



Roskear Primary and Nursery School

Pupil Attendance Policy

Accepted by Governors	July 2016
Reviewed and amended	September 2019

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 **Roskear Primary and Nursery School** is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.

1.3 The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School’s roles and responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Roskear Primary and Nursery School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 Attendance Leader

The Deputy Headteacher with support from the Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. As the Attendance Leader, the Deputy Headteacher will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that the Governing Body is fully aware of attendance data and targets. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).



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REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence



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V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

ii) The register will be called promptly at **8.55 am** and **1.05 (FS/KS1) and 1.15 pm (KS2)** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close at **9.25 am** and **1.25 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be marked as **absent**. Any child arriving late but before the closing of the register will be marked as **late**.

2.4 Categorising absence

i) A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

ii) Roskear Primary and Nursery School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education. Any such inappropriate authorisation of absence could well send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable. This in turn may make children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Roskear Primary and Nursery School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –



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- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see appendix for the school's term-time leave of absence form);
- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parents belong;
- (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- (g) the pupil / student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil / student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- no explanation has been given by the parent;
 - the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
 - the pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house;
 - the pupil or parents are shopping during school hours;
 - the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
 - the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday and the reason for the absence is not considered 'exceptional' (as defined by the government);
 - the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.



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2.6 Absences after close of class registers

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the classteacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Headteacher.

2.7 Traveller Families

The special position of Traveller families is recognised by Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. Section 444 advises local authorities that:

“Traveller parents are protected from conviction (for the non-attendance of their children at school), if the parents can show that their trade or business requires them to travel, and the child has attended school as regularly as the nature of the trade or business allows, and the child – where aged six or over – has attended school for at least 200 sessions during the preceding twelve months.”

This does not mean that part time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve the parents of their duties under section 36 of the 1944 Education Act to ensure that children are receiving a suitable education when not in school.

Absence must be authorised for the following reason: The family travelling for work.

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Absence due to lateness because the family is forced to travel a long distance to bring the child to school to ensure continuity of education.
- Absence due to family occasions for which the parents make an application to the Head Teacher for Exceptional Leave.

Travelling families may not be able to give schools prior warning of an absence, or a written note following an absence. Therefore it is important to work with parents to encourage oral communication e.g. by phone, when parents collect children after school, or via other relatives.

2.8 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receives sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. Collection and analysis of data

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to staff, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and SIMS).

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 Attendance has a high profile at Roskear Primary and Nursery School. Parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 Roskear Primary and Nursery School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. The learning mentor will contact the families for an explanation of absence and refer to the Headteacher. (see appendix 1)



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4.3 First-day calling

Roskear Primary and Nursery School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

4.4 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Where attendance has dropped significantly below the expected attendance of 96% as a result of illness the school, as is their right, may decide to no longer authorise absence as a result of illness without parents/carers providing medical evidence from the hospital or GP.

4.5 Referral to the Education Welfare Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

4.7 Pupils / students who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office and will be recorded in the "Late Book". They will then be marked as late.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.9 For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

4.10 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Roskear Primary and Nursery School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents



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immediately. The school also has an obligation to report a child as a missing person to the police if they have left the school without authorisation.

5. Term-time Holidays (please note new statutory legislation, from Sept 2013)

5.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

5.2 Roskear Primary and Nursery School will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see appendix), with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

5.3 Roskear Primary and Nursery school will consider authorising exceptional leave of absence during term time for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.5 Roskear Primary and Nursery School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence using the appropriate form (see appendix) giving the reasons for the decision.

5.6 Roskear Primary and Nursery School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATS examinations.

6. Extended leave of absence

6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas Roskear Primary and Nursery School will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;



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- where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Roskear Primary and Nursery School.

7.2 Roskear Primary and Nursery School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.
- notify Roskear Primary and Nursery School on the first day of absence.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives Roskear Primary and Nursery School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Pupils' responsibilities

8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to any member of staff.

8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should provide a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

9. Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

9.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

10. Conclusion

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.



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A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school with sufficient time to be ready to join their class for the start of the day, doors open at 8.40am. The register is taken at 8.55, afternoon school starts at 1.00pm in Reception and the infants and at 1:15 p.m for juniors.

2. What happens if my child is late?

The doors to the rear of the school close at 8.50am. Pupils who arrive after this time should report to the school office.

A series of unauthorised late marks may lead to referral to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. We will telephone you if your child has not arrived in school by 9:30 a.m. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness (in rare cases, where a child's attendance is low parents/carers may have to provide medical evidence if this has been requested by the school. Failure to provide the evidence will result in the absence being unauthorised)
- Emergency dental/medical appointment, please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays.
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Absence for exceptional circumstances, this may include some holidays when prior approval has been given.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5 What is unacceptable?



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The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances; family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

7 Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given. You need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time. You should complete an exceptional leave of absence application form (see appendix) stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The governors have the right to refuse permission.

8. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family, particularly for minority ethnic families. Contact your child's class teacher or form tutor as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the school then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away. As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

9 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he / she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

10. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.



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175 non-school days in a year

175 days to spend on family time visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments.

<p>190 School days in each year</p> <p>190 Days for your child's education.</p>		<p>7 days absence</p>			
<p>100%</p>	<p>183 Days of Education</p>	<p>12 days absence</p>	<p>178 Days of Education</p>	<p>19 days absence</p>	<p>28 days absence</p>
<p>100%</p>	<p>96%</p>	<p>94%</p>	<p>90%</p>	<p>85%</p>	<p>75%</p>
<p>Good Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start.</p>		<p>Worrying Less chance of success. Makes it harder to make progress.</p>		<p>Serious Concern Not fair on your child. Legal Action!</p>	



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Request for a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

(Please read the attached notes before you fill it in.)

Section A

Child's name: Class:.....

First day of absence from school:.....

Last day of absence from school:.....

Total number of days absent:.....

Reason for request during term time

If you are requesting a family holiday please continue in the box below

Family Holidays

Is this your only family holiday this year? Yes / No

Why are you planning your holiday during term time? Please include any information you would like us to consider.

Other requests for absence

Section B

Please fill in this section if it is difficult for you to take time off work during the school holidays. Otherwise, go to Section C.

Name of parent or carer whose job affects when you go on holiday:.....

Name and address of employer:

Job title:.....

Please explain why it is difficult for you to take time off work during school holidays or attach your conditions of employment.

Section C



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I have read the attached notes. The information I have given on this form is correct:

Signature of parent of carer:.....

Date:.....

Notes on family holidays

Planning your holiday

We publish the dates of school terms well ahead. This is to help you plan your holidays. When you book your holiday, please check that it does not clash with the school term.

The value of regular attendance

Your child must attend school regularly, especially to gain qualifications for their future employment. Research shows that pupils perform better if their parents or carers emphasise the importance of attending school.

Your legal responsibilities

You have a legal duty to make sure your child attends school regularly and punctually. The school and the Local Authority monitor your child's attendance and will take action if it is poor.

Absence for a family holiday

The Government recommends that family holidays are taken outside school terms. Schools will sometimes give permission for a pupil to go on holiday during term time. The school will consider the reasons for the holiday, the pupil's past attendance, and the effects the absence will have on the pupil's learning. The school will not normally give permission simply because holidays cost less during term time.

Schools have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a school grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. ***This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.***

Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

Applying for absence because of a family holiday

If you have to take your family holiday during school term, please fill in the form attached. ***Please do not assume that you will automatically get permission for the absence because you have filled in the form. Please wait to hear if the school agrees to your request.***

Warning

If you take your child out of school without permission you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may decide to prosecute.

A conviction may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a prison sentence of up to three months or both. Alternatively, a penalty notice may be issued under **Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996**. This carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice will result in Court action.



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Appendix 1.

Investigating Absence

Day 1 calls

1. The office staff to log any child not present in school after register has been taken at 8.55am.

Any messages of absence from parents/carers logged.

Any unexplained absences will be followed up with a phone call from the office staff. If no reply from first contact called, member of office staff to work their way through the other contacts until a reason is given. If no reason is received by 9.45am then name to be forwarded to Mrs Squires (or in her absence Mrs Head)

All calls will have been made and logged by 9.45am – all logs then given to Mrs Squires

2. Mrs Squires (or in her absence Mrs Head) will look at SIMs daily to check on reasons for absence, along with checking on children who school have received no reason for absence. Mrs Squires will check with DSL regarding children absent to ascertain if any other action needs to be undertaken (see safeguarding below).

Day 2

1. Office to ring again any child who remains absent and the school still have received/made no contact with home and no reason has been provided.
2. Mrs Squires (or in her absence Mrs Head) will check SIMs daily to check on reasons for absence, along with checking on children who school continue to have received no reason for absence. Mrs Squires will check with DSL regarding children absent to ascertain if any other agency needs to be contacted or a home visit by school should be made.

Day 3

1. If a child has been absent for three days and we have not received a call day three then the office will make a follow up call to ascertain how the pupil is doing and find out their expected return date.

Safeguarding

If the child is known to the safeguarding team and there are or have been historically any concerns around the family or child the following procedure will be followed by the safeguarding team:

Day 1

1. Mrs Squires to ensure all contacts have been contacted to establish why the child is absent

If a reason is not given and child remains absent a further day and no reason has been provided the school will carry out a home visit on day two. If there is no response from home then the school will contact the Police and request a welfare check.

If a reason is given on day one but child remains absent, on day three the school will carry out a home visit and inform family support worker/social worker.