if they are healthy and not required to isolate any more, for example with the help of family or friends.

### **Exceptional leave (optional)**

There is still no entitlement to leave during term time for the purpose of a holiday. Parents should continue to plan their holidays within school breaks. If you need to take your child out of school for an exceptional circumstance, you must apply complete a leave of absence request form and seek permission from the school as usual. Please also consider that your child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. Please see [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

If you and your child(ren) have been told to quarantine following travel, you should not attend school during the period of quarantine. Please discuss such circumstances with us and provide documentary evidence in support of the absence. We will provide access to education at home resources (remote learning). Please see current advice on [travel corridors](#)

### **Outbreaks**

In the event of a local outbreak, the school or a number of schools may need to close temporarily to help control transmission. If this is the case, the school will provide your child with education at home resources (remote learning).

### **Punctuality**

Until further notice, children will be given staggered start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. This was communicated in July 2020 and again at the beginning of the autumn term. Staggered start and finish times will not reduce the amount of overall teaching time each child receives. Please ensure your child arrives on time and is collected on time in order to minimise disruption. Please contact the school if you are experiencing difficulties. If lateness persists, we will want to discuss this with you and agree some support measures; if matters do not improve, the lateness will be addressed as per our full attendance and absence policy.

**Please be aware that the gathering of parents at the school gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed until further notice.**

This appendix should be read in conjunction with our full attendance and absence policy.

### **Further Guidance**

#### **\* Guidance on schools reopening**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

This appendix was written in September 2020 and will be reviewed regularly to reflect any changes in school circumstances, national guidance or law.