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## **Aims**

**At Rotherhithe we expect good attendance and punctuality. Our aim is for 100% attendance and punctuality.**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence (children who have 10% or more absence).
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We believe that:

- Good attendance gives children every opportunity to influence their future quality of life and reach their full potential.
- Attendance is closely linked to achievement.
- Good attendance helps children develop friendships.
- Punctuality is important. It is habit forming and shows commitment to the importance of working and learning.

## **Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## School procedures

### Attendance register

By law, schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The register is an electronic register. Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

### At Rotherhithe Primary School we:

- Use a computerised register system which records absences and lateness.
- Employ a Safeguarding & Intervention Officer, Attendance Officer and Learning Mentors to prevent, reduce and help with problems around attendance and punctuality, as well as help with other problems relating to family support, student and family welfare and Safeguarding.
- Recognise the need for all parties with responsibility (i.e. parents, school, Southwark Early Help team and other external agencies) to work in partnership to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure registers are kept accurately. They record absences and lateness and these are inspected by the local education authority, monitored regularly in school and could be used as evidence in any legal proceedings.

### Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9 am or as soon as practically possible.

Parents should contact the school by telephone to inform the school of their child's absence or in person at the school office, where parents can complete a school absence form. Alternatively parents can send an email relating the reason for absence to the school office (please indicate in the subject heading that it is related to child absence.)

### Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not, ensure the child is safe and identify the correct attendance code to use.

**First day of absence:** From 11 am onwards parents will be contacted by text, or telephone message to ascertain the reason for absence. If the child returns after the first day of absence but no accountability has been provided a student absence form is sent home to be completed by the parent.

**Second day of absence:** If there has not been any accountability for a child's absence on day two texts, phone calls and emails will be sent to the primary guardians. **Emergency contacts** will also be called to ensure the child and family are safe.

**Third day of absence:** If there has been no accountability for a child's absence on day three, a **home visit** may be conducted to ascertain the safety and well-being of the child.

## **Authorised Absence**

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

Parents may notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment by presenting an appointment letter, card or text to the school office, or informing the school by telephone of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments **out of school hours where possible**. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

## Granting approval for term-time absence

Head of School will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be '**exceptional circumstances**'.

Examples of what may be considered an 'exceptional circumstance' are: immediate family bereavement, significant trauma in the home leading to interventions from police or social services, domestic abuse leading to the family being moved for safety reasons.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head of School's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** at the discretion of the Head of School also include:

- One day for religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

## **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

It is very important to get your child to school on time for 9.00 am when teaching begins. School gates open at 8:50 am to ensure there is time for children to arrive and line up for class

Lateness causes

- \*disruption to classes
- \*your child to miss valuable learning time
- \*unhappiness and leads to social problems with making friends

The Pupil entrance (Hawkstone Road) to the school shuts at 9.00 am.

If you arrive after this time you will need to use the main visitor's entrance and your child will be recorded as late, you will need to leave your child at the front office to minimise disruption to teaching. You must provide the reason for your lateness.

Lateness is recorded in the registers which are checked by the Local Authority.

If a child is late on 5 or more separate occasions within a half term period a late letter is sent home. When a child is persistently late for a longer period a letter will be sent home requesting you attend a punctuality meeting with the attendance officer.

### **Unauthorised absence**

- A child's absence will be noted as unauthorised when a note or phone call is not received explaining the absence.
- Holidays will be noted as unauthorised.
- If the reason provided for the absence is not considered to be an adequate reason e.g. going to buy shoes, washing machine broke down, sibling ill, birthday arrangements and visiting friend.

### **Roles/Responsibilities**

Parents, schools and Southwark Education Authority share legal responsibilities in respect of attendance. Each party has legal duties and they are outlined underneath.

#### Role of Parents

Parents are required to:

- Fulfil their legal obligations to ensure their child receives full time education by regular attendance at school, under Section 7 of Education Act 1996.
- Fulfil their legal obligations under Section 7 of Education Act 1996 to ensure their child arrives on time for school – 9.00 am to secure a full time education.

Parents should:

- Support the school in its aim to raise achievement through their child's full attendance at school.
- Contact the school, by telephone on each morning of absence or complete an absence slip or provide letter on the first day of absence if their child is unable to attend for a valid reason.
- Try to make appointments for after school and if not for the afternoon to make sure their child attends in the morning to maximise learning time.
- Take holidays out of school time. The school will not approve term time trips under any circumstances. Inform the school if their child is leaving giving details of the next school. This ensures records can be quickly passed on to give the child the best possible start in a new school.
- Reply to letters sent by the school querying absences.
- Inform the attendance officer or member of the senior leadership team if they are planning to move out of the area, abroad or to an alternative school, providing. Information should include name, address, telephone number, name of new school, school address, school telephone number and start date.

## Role of the School

### The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Governing Body is empowered to ask the Head of School for a report on any aspect of the running of the school, including attendance.

### The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head of School also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and may have meetings alongside the attendance officer with parents whose children are persistently absent.

### Personal Assistant (PA) to the Executive Head Teacher (EHT)

The PA enters names and data of children on to Arbor creating class registers. She does this as children are admitted and at the beginning of the academic year.

### Class Teachers are required to:

- Take the register at the beginning of every session (see appendix 1 attendance codes) using the appropriate symbols.

### Class Teachers should:

- Positively promote good attendance and punctuality in their classes.
- Record if children are present or absent on the computerised register and the Attendance Officer to code the register with the correct attendance code when all registers have been taken.
- Keep daily totals of attendance.
- If concerned about a child's attendance speak to the Attendance Officer or the Safeguarding and Intervention Officer for welfare/ safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure parents advise the Attendance Officer, or member of the senior leadership team if their child is leaving school for any reason.
- Fill in attendance figures on annual report forms.
- Ensure the implementation of The Attendance Policy and procedures.

### The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

- ✓ Keep a weekly summary and calculate attendance in percentage terms.
  - ✓ Identify concerns and follow these up with telephone calls, letters or emails when required.
  - ✓ Fill in yearly/ termly returns on Attendance records.
  - ✓ Give out weekly class attendance results in the weekly newsletter to parents.
  - ✓ Award 100% attendance certificates on a termly basis to individuals in a special assembly.
  - ✓ Organise a special reward for those with 100% for the whole year.
  - ✓ On an individual basis, note/reward those who improve on particularly poor punctuality or attendance.
  - ✓ Organise/lead any particular initiatives on attendance and punctuality.
  - ✓ Assess individual levels of absence/punctuality at the end of each term and contact parents where necessary.
  - ✓ Form positive links with outside agencies and Social Services.
  - ✓ Share joint responsibility with the PA to the Head of School, to off roll children (under Head of School's instruction)
  - ✓ Enter children who arrive after 9.30 am on registers
  - ✓ Ensure that communication and data for offsite provision is maintained and daily register is updated with the correct code
- Report to the Head and Governors about attendance issues as required.
  - Works with the senior leadership team and Early Help team to tackle persistent absence
  - Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues. Liaises with senior leaders who will attend meetings for children that are persistently absent.
  - Form positive relationships with parents to resolve non-attendance issues.
  - Completes referral to the Early Help team.

### Safeguarding & Intervention Officer

- Line manages the attendance officer
- Supports the attendance officer to monitor the attendance of individual pupils and as a school.
- Conducts meetings alongside the attendance officer with parents whose children are persistently absent.
- Liaises with external agencies such as Early Help and Social services.
- Forms positive relationships with parents to resolve non-attendance issues.
- Completes referrals to the Early Help team.

### Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and provide the attendance officer with this information.

## Role of Early Help Team

- If other strategies are not successful in developing good attendance and punctuality and there are additional challenges that families are facing a referral may be made to the Local Authority Early Help Team.
- The Early Help team have powers under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act:
- Offence: Failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupils may result in families going to court for not fulfilling their obligations.
- Referrals will be made at the discretion of the Safeguarding & Intervention Officer and the Attendance Officer this will be dependent on individual circumstances.

## **Monitoring of the policy arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Safeguarding and Intervention Officer. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition                    | Scenario  |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| /    | Present (am)                  | Pupil is present at morning registration  |
| \    | Present (pm)                  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                      |
| L    | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| B    | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| D    | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| J    | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| P    | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V    | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| W    | Work experience               | Pupil is on a work experience placement   |

| Code                      | Definition                  | Scenario   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                             |  |
| C                         | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E                         | Excluded                    | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made         |
| H                         | Authorised holiday          | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |
| I                         | Illness                     | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness        |
| M                         | Medical/dental appointment  | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment                                |

|                             |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance   |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations  |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school   |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b>                    | Reason not provided               | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence              | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration        | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed   |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>Y</b>    | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school  |
| <b>#</b>    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day  |

