Attendance Policy

The staff members responsible for the Attendance Policy are

Mrs S. Bradford Mrs A. Plowman

The governor responsible for the Attendance Policy is

The Governor responsible for Attendance

Agreed by governors: 8th November 2025

Review Date: November 2026

Introduction

We are committed to giving all our pupils access to the highest quality education, and for a child to reach their full educational achievement, an excellent level of school attendance is essential. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all, and parents and children play a vital role in ensuring pupils maximise their learning potential.

It is our duty to strive consistently to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence when interacting with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

In drawing up this policy, consideration has been given to Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, May 2022) to ensure that our procedures and practices are in line with the published non-statutory guidance.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available on our school website to all parents and carers of pupils who are registered at our school. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils and governors to:

- support pupils' achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance;
- provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences;
- make parents and carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- and, act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we work with the LA to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age and, where necessary, use legal enforcement.

Definitions

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity;
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has:

- been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, a child is unwell and the parent telephoned the school to explain the absence;
- medical or dental appointments that unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- religious or cultural observations for which the school has granted leave.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include, but are not limited to:

- a pupil's/family member's birthday;
- shopping for uniform;
- closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes;
- an unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to lack of organisation, transport, etc.;
- appointments that could be arranged for outside the school day;
- a refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend;
- holidays taken without the authorisation of the school.

Parent

- Any natural parent, whether they are married or not;
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. (Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.)

Procedures

Our school will follow these procedures to support good attendance:

- maintain appropriate registration processes;
- maintain appropriate attendance data;
- communicate the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils;
- have consistent and systematic daily records that detail any absence and lateness;
- follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents or carers have not communicated with the school;
- inform parents and carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time;
- work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality;
- refer to the Attendance Officer any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents or carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve this;
- report attendance statistics to Norfolk LA and the DfE where requested.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities that individuals might have.

Responsibilities of the Governors

- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to implement the policy fully.
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters.
- Ensure that the school complies with regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governors' meetings.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher:

- Oversee, direct and co-ordinate the whole school approach to promoting regular and improved attendance.
- Support staff to deliver engaging teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend, achieve and strive to be the best they can be.
- Establish procedures to celebrate and reward good behaviour and punctuality.
- Ensure that the Attendance Policy is reviewed annually in consultation with the governor with responsibility for attendance.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and apply it consistently throughout the school.
- Work in close liaison, including holding formal meetings, with Administrative Officer and the Parent Support Advisor.
- Work with DSLs to devise action plans to support children who are persistent absentees or have poor punctuality.
- Monitor overall school attendance rates, compare these with national data, identify trends in authorised and unauthorised absence and their causes, report these to the Governor responsible for attendance.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.
- Instigate Fixed Penalties or the Fast Track to prosecution process as required.

Responsibilities of the Administrative Officer:

- Ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed.
- Ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage, and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- Check weekly any children whose attendance is below 90%.
- Make referrals to the Attendance Officer.
- Provide reports and background information to inform discussion with the headteacher and/or PSA.
- Liaise with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Send out standard letters regarding attendance.
- Return data to the LA as required.
- In liaison with other staff, keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents or carers.

Responsibilities of the Parent Support Advisor:

- Contact families where concerns are raised about absence, including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues, home visits, organising and chairing multi-agencies meetings, etc.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Monitor progress towards attendance targets.

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Liaise with the Administrative Officer on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.
- Discuss attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

Responsibilities of Office Staff:

- Collate and record registration and attendance information.
- Take and record messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensure the Late Folder is completed.
- Contact parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Record details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents or carers, and report concerns to the Administrative Officer.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

- Understand that a child's regular attendance at school is a parent or carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act), and that permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

- Discuss with the office staff any planned absences well in advance and make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Inform the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Talk to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

Categorising Absence and Attendance

Appendix 1outlines the national codes that enable all schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and comply with the regulations and Department for Education advice. When marking our registers, we will apply these codes to record and report attendance accurately.

Lateness/Punctuality

It is important for children to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of the other pupils. A child who is late will miss vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing, leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at **8.45am** and all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time**.
- Morning registration closes at **8.55am**. Unless the school has been notified prior to 8.45am of an acceptable reason for lateness, any child arriving after this time will be marked as L (Late) up until to 9.15am. After this time, U (Unauthorised) will be used to record an unauthorised absence in line with Department of Education guidance. These marks show them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence. All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M provided the school has been notified before 8.45. (Evidence of the appointment may be required).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is declined and a child has more than nine sessions of unauthorised absence recorded in any 6-week period, the school will issue parents with a Penalty Notice.

All children should be collected promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. If one is available, the school will place a child into the after-school club and provide the parent or carer with the bill.

Reduced Timetables

All schools, academies and free schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement one for a time-limited period to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parents or carers and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used a part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil. In line with Norfolk County Council guidance, we will notify the Attendance Team of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

Deletions from the Register

At Roydon Primary School we will add and delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the transfer. We will always work with families to gain

information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We follow Norfolk County Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed, in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Norfolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above. We will also inform Norfolk County Council's Services to Home Educators Team by completing a referral form.

Roydon Primary School will follow Norfolk County Council's Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil's whereabouts are unknown, and the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence for the sole purpose of a holiday, unless in exceptional circumstances.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances', but this can only be granted at the discretion of the headteacher.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply to the headteacher in writing using the school's leave of absence form before the planned leave. If leave is taken without a request being submitted in advance of the leave, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and a referral to the Local Authority may be made to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or prosecution considered. We treat each application individually.

All absences associated with a holiday without exceptional circumstance during term time will be marked as unauthorised in the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

When absence is granted by the headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated, a penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution.

Medical Appointments and Absence Due to Illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is unavoidable, we ask that q parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and, in most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day. Parents are asked to arrange collection from school office so that the child can be signed out and, on their return, they will come in via the main entrance where they will be signed in. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult.

In most cases, absences for illness that are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Repeated illness without medical evidence will not be authorised and parents will be notified if their child's absence is not going to be authorised.

Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent or carer. We will invite parents to attend school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with our 'Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school' and NCC policies. We will also consider whether a Healthcare Plan is required.

Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Roydon Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that sometimes religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. Where the date of these is set by the religious authority, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school, and these will be recorded as R (religious Observance) in the register for the duration of the festival, agreed in advance.

First Day Contact

A child not attending school may be considered a safeguarding matter which is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. When a child is absent, a parent must contact the school as soon as possible and before 8.45am on the **first day of absence**, giving a clear reason for the absence. A message can be left on the school answer phone. Parents are asked to call the school before 8.45am on each subsequent day of absence.

Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. When the school has not received any communication or a clear reason from the parent, then we initiate our first day contact process:

1) office staff call parent
2) office staff recall parent after 10 minutes
3) office staff call alternative contact number
4) office staff call alternative contact number at a different address above)
5) office staff ask PSA to visit (HT with another member of staff visit if PSA not available)
6) office staff contact police to carry out a welfare check

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent or carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

Persistent Absence and the Use of Legal Interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops below 90% for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level causes considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified, we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance and/or punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

Rewarding Good Attendance

Each week, all children with 100% attendance are entered into a prize draw to win a £10 Amazon voucher and the winner is announced in the weekly Heads Up newsletter.

At the end of the year, children with 100% attendance receive a certificate and golden wristband, while those with 99% or 98% attendance receive a certificate. These are presented during the final assembly.

Each term, the class with the highest attendance and the class(es) with the best punctuality benefit from an extra 15-minute playtime.

Related Documents

Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, May 2022)
Safeguarding policy
Policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions
Positive Behaviour Policy
Documentation regarding pupils missing education