



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The staff responsible for the Attendance and Punctuality Policy are

Mrs S. Bradford

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The Effectiveness Committee

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## **Introduction:**

Children's learning is at the heart of everything we do at Roydon, although children can, of course, only benefit from this if they attend school regularly. Therefore, we try to ensure that our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and raise standards by promoting the regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

## **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'.

## **We aim to:**

- Achieve attendance levels of 95% across the whole school
- Reduce unauthorised absence
- Improve punctuality
- Achieve minimum levels of pupils identified as persistent absentees
- Reduce parental requests for pupil term-time holidays
- Create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is accepted as the norm
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance and punctuality between home and school
- Develop partnerships with families to improve attendance of those pupils with high levels of authorised absence and ensure full access to the curriculum.

## **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

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

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences that have not been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after 9.15am without a valid reason.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed.

## **Registration Procedures:**

The register is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. The school day starts at 8.45am. Children will receive a late mark if they arrive at school between 9.00 and 9.15am when the register officially closes.

For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved activity away from the school site, or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school. The decision to authorise is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

## **Absence Procedures:**

### **Parental responsibility:**

- Inform the school office on the first day of absence (by phone leaving a message on line 1, email or in person) indicating the reason for absence and the expected return date.
- If the child is unable to return on expected date, inform the school office.
- Provide copies of medical appointment letters or cards.

### **School procedures:**

- On the first day of absence the school will telephone parents by 9.30am if we have no explanation for a child's absence.
- Informal conversations between teachers, office staff and Headteacher.
- Attendance is monitored weekly by the school secretary and any concerns raised with the Headteacher.
- Class teachers discuss initial concerns with the parent.
- If absences persist the parent is invited in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher.
- If this fails to achieve required improvements then the matter is referred to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO).
- There may be circumstances in which it is deemed necessary to omit one or more of these stages, for example if attendance was previously referred to the AIO or if the level of attendance is so low that emergency action is required.
- In cases of high levels of authorised absence we may invite parents to join a multi-agency meeting that might include any appropriate school staff, the Headteacher, School Nurse and the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer. The purpose of these meetings is to offer support and decide a plan in order to improve attendance or offer additional support to pupils.
- Supplementary to the register checks, half-termly attendance data is analysed to identify and challenge persistent absence.
- Pupils who do not attend school for a period of four days without explanation will be referred directly to the AIO as 'Children Missing Education'.
- Registration data is analysed termly to identify any other factors that may be preventing the achievement of 95% attendance across the whole school.
- Attendance and punctuality policy and procedures are reviewed annually.

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

- Any parent requiring an absence for the purpose of a holiday should make their application on a holiday form for the attention the Headteacher.
- The school follows the government guidelines that term-time holidays will be authorised only in extenuating circumstances and at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- The reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated and evidence given. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a referral to the AIO.
- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated and dates included. If these times are not adhered to, it is possible that the parent may receive a referral to the AIO.

### **Punctuality procedures:**

Class teachers discuss initial concerns with the parent. If lateness persists the parent is invited in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher.

If there is no improvement then the Headteacher may consider a referral to the AIO.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality:**

- The importance of regular attendance and punctuality is explained at the meeting for parents and carers of the new intake each year.
- Discussions are held during parent/teacher consultation evenings when attendance or punctuality is an issue.
- Attendance data is presented to the governing body each half term.
- Individual attendance and punctuality information is detailed in children's end of year report.
- Attendance is celebrated each week in whole school assembly with the class with the highest attendance being granted an extra 15 minute playtime.
- Certificates are presented at the end of the year to those children who have achieved 100% attendance.