

Roseberry Primary School

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Attendance Policy and Procedures

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Interim Review:	October 2021
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Head Teacher:	Maggie Fearnley



Statement of Intent

At Roseberry Primary School we believe that regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is vital to a good education. Securing it must therefore be a high priority of the school, governors, LA, parents and pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils lessen the impact of the education provided for them. Pupil absence and punctuality will seriously disrupt the continuity of teaching for themselves and others.

Overall Aims:

The aim of Roseberry Primary School is to maintain strong home – school links and lines of communication so that we may work together with parents, pupils and other agencies where necessary to ensure that all pupils enjoy a full and efficient education with regular and sustained attendance levels.

Specifically:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure that attendance is at least in line with the national average – rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality will be used.
- To ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach their full educational potential, through a high level of attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that all stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

School Attendance – The Statutory Framework

All pupils of statutory school age who are registered at a school must attend regularly, in line with the relevant legislation (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016).

Any absence from school can have a detrimental effect on a child's future progress and continuity of learning. Regular absence for such reasons as holidays taken in term time can have a significant impact on achievement.

Coronavirus

School will continue to follow all Government guidance and advice with regards recording attendance and attendance procedures in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. This is shown on our computer records.

Staff, pupils and parents should see the taking of the register as an integral part of the day, as it was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the Schools Head Teacher's role. The Head Teacher has the primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils in the classes and for contacting home with concerns about attendance and punctuality also ensuring notes explaining absences are collected and maintain an accurate register of attendance. At Roseberry Primary School the Head Teacher has overall responsibility, however, this is delegated to Education Welfare Ltd and to class teachers. Class teachers have their part to play in being responsible for ensuring attendance is a key priority in their day to day work.

In accordance with current legislation, each class in the school has an electronic attendance register. It is School's policy that registers be completed after the sounding of the second bell on a morning (9.00am) and by 12.55pm on an afternoon. Registers should be saved immediately so that they can be accessed by the Administration Team and Attendance Officer.

Children who arrive after the register has closed will be recorded with a late mark (L).

Children who arrive after 9.15am or 1.00pm will have a late after registration mark recorded (U).

If a pupil is present for registration but then leaves for an appointment they will be signed out on the class fire register (by the class teacher) and on the Electronic Signing System in either the KS1 or KS2 Office (by either the parent/carer collecting or member of office staff). Similarly, if a child arrives late following an appointment, the fire register will be updated to reflect their presence and they will be signed in at the office by their parent/carer or a member of the office staff. These procedures are for the purpose of emergency evacuation.

Absence

We ask that parents communicate the reason for their child's absence on the first day of absence before registration (before 9am). Reporting by telephone, verbally to a member of staff or a note are all acceptable. Once we receive a reason for an absence, we may authorise that absence by inserting the correct symbol.

The school office will retain all notes, notes of telephone messages and other conversations regarding absence. The information received will be noted on the electronic register.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to agree to it. If the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally-condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, school will involve Education Welfare and the LA Attendance Officer at an early opportunity.

An excessive amount of authorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. Roseberry Primary School monitors its levels of persistent absence (below 90%) and is therefore aware of the impact of any absence on a child's education no matter what the reason. We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

If no reason is received by the school for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence by 9:30am then school will activate its first day calling system.

Where we have reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested. If school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or a pattern of absence is noted early contact will be made with the Local Authority, Education Welfare and/or school health. Where concerns continue and/or a pupil has 10 consecutive days or more of unauthorised absence from school and no contact is made, a referral will be made to the Local Education Welfare Service under Children Missing Education/attendance procedures. Where it is suspected that a pupil may be at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, radicalisation or is a runaway or young carer safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Leave of Absence in Term Time for Family Holiday

The Pupil Registration Regulations 2013 state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The legislation makes it clear that parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time.

Parents are strongly urged to avoid making requests for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time due to the disruption and impact of the missed education on the child.

If parents feel that exceptional circumstances apply then they should complete a Leave of Absence Form stating in full their reasons in advance for the absence, why they feel it is essential that it takes place during term time and if appropriate accompanied by evidence.

The form can be obtained from the office. It should be completed at least four weeks prior to the holiday and should be returned to the office for the attention of the Head teacher for individual consideration.

Parents have been made aware that the Local Authority will decide to issue penalty notice fines to parents. Currently the amounts are £60 per child for each parent where the fine is paid within 21 days, and £120 per child for each parent where the fine is paid between the 21st day and the 28th day. Parents should be aware that this means a family of 2 parents and 2 children will be fined £240 if the fine is paid within 21 days or £480 if the fine is paid from 21 – 28 days. For families with 3 children these amounts would be £360/£720.

If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28th day period, the Local Authority will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

Punctuality

We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality. Pupils will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place but before the close of the registers.

It is school's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

Registers will close at Roseberry Primary School 20 minutes after the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Where a pupil does arrive and misses registration, his or her presence on site will need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation.

Pupils arriving at school late (after the close of registration) in the morning must report to Mrs Maddison (KS2) or Miss Fleming (KS1/Foundation) who will adjust the entry in the class register by applying a 'u'. This will be interpreted in the class register as a child present at school having arrived late after registration. This constitutes attendance for Health and Safety purposes but is an **unauthorised absence for statistical purpose**.

If a pupil fails to attend registration for the afternoon session, he or she will be marked as 'u' if arriving after the close of registration.

An explanation note may authorise this absence, e.g. visit to doctor/dentist. Otherwise it will be treated as unauthorised.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason need to keep the Head teacher informed. Further action may be taken if there is no valid reason for this lateness.

Role of Education Welfare Ltd

The school has a service level agreement with Education Welfare Ltd. Mrs J Andrews is the welfare officer attached to the school. It is her role to:

- Liaise, where appropriate, between home and school.
- Investigate irregular attendance or lateness which may rise to concerns that a child may be at risk.
- Complete a regular register check.
- Provide advice and support to parents through the initiation of attendance procedures.
- Work with children who are experiencing problems with attendance and/or punctuality.
- Assist school in setting attendance targets.
- Follow Local Authority attendance procedures through to prosecution and possible court action.

Attendance Procedures

Intervention at school level

Stage 1 – Monitor

All pupils with less than 95% attendance are regularly monitored by school and Education Welfare Ltd on a weekly basis.

The class teacher has primary responsibility for monitoring attendance of the pupils in the class group and for collecting notes explaining absence, maintaining an accurate register and informing the Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher/Administrator with concerns about attendance and punctuality.

Roseberry Primary School operates a first day calling system to home where explanation for absence has not been received by 9:30am. Any communication with parents is logged and the parent will be informed if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

Stage 2 – Attendance Concerns

Where attendance continues to be a concern the school will send home a first letter of concern to the parent.

A record is kept by the school of all contacts and conversations relating to reasons for absence from school.

Parents are encouraged to visit the school to discuss attendance and strategies to improve, with the PSA (Parent Support Advisor)/Education Welfare Ltd.

Where attendance falls below 95% Education Welfare Ltd will discuss the pupil with the Head Teacher/Administrator and/or the PSA. The parent will be sent a letter requesting medical evidence to cover absences or will be invited to a meeting to discuss the reasons for poor attendance. It is important to establish the reason for poor attendance, the general health of the pupil, home circumstances etc. The parent will then be involved in writing an attendance support plan and given a target to improve the pupil's attendance.

Attendance for that pupil is then monitored for the duration of the plan and appropriate action taken if attendance remains a concern.

If attendance has not improved then options include:

- Contact home to discuss attendance either by letter or phone. If contacted by phone or in person areas of concern should be discussed with the parent and appropriate advice and support offered. Eg if the parent reports absence due to a recurring medical condition such as asthma the school could offer assistance by putting the parent in touch with school health.
- Referral to the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion service which may result in a penalty notice.

Referral to the Local Authority

Referral to the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion team will be made in the following circumstances:

- Absence falls below 80%.
- Intervention by the school has failed to secure regular attendance.

- When a child has been missing from education, the absence is unauthorised and school are unable to make contact.

When referring a form will be completed for each child and signed by the Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher in her absence.

The following information will be included:

- Actions taken by the school.
- A print out of the pupil's attendance.
- Parent/pupil's attitudes towards school and the school's intervention.
- Parental reasons for non-attendance.
- Action taken by the school to resolve any identified problems.
- Information regarding any special educational needs the pupil may have, academic attainment and support being provided by the school.
- Information regarding potential aggression from the parents.

The role of the Local Authority Attendance Officer is to:

- Liaise, where appropriate, between home and school;
- Investigate irregular attendance or lateness which may give rise to concerns that a child may be at risk;
- Complete a regular register check; provide school with advice on strategies to improve attendance;
- Provide advice and support to parents through the initiation of attendance procedures;
- Work with children who are experiencing problems with attendance and/or punctuality and/or are preparing to transfer to secondary school;

Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

As well as tackling poor attendance levels and supporting parents where necessary to improve attendance Roseberry Primary School believes in celebrating good and improved attendance and punctuality. This is done by:

- A weekly attendance cup is awarded to the class in each key stage with the highest attendance.
- Reward vouchers are given to the winners of the weekly attendance cup and to individual classes for each day of the week that all of their pupils have arrived on time. These vouchers are presented in a weekly assembly so that they are celebrated.
- A lottery style draw for pupils – one pupil from each class has the opportunity to win a reward voucher each week. The pupil will have been at school each day that week and will not have been late as well as being in full school uniform and having remained on the green traffic light.
- Reward vouchers– the children are fully involved in deciding how the vouchers are spent.

- Attendance certificates and prizes are given termly in assembly.
- 100% attendance rewards termly and yearly.

Attendance and punctuality is actively promoted in school through:

- Weekly newsletters
- Assemblies
- Awarding of weekly attendance cups
- Attendance end of year treat saving scheme (vouchers awarded in assembly for children who have not been late/absent that week)
- Information given to parents at parent's evenings