



ROSE GREEN INFANT SCHOOL

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

The Importance of School Attendance

Improving and then sustaining good attendance is the business of everyone; parents and carers, teaching and non-teaching staff, our Governing Body, the Local Authority and other agencies and partners that we work with. The barriers to a child accessing education are wide and complex, both within our school and outside our gates, and are often very specific to individual pupils or families. At Rose Green Infant School, we believe that the foundation of securing good school attendance is to create a school environment that is calm, consistent, orderly, safe and supportive, where children want to be, and where they feel secure and ready to learn.

We understand that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore in all stages of improving attendance, we will make our best endeavours to work with our pupils, parents and carers, to try and remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working in partnership to put the necessary support in place.

The Law on Attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to 'an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.' It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure their child receives that education by attendance at school. When parents/carers register their child at Rose Green Infant School, they have an additional duty to ensure their child attends regularly. This means their child must attend every day the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission by the Headteacher for an absence in advance.

Regular attendance is essential for children and young people to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. For our most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor in order for needs to be identified and support provided.

Our Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

At Rose Green Infant School, our gates open at 8.45am and the expectation is that every child is in their classroom before the school day begins at 9.00am, when the register is taken. 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. Our school day ends at 3pm.

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/carer 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 (01243 262318 – there is an answerphone for absences) or verbal messages to the school office, Parent Mail notifications and emails (office@rosegreeninfant.school) will be accepted as notification of unexpected absence and a record of the message will be kept. If a child is absent for several days, we would appreciate parents/carers keeping in regular contact with us regarding the absence and expected return date.

Holiday

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/carer 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 Pupil Entitlement: Investigation 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/carer 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 Pupil Entitlement: Investigation 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 strongly 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.

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/carers to discuss further, in order that we can identify how the situation can be resolved and attendance improved. We ask that parents/carers 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 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.

Improving and Incentivising Good Attendance

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. As a school, we aim to work in close partnership at all times with parents/carers, and other agencies where appropriate, to support regular attendance.

Promotion of good attendance sits alongside in particular four of our 'Five Words'; **Motivation**, **Resilience**, **Independence** and **Responsibility**. As a school community we refer to and talk about these words regularly, including linking them to good school attendance. We are always promoting good attendance, for example through regular reminders in school communications and through informal discussions with parents/carers.

Where positive impact is required for specific children, all staff in contact with the child take extra care to welcome them each morning, praising punctual attendance and acknowledging the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent/carer 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. At Rose Green Infant School, we have made the decision that we do not use attendance certificates to reward 100% attendance because for some children, this is not attainable, through no fault of their own, for example they may have a medical condition that requires time off for regular appointments.

In cases of persistent or severe absence, we make our best endeavours to work with the child's family to address this. We may access the advice and support of wider services, which include the Mental Health Support Team, the Special Educational Needs Team and the Learning and Behaviour Advisory Team, in order to try and remove the barriers to attendance. If parents/carers need support or advice around attendance, they are more than welcome to talk to the class teacher or Headteacher about this, so that we can support, signpost or refer as appropriate.

In exceptional circumstances, for example where a child is not attending at all, or where the attendance consistently remains below 90% and does not improve despite interventions and support, we may engage more formally with the Local Authority, initially via the Pupil Entitlement Team.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher, Mrs Sally Dreckmann (head@rosegreeninfant.school), is the Senior Leader responsible for our school's strategic approach to attendance in school.

Attendance data is monitored each Monday by our attendance officer, Mrs Ann Vaughan (ann.vaughan@rosegreeninfant.school) 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 each half termly review, the data is used to target attendance improvement efforts; parents/carers will be contacted in person or by letter to raise any concerns and a meeting may be requested. Ongoing concerns may 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 and discussed each term with the Governing Body; individual pupil data remains confidential.

The Equality Act

Whilst every child at Rose Green Infant School has a right to full time education and we have high attendance expectations for all, we take into account the specific needs of certain pupils. We make our best endeavours to apply this policy fairly and consistently while considering the individual needs of children and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In the development of this, and every other school policy, we consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Safeguarding

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

This policy was written in September 2022 to take into account the new DfE Guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' and was adopted by the Governors on 27/09/2022

Next review: September 2023

Appendix 1

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.**