



Russell Street School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction:

This is a successful infant 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 your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular school newsletter;
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), 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 which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or 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
- 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.

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, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, telephone 01908 563148;
- 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 talk to the class teacher or teaching assistant.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Senior Attendance Officer, who deals with Fixed Penalty Notices, if attendance becomes a problem.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Senior Attendance Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be

sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the LA Senior Attendance Officer **who can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.** Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect your child to be in class by that time. Doors open at 8.40am.

Registers are marked by **8.55am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.10am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a **Penalty Notice** if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. Holidays in term time will not be authorised.

Leave of Absence

All applications for leave must be made in advance. Leave of absence will only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances** at the discretion of the Headteacher.

No absence will be authorised:

- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (95%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.

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 **Penalty Notice**. This is regardless of a pupil's percentage attendance.

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 % attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

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

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 provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Removing pupils from the school roll:

Children will be removed from the school roll after written confirmation from the parent of the day that they are leaving school. Checks will be made to ensure that the child arrives at their next school.

If a child does not attend school for a period of four weeks without contact from the parents they will be removed from the school role. During this time procedures will be followed to locate and ensure that the child is safe.

In the first four weeks that a child does not attend school, the school and other agencies, will make enquiries and assess the child's circumstances and their vulnerability. In some cases the situation will be resolved between the school and the parent/carer. For other cases the timescale for initiating a multi-agency response will depend on the school's view of the vulnerability of the child.

Concern for a child may be so high that a referral may be made to the police immediately the child is found to be missing. Alternatively, information may emerge over the course of time which raises the level of concern about a child's welfare and a referral should then be made to the police and LA children's social care (the LA education welfare service and/or LA nominated child protection adviser is likely to already be involved by this stage).

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 as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.