

# Roe Farm Primary School



## Attendance Policy

<b>Approved by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	May 2019	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	May 2020	

## Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time. In addition to this, your child should also be at school on time.

School begins at 8.55am each day. Striving for 100% attendance in school can play a major part in your child's education, they should therefore be in each day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Our target as a school is to maintain and aim to be more in line with the National target of 95.8%.

There are two main categories of absences:

**Authorised Absence:** when mornings or afternoons are taken away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised Absence:** those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to further steps being taken with the Local Authority and can lead to legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced with relevant documentation e.g. appointment letters
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

It is important you are aware that....

- When a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may **not** be automatically authorised.
- Your child's current and previous attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may **not** be authorised.
- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a slight headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery.
- If your child has been prescribed medicines this can be administered in school if your doctor advises that your child can be in school.

### Please note:

**The school is **not** asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.**

**Monthly reports of attendance and punctuality will be gathered by our Attendance officer to identify any instances where there may be regular illness reported, therefore affecting attendance of a child. Where this is the case parents/carers will be contacted.**

**In addition to this, half termly meetings will take place between the school Attendance officer, Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer (EWO).**

- If a child has been absent for five days or more (including a Bank Holiday) the school may ask parents to obtain medical evidence from the doctor's surgery.

**Evidence includes: a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, prescription or medicine bottle. They must be shown to member of the school office.**

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and

the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, covering up their absence or giving in to pressure to excuse them from attending is not beneficial. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. We in partnership, can work together to ensure your child is happy and feels safe in school.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

**Learning:** - There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self – esteem.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. Within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child includes:

- 1 Attendance
2. Behaviour Management
3. Health and Safety
4. Access to the Curriculum
5. Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Where a child has not attended school for 3 days or more without an explanation a home visit will be made by the EWO/and or a member of school staff.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence; if there is no response from the call please leave a message as this will be picked up that morning
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.
- Keep us updated daily if your child is absent for more than 1 day.

#### **School actions:**

##### **If your child is absent, we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.30am;

##### **Where attendance continues to be an issue we will:**

- Send you a letter to inform you that we, as a school are concerned about your child's attendance and it has dropped below 95% (Stage 1 letter) or 90% (Stage 2 letter)
- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation with a member of staff if a child's attendance falls below the Persistent Absence ( PA) threshold of 90%
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if it remains *persistently* below 90% (PA) or moves below 85% and where steps to improve attendance have not been successful.
- In some cases, this may have already been identified by the school's Education Welfare Officer and they may raise it with us and take action

#### **Contact numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so it is therefore essential we have up to date contact numbers at all times for at least two contacts.

If we don't have this something important may be missed.

## **The Law relating to attendance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: -

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

### **Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996 says:**

"If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

## **The Law relating to Safeguarding**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

### **Aims of the Attendance Policy:**

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning. To ensure parents/carers understand the procedure in place for attendance at Roe Farm Primary School.

### **Objectives of the Policy:**

- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure children are in school for the maximum number of days.
- To help all concerned adults and enable children to attend school regularly and be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

### **School Responsibilities:**

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first – day phone call.
- Inform parent/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absences and lateness (punctuality).
- To report to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer)/SAO (School Attendance Officer) and support their work as necessary
- To report to the Governors on absence three times a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To promote good attendance.

### **Parental Responsibilities:**

- To have children in class ready for teaching at the start of the day at 8.55am.
- To inform school on every day of any absence.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible by completing the schools "Application for Leave of absence form".
- To make applications for leave in writing.
- To work with the school and EWO/SAO to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day where possible.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child - it may be something simple that needs your help resolving
- Talk to your child's teacher in the first instance

*Children's and class attendance will be displayed in the school entrance for children and parents to see the importance and to celebrate success and achievement*

### **The Process for Monitoring Attendance:**

The school Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness (punctuality) and discuss any issues or concerns that they have with class teachers and the Head Teacher.

Where issues persist, the following will be initiated:

1. Where concerns arise verbal contact will be made with home with regards to the attendance and punctuality.
2. If the concerns persist or attendance falls below 95% the school will write to the parents/carers. **(Appendix 1)**
3. If the concerns persist or attendance falls below 90% the school will write to the parents/carers. **(Appendix 2)**
3. If the concerns persist and there is no improvement and/or attendance falls below 85% the school will arrange a meeting between the parents/carers, School Attendance Officer or EWO.
4. If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues.

### **Holidays in Term Time:**

The Education Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

**Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The amended regulations came into force from 1st September 2013.**

Leave of absence taken *without* authorisation may be referred to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

**Payment of a penalty notice is £120 per parent/carer reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid with 28 days a summons may be issued for the parent/s to appear in the Magistrates Court** and if proved the parent may receive a criminal conviction and/or fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for Leave of Absence'. These may be obtained from the school office.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Head Teacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances' such as:
  - Significant family bereavement i.e. mother (step), father (step), principle carer or sibling
  - Significant family illness to mother (step), father (step), principle carer or sibling
  - Disclosure of significant abuse where a short leave of absence may be beneficial to recovery
  - Involvement in court proceedings, either in the family courts or criminal proceedings
  - Where evidence is provided that a parent can only take holidays at specific times e.g. service

Parents will be informed whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised by letter.

There are 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 weeks. Please ensure holidays are taken during this period.

### **Lateness (Punctuality):**

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

- Children must be in class by 8.55am each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time.
- Children who arrive after 9.00am will be given a '**Late mark**' in the register. If the gates have closed entry is via the main entrance.
- Your child will be signed in using our electronic system at the front of school by one of the members of staff in the office.

If it is after 9.15am without an authorised reason then an unauthorised absence will be given. This equates to a half day absence, although we are aware that the child is on the school premises in accordance with Health and Safety.

- Lateness will be monitored and the EWO/SAO will follow this up.
- If a child is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. **Please be advised that where possible doctors and dental appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.**
- The school gates will be locked at 9.10am.

Pupils who are persistently late are disrupting not only their own but others' education as well. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians and carers of children who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If this persists then parents, guardians and carers will be invited to attend the school to discuss the problem with the School Attendance Officer.

### **(See appendix 3: Punctuality letter to parents)**

Where no improvements are made and lateness (punctuality) remains an issue the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted and further steps will be taken.

The Department of Education (DfE) guidance to schools and Local Authorities regarding the monitoring of pupil absence state a child is a Persistent Absentee (PA) from school if they are missing more than 10% the school year. This means that a pupil whose attendance is **consistently below 90% will be classed as a Persistent Absentee as defined by the Government Guidelines, regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised.** Given the clear link between regular attendance and learning, the Government expects Schools and Local Authorities to be intervening much earlier to tackle and reduce absence.

### **Promoting Good Attendance:**

We promote good attendance and punctuality throughout our School by:

- Working with families and children where attendance is a concern and develop strategies to support and develop attendance e.g. reward cards, stickers
- Awarding termly certificates / prizes where children have 100% attendance
- Reward children where attendance is 100% for the whole school year
- Prize draw every term for those children with 100% attendance and punctuality

**(See appendix 4: certificate)**

**Education Welfare Officer:**

It is their role to strive to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non –school attendance and persistent lateness. Section 444 of the Education Act states that “if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence. Derby City Council, through the Education Welfare Service, may issue a Penalty Notice or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly and where absences are not authorised.

**School targets, projects and special initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The **minimum** level of attendance for this school is 95.5% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child’s attendance compares. National for primary schools is average is 95.8%

It is the school’s intention to reduce the number of children who are currently below the PA’s Threshold

Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be displayed in our front entrance.

**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Mrs Laura Horsley  
Mrs Helen Weston

**Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child’s welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

**Date of Policy: May 2019**

**Review: May 2020**

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**Where to find Roe Farm Primary School’s Attendance Policy:**

Copies can be requested from our School Office  
A copy can be found on the Attendance display in the School entrance  
School website.