

**RUSH GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Attendance Policy**

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| **Approved by:** | S Abeledo | **Date:** May 2022 |
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# 1. Aims

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

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent 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:

* fulfil their legal responsibility in ensuring their child attend schools regularly and punctually
* ensure their child attends school in correct uniform and with the right equipment
* ensure their child is picked up on time and to notify school immediately if exceptional circumstances necessitate a late collection
* notify school as soon as possible regarding their child's absence and give prior notice of any hospital or dental appointments
* notify school immediately of any changes to contact details especially changes of telephone numbers or collection details

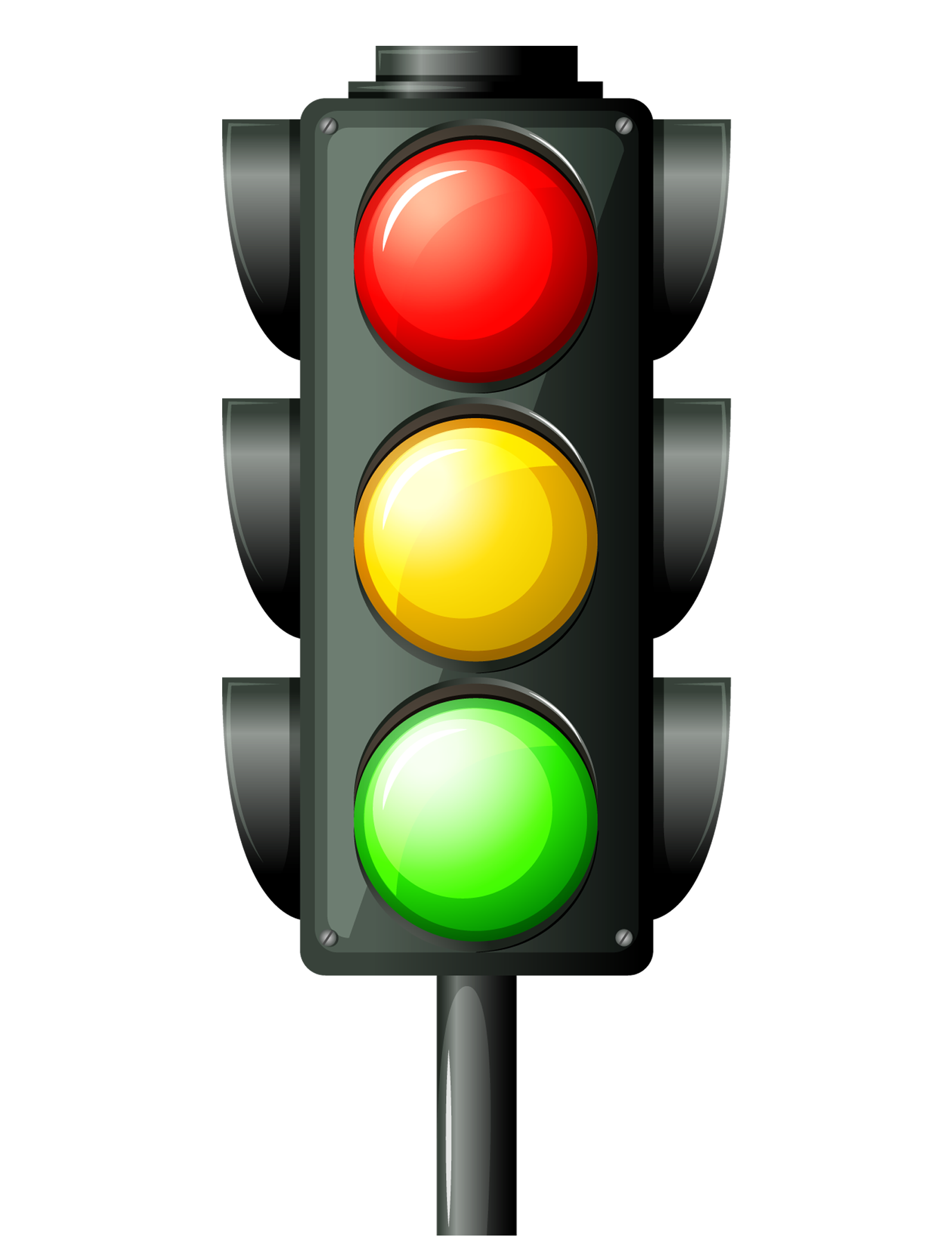
[**1.2 The link between absence and attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509679/The-link-between-absence-and-attainment-at-KS2-and-KS4-2013-to-2014-academic-year.pdf)

Department for Education found **overall absence negatively effects attainment** at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 – every extra day missed is associated with a lower attainment outcome.

* Pupils with at least 95% attendance achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*- C
* Only 10% of persistent absentees achieve 5 A\* – C GCSEs compared to 58% of regular attenders
* 21% of persistent absentees had no qualifications compared to only 3% of regular attenders

In Rush Green Primary School, we have also seen the link between high absence and lower attainment. Children who are persistent absentees (as defined by the DfE as attending < 90% of school sessions) will fall behind by around a year in their literacy over the course of their time in our school

In our school we use a ‘traffic light’ system to assess the pupil’s attendance. These thresholds are used to allocate rewards for good attendance and to help us decide on what strategies may be appropriate to implement when supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure regular school attendance.



Red – Attendance <90%

Amber – 90% < Attendance > 96%

Green – Attendance >96%

# 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

* [The Education Act 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/II)
* [The Education Act 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/part/3/chapter/3)
* [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/part/7/chapter/2/crossheading/school-attendance)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/amendment-regulation-2010_tcm3-8642.pdf)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/made)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/made)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016](http://legislation.data.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/made/data.html)
* [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/pdfs/uksiem_20130756_en.pdf)
* [The Children Act 2004](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/2019-04-29)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Ensuring your child’s regular attendance at school is a parent/carer’s legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

# 3. School procedures

**3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second 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

All entries will be in line with the DfE Attendance codes (see appendix 1).

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for at least 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The register for the first session will be taken when the school day begins (as shown in the table below) and will be kept open until 9:30 am. Children arriving in school after the Late Register closes will be marked as having a ‘U’ code – in line with government guidelines, this is classed as an unauthorised absence. The register for the second session will be taken shortly after lunch and will be kept open until 1:20 pm.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | School Day Begins | Late Register closes |
| Nursery | 8:30 | n/a |
| Reception – Year 2 | 8:55 | 9:30 |
| Years 3 and 4 | 8:45 | 9:30 |
| Years 5 and 6 | 8:45  *(doors open at 8:35* | 9:30 |

**3.2 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 9:30 am, or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents should call the absence line and leave a clear voicemail. The telephone number for this is

0208724 8539.

Alternatively, parents can email the school via the dedicated email address for reporting absence:

Pupil67.301@bdcs.org.uk

In most cases, absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the welfare of the child or if there has been a pattern of irregular attendance

In these cases, 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 without careful consideration. If insufficient information is seen, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If a child has an ongoing health concern, the school may request permission to seek a medical update from an appropriate healthcare professional via a GP consent form which will be signed by the parent.

**3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence where advance notice is given and proof of the appointment is provided.

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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

**3.4 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.

Where a pattern of poor punctuality is established, the school will notify parents of their concerns via a letter. If the punctuality issues continue, then parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the relevant school staff.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.

**3.5 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 and identify the correct attendance code to use.

School systems are in place to ensure that absences are followed up in a timely manner, to ensure that the appropriate next steps are taken and to establish the reason for absence (see Appendix 2 – Absence Protocol Flowchart).

Where a child is absent and the school is yet to be informed, *‘First-day calling’* procedures will be put in place. This may include:

* + Text message to parents to ascertain reasons for absence
  + Telephone call from the PSA
  + Home Visits
  + Letter home
  + If no response received within 10 days, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised

Whilst Rush Green Primary School considers all pupils with low attendance as vulnerable, the Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL) may prioritise the most vulnerable children as a safeguarding concern and will carry out a home visit on the first day of absence if the safety of the child cannot be established.

**3.6 Reporting to parents**

Parents will be informed of their child’s attendance in the termly parents’ meetings and within the end of year report. However, where there are concerns about a pupil’s attendance, the PSA will contact parents via a letter, telephone call or school-based meeting.

Where attendance concerns are not resolved, or if there is no noticeable improvement, the school may refer the case to LBBD Education Prosections.

# 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

**4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers or designated persons may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances may include educational visits, approved sporting activities or circumstances such as a family bereavement.

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 headteacher’s discretion.

**4.2 Leave of absence**

Leave of absence during term-time and holiday requests will be discouraged and families reminded of the impact that absence from school has upon pupils’ attainment and progress. Should a parent or carer wish to apply for a leave of absence, then a form from the school office or downloaded from the school’s website should be completed. In order to validate the reasons for absence, or to verify the length of the leave, the school may request to see evidence which may include flight tickets, booking confirmation

All requests for a leave of absence will be forwarded to the school’s governing body, who will make a decision as to whether the leave of absence can be granted.

In deciding whether to grant the leave of absence, the following factors will be taken into account:

* Children with attendance of 90% or less will never be authorised
* The child’s historic attendance levels – above 95% will be considered (in exceptional circumstances, children with prior attendance levels of <95% may be considered)
* Discussions with the class teacher
* The circumstances behind the leave of absence
* Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave by their own employer
* No leave of absence will be granted during the period leading up to and including the week/s of statutory testing

When leave of absence is agreed, a maximum of 5 days will be approved. Following this, the absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences that have been taken without seeking prior approval, or when approval has not been given, may result in a penalty notice being issued in accordance with the [London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/The-penalty-notice-code-of-conduct.pdf) which states:

*‘If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.’*

**4.3 Reasons for authorised absence**

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

* Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
* 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
* Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes– this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away, the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

**4.4 Reasons for unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school without good reason and for which no leave of absence has been approved. Examples include:

* Staying at home because a parent is sick or cannot take the child to school
* Birthday treats
* Shopping
* Hair cuts
* Waiting for deliveries or maintenance companies
* Head lice (see Appendix 3)

**4.5 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority’s code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

* A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
* One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
* Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent under Section 444(i) of the Education Act as a strict liability offence or to withdraw the notice. In consultation with LBBD Education Prosecutions, AttendancePlus may also refer cases to magistrates’ court under both Section 444(i) and Section 444(1a) of the Education Act. The latter is the aggravated version of the offence which could result in a fine, a community order or up to 3 months’ imprisonment. Consideration will also be given to seeking an Education Supervision Order and referring the matter to the Family Court.

# 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Rush Green Primary School expects that children on roll will attend every day, 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 support families in ensuring that this happens. 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 school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We recognise and reward children who attend school regularly, or make good progress in improving their attendance in a number of ways, such as:

* Termly rewards for good or improved attendance (pencils, certificates, badges etc.)
* End of year rewards (such as a bouncy castle experience)
* Certificates
* Traffic light system
* Inform and remind parents of the benefits of good levels of attendance
* Communicating with parents regularly on their child’s attendance
* Informing and meeting parents when there is a decline in their child’s attendance to establish what means of support can be given

# 6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance team monitors pupil absence on a fortnightly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

During fortnightly attendance profiling meetings, the attendance team will consider a number of factors to ‘RAG’ rate the pupils’ attendance. Where there are concerns over the patterns of absence seen, or if a child’s attendance has fallen below the target of 96%, the parents may be contacted by the school’s PSA. This contact may be via a letter, telephone call or an invitation to attend a school-based meeting. Regular updates on attendance will be given by the PSA to parents of children whose attendance is being monitored.

If, after contacting parents, a pupil’s absence continue to rise, or if parents are not engaging with the school, we will consider referring to the LBBD Education Prosecutions.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

# 7. Dual-Roll and Long Term Absence

There may be occasions when a pupil at Rush Green Primary School is absent from school for a long period of time, or may be dual-registered in another educational establishment. In these circumstances, the school will:

* Monitor the attendance regularly to ensure regular attendance and safeguarding requirements are met
* Consider sending additional work home to lessen the impact upon the child’s education
* Liaise with other professionals, such as the Hospital Home Tuition service and Hospital Schools etc.

# 8. Roles and responsibilities

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Who | Responsibility |
| Parents and Carers | Parents will:   * Inform the school on the first day of absence * Discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance * Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year * 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 * Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments * Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance. |
| The Governing Body | The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.  Attendance figures are included as a standing agenda item in Full Governing Body meetings and in Teaching and Standards Committee meetings. |
| The Headteacher and Designated Deputy | The headteacher and designated deputy are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.  They also support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary |
| The Parent Support Adviser (PSA) and Attendance Team | The PSA (as part of the attendance team):   * Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level * Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher * Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence * Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues * Carries out home visits * Supports parents and children who may be finding it difficult to attend regularly and punctually * Decides when to request medical evidence * Ensures good communications and strategies to provide early intervention to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities * Refers cases to AttendancePlus where this is deemed to be the most appropriate course of action * Regularly monitor the attendance of any children who are dual-registered |
| Class Teachers | Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office.  Teachers will use the online register (Integris) using only the following codes:   * / Present (am) * \ Present (pm) * L Late arrival * N Reason not provided   All teachers will complete the register at the beginning of every session and ensure that it has been saved correctly and is accurate.  Parents giving reasons for absence will be directed to the PSA or school office |
| Office staff | Office staff are expected to:   * Listen to messages left on the absence line and read emails from parents reporting their child’s absence and record on the electronic register * Receive notification in advance of medical appointments etc. * Check whether children marked as absent are in school or not * Forwards a list of absentees to the PSA |

# 9. School Leavers and Children Missing Education (CME)

If your child is to leave school (other than transferring at the end of the Year 6), parents/carers are asked to give the school office full and comprehensive information about their plans to leave. Information should include:

* Date of move
* New address
* Telephone numbers
* The new school for the child, or, the parent’s/carer’s intentions to ensure they are in receipt of effective education in regard their age, ability and aptitude
* The last day of attendance at Rush Green Primary School

This information should be submitted to the school in writing and signed by the parent/carer.

Until Rush Green Primary School receives confirmation that the child has begun attending their new school, normal attendance procedures are followed and the child will remain on the roll of Rush Green Primary School. In these circumstances all absences will be reported as unauthorised.

If a student leaves and we do not have the above information, then your child will be considered to be a ‘Child Missing Education’. This requires the school and Local Authority to investigate their whereabouts and reason for non-attendance. This may involve the Police, Children’s Social Care and other agencies as appropriate and required. By parent’s/carer’s providing this information, these investigations can be avoided.

# 10. Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents/carers of able sports persons can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national or international events and competitions. It is however the discretion of the Head Teacher whether to authorise this. They will need to discuss with the parents/carers the nature and frequency of the absence and how the child’s learning will be upheld if absent from school. Permission to leave early or arrive late to attend training sessions will also be the discretion of the Head Teacher. NB. It is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

# 11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the strategic lead for attendance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

# 12. 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.

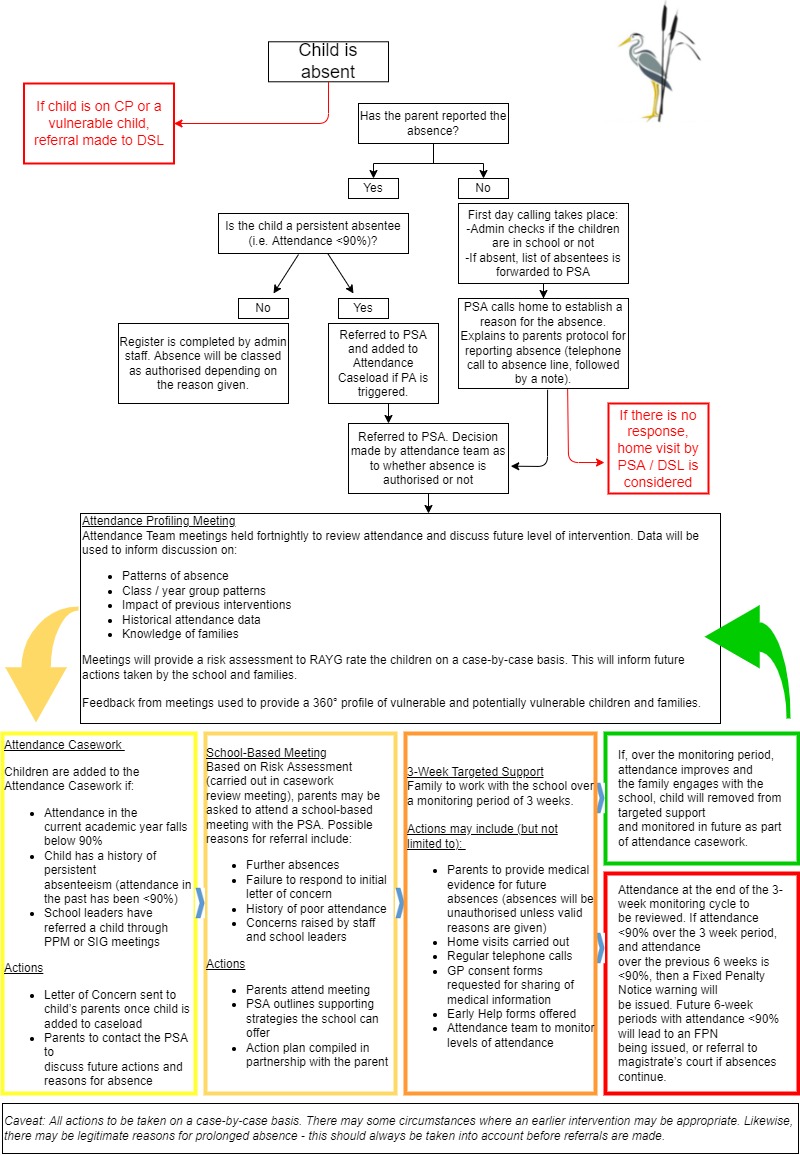
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **/** | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| **\** | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| **L** | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **B** | Off-site 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** |
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **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 |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | 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) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y** | 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 |
| **Z** | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |

# Appendix 2: Absence Flowchart

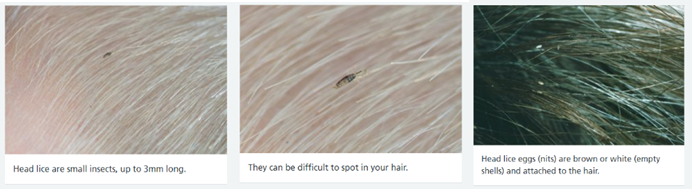
The flowchart shows the protocols and systems in place for monitoring children who are absent and the actions taken.



# Appendix 3: Head lice / Nits

The following policy advises parents on the school’s policy regarding whether absence due to head lice will be authorised or not.

Concerned About Head Lice or Nits?

From time-to-time, children may pick up head lice. This is not related to dirty hair, but through contact with other people's hair or clothing. The lice may make your child's scalp feel itchy, or as though there are things moving in their hair.  

The only way to be sure someone has head lice is by finding live lice. You can do this by combing their hair with a special fine-toothed comb (detection comb). You can buy these online or at pharmacies.

**There is no need to see a GP**

What parents should do if they discover head lice

When a parent or carer discovers that their child has head lice, they should treat the infestation immediately. Usually this will involve 'wet-combing'; combing the hair when wet with a special fine-toothed comb, or using a medicated lotion or spray.

The child should still attend school following this treatment. If head lice are discovered in the morning, we would still expect to see the child in school once the treatment has been carried out.

What will the school do?

If a member of staff observes a child with head lice, we will call the parents at the end of the day. In some cases, we may call home sooner - the parent may wish to collect their child in order to treat the infestation or to make their child feel more comfortable.

We will signpost parents to the latest NHS guidance, which can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice-and-nits/>

The school will expect the child to attend school the following day - government guidance states that there is no need for children to be absent from school. As a result, any absence due to headlice will be unauthorised.

If the problem persists, or in the case of a severe infestation, the school may ask for parental consent to seek advice and guidance from the school's nursing team.

The school will no longer send out 'mass alerts' when there is an outbreak of head lice.  There are a few reasons for this. Most schools and nurseries are likely to have a few children with head lice at any one time. On that basis, ‘alert’ letters could potentially be required every day. ‘Alert’ letters also frequently lead parents to attempt to treat their children preventatively, which is neither effective nor advised. Head lice infection cannot be prevented, and over-use of insecticide treatments may lead to resistance. We will, though, provide helpful information for parents about the detection and treatment of head lice infection on a regular basis, for example at the start of a new term.

# Appendix 4: Absence Advice

Parents often ask whether their child should attend school when they have been sick or how long to keep their child absent from school. We use government guidance published by [Public Health England](https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance_on_infection_control_in%20schools_poster.pdf) to ascertain whether a child needs to be absent and to decide when a child can return to school. The school may refer to this when deciding if an absence can be authorised ornot. 

