



# Rush Green Primary School

Attendance Policy



Rush Green Primary

## Whole School Attendance policy

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** Rush Green Primary School is committed to providing a full and effective education to all pupils and we embrace the concept of equality of opportunity for all.

**1.2** We expect all children on roll to attend every day that the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all that we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures to support them in doing this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those whose attendance is very good. We will make the provision we can for those children whom are prevented from coming to school.

**1.3** Under the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration 1995), the Governing Body (GB) is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required. These records are required to be reported to the Local Authority (LA) at agreed intervals and can form evidence in court where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences and include details of pupils who:

- Fail to attend regularly,
- Are identified as having an unsatisfactory attendance (below 90%)
- Have been absent for a continuous period of more than 5 school days
- Fail to arrive on time for school or are collected late on a regular basis

**1.4** School attendance is subject to Education Law and this policy is written to reflect the laws and guidance provided by the DfE (Department for Education).

**1.5** The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

**1.6** This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

### **2. DEFINITIONS**

#### **2.1 Authorised Absence**

**2.2** Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, illness, medical/dental appointments, religious observance and bereavement. Medical certificates may be requested for long term or repeated patterns of non-attendance.

**2.3** Only the school can declare an absence authorised and parents do not have this authority.

**2.4** Not all reported absences will be authorised. For example, keeping children off school for shopping, haircuts, birthday treats etc.

## **2.5 Unauthorised Absence**

**2.6** Unauthorised absences are morning or afternoons away from school without good reason and for which no Leave of Absence has been sought or granted. This includes: keeping children off for treats, truancy, unexplained absence, **children who arrive late after registration without a valid reason**. If a child is consistently late for school, then a letter expressing concern will be sent home and parents may be asked in to discuss next steps with the Head Teacher and/or LA Attendance Officer and/or Parent Support Advisor, depending on the severity of absence. If lateness continues, or if parents refuse to engage with the school, then the Local Attendance Officer will be contacted to make alternative arrangements, which may include home visits, fines and in extreme cases, prosecution.

## **2.7 School Procedures**

**2.8** Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absences. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded as unauthorised, until a reasonable explanation is provided (see first day calling).

## **2.9 Lateness**

**3.0** Punctuality is important as it shows consideration to others, but more importantly ensures a prompt start to learning.

## **3.1 Registration**

**3.2** In the juniors (KS2), morning registration starts at 8.45am and closes at 8.55am. Any pupil arriving after morning registration time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. If pupils arrive after 8.45am but before 8.55am, pupils may be given a late before registration closes. This will be followed up in the same way as described in 2.6.

**3.3** Teachers must ensure that registers are sent to the Office by 9.15am

**3.4** In the Juniors (KS2), afternoon registration starts at 12.50pm (year 5 & 6) and 1.05pm (year 3 & 4). Any pupil arriving after registration time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. Pupils may be given a late before registration closes. This will be followed up in the same way as described in 2.6.

**3.5** In the infants (KS1 and EYFS), morning registration starts at 9.00am and closes at 9.10am. Any pupil arriving after morning registration time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. If pupils arrive after

9.00am but before 9.10am, pupils may be given a late before registration closes. This will be followed up in the same way as described in section 2.6

**3.6** pupils arriving after the start of a school session but before the end of registration period will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present but will be coded as late before registers close. Lateness will be monitored on a daily basis. If frequent lateness is recorded then a letter will be sent to the parents/the Parent Support Advisor (PSA) and/or Head Teacher may request a meeting with the parents and/or the LA Attendance Officer.

### **3.7 Late collection**

**3.8** Persistent late collection will result in referral to the LA Attendance Officer. In extreme cases, a referral will be made to Social Services.

### **3.9 First Day Absence**

**4.0** Parents are asked to contact the School Office (0208) 270 4940) on the first day of a child's absence. This should be before 9.30am.

**4.1** When an absence is not reported, then the Office will call the parent/guardian to ascertain the cause of absence (children on the School Vulnerable Pupil list will be called first). All calls must be made before 10.30am.

**4.2** Messages will be left where possible for parents/guardians to contact the School Office but where there is a cause for concern or the School is unable to make any contact, then the Local Authority Attendance Officer and/or Social Services will be called.

**4.3** In the case of a missing pupil (the pupil has not been recorded as being present in the school but the parent/guardian tells us that the child left home as normal) then the following steps must be taken:

**4.4** Check to see if the class teacher has seen the child and the child is in class/assembly.

If the child is in class/assembly, then inform a member of the SLT and telephone the parent to advise them that the child has been found and review register procedures to investigate.

If the child is not in class and has not been seen then inform the Head Teacher or acting Head Teacher, who, with SLT will carry out a rapid school search.

If the child is still not found, (and in any case, after 15 minutes), the Police must be called to inform them that there is a missing child - giving them all the information that is required (including any relevant medical information or special need).

Telephone the parent after the call to the Police.

Print 5 x copies of the child's photo (from School records for Police use)

In cases, where we are unable to contact parents when a child is absent, we may have to seek advice from the LA Social Services Team or the Attendance Officer. In some cases, the LA may work closely with the police to establish the whereabouts of the family. Our school will keep the child/ren on roll until advised to remove them by the LA.

**4.5** When a child returns to school, he/she must provide a letter of explanation signed and dated by the parent/guardian. Absences cannot be authorised unless a valid explanation for absence is received (providing a written letter of explanation may not be sufficient for an authorised absence if the given reason for an absence is not valid).

**4.6** Absence notes received from parents should be kept for the remainder of the academic year, or longer if there are concerns about a pupil. These notes may be submitted to the LA Attendance Officer and/or Parent Support Advisor, depending on the severity of the case and only if the School has concerns.

#### **4.7 Unexplained Absence**

**4.8** If the School has any cause for concern about a pupil who is absent without adequate explanation, a referral will be made to Children's Services and/or the Attendance Officer and/or Child Protection Lead. This action does not preclude the School taking all necessary steps to ensure that pupils are safeguarded. Unexplained absences and/or frequent absences can be a serious concern and will therefore be fully investigated.

#### **4.9 Frequent Absence**

**5.0** In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the School will try to resolve the problem with the parents. If unsuccessful, the School will refer the case to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases, the School will seek guidance from the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

#### **5.1 Long Term Absence**

**5.2** Depending on the nature of the illness, work will be sent home to support the pupil. In some cases, pupil support services may be contacted so that tuition can be provided in the setting. In cases where pupils are subject to tuition, for example, in a hospital setting, the School is still responsible for the progress that the individual child makes.

#### **5.3 Persistent Absence**

**5.4** This School is committed to ensuring that pupils with an attendance of 80% and below are a priority. The PA (persistent absenteeism) status of a school is determined where 2.5% of the roll are attending at less than 90% of the time. Priority will be given to working with the LA to reduce the number of children who are persistent absentees. THIS IS A HIGH PRIORITY FOR OUR SCHOOL!

## **5.5 LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS**

**5.6** Every child of school age is legally obliged to attend school for 190 days per year on the days designated by the School. The policy of our School is to discourage parents from taking children out of school during term time. Parents should be aware that poor progress is linked to poor attendance.

**5.7** The DfE has stated that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**5.8** All requests for Leave of Absence will be forwarded to the School Governing Body, whom will make a decision as to whether Leave of Absence can be granted (please note that all requests must be completed on the Leave of Absence Request Form, which can be downloaded from the School website).

**5.9** In deciding whether to grant Leave of Absence, the following factors will be taken into account:

- Children with 90% or less attendance will never be authorised (unauthorised absences due to lateness will count in these figures).
- Child's previous attendance history – above 95% will be considered. Less than 95%, only in extreme circumstances,
- Discussion with the Class Teacher,
- Child's stage of education,
- Nature of the absence (special/exceptional circumstances),
- Whether parents are restricted, in terms of leave, by their own employer
- No absence will be granted during the period leading up to and including the week/s of statutory testing

**6.0** The School may consider authorising up to 5 days absence but parents must seek permission beforehand (see points above).

**6.1** Unauthorised absences that have been taken without seeking approval or when approval has not been given, will be referred to the LA Attendance Officer. A penalty notice may be issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct which states:

*'Where a parent has taken the pupil on holiday during term time without the school's authorisation or (in cases where the school has authorised absence for a holiday) has failed to return the pupil on the date agreed.'*

**6.2** If Leave of Absence requests are unauthorised and the child is reported as being ill for the period when leave was applied for, or illness was cited as a reason for returning a child after the agreed return date, then medical evidence or ticket/booking information will be required to show this was the case. Where unauthorised holidays are taken that extend to 20 days or more, the school reserves the right to remove children from the school's roll.

### **6.3 Stage/Television Productions**

**6.4** Parents should find out how many sessions (half days) they wish to request. This should include any rehearsals, performances and travel time.

**6.5 Applications should be made in writing.**

**6.6** If the School deems that the child's progress may suffer, then the request will be denied.

### **6.7 Attendance Targets**

**6.8** The School, jointly with the LA, will set attendance targets each year. These targets will be based upon previous year's data on attendance and will be aspirational.

**6.9** The School, for example through the Parent Support Advisor, will seek to remind and reinforce good attendance and punctuality with School users.

### **7.0 Monitoring and Review**

**7.1** It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance and this will be reported on by the Head Teacher.

**7.2** The School will keep accurate attendance records for a period of seven years.

**7.3** Class Teachers, the Parent Support Advisor and Head Teacher will have responsibility for monitoring attendance. Where there are attendance concerns, the Head Teacher should be informed immediately.

**7.4** The LA have a duty to check that the School's registers are completed accurately and to check that the correct codes are used for recording absence.

**7.5** Register reviews are undertaken by the LA Attendance Officer and Parent Support Advisor. The information provided will inform the School of any issues that need to be addressed. The Parent Support Advisor and Head Teacher will meet regularly to discuss attendance and next steps.

To be reviewed in 2020

Simon Abeledo

13/1/15

14/7/17

23/4/18

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body: Mr D. Hodge Date: 23/4/18