

Rydon Primary School

Attendance Policy



Adopted by Governors: March 2014

Reviewed: December 2016

This document is subject to review on an annual basis

IMPACT OF POLICY:

The impact on Rydon school targets of using this policy is the improved attainment and achievement for pupils through improved attendance.

1. Introduction

Rydon School, as part of the Templer Academy School Trust, is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

2. Objectives

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that parents / carers are aware of attendance / punctuality concerns
- To work with EWS (Education Welfare Service) and other appropriate agencies to support good attendance & punctuality
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance through the school's celebration assemblies
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school
- To improve attainment and achievement of pupils through improved levels of attendance.

3. Statutory Duty of School and Parents

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

• Principles

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. This extends to ensuring that pupils arrive at school on time, in the correct school uniform and in a condition to learn. The school will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed.

• The Education Welfare Service (EWS) & School Attendance

- As part of an academy, we will continue to work with the EWS which is a part of the Devon Local Authority (the LA). Its aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.
- The EWS will be notified in the following circumstances;
 - Unauthorised absence by a pupil of more than 10 half-day sessions over 6 months
 - Attendance of less than 85% by a pupil

- Where the action taken at school level has failed to improve attendance/punctuality for a particular pupil

What happens if a child does not attend school regularly? (and their absence is not authorised)

- It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly and it is the parent's responsibility to ensure this happens. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued, requiring each parent to pay a fine of up to £60 in the first instance, increasing to £120 per parent/carer (if it is not paid within a certain number of days), per child if their attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances the parent may be prosecuted and be required to attend the Magistrates Court where the parent could face up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2,500. The parent will be given every opportunity to improve their child's attendance and the parent will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

4. Statutory Attendance Responsibilities

There is a legal responsibility to have a morning and an afternoon registration

- **The School will:**

Record and monitor attendance and absence. Legally the school is required to do this twice a day.

Use a registration system to record and monitor attendance to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils.

Record and monitor the punctuality of all pupils and, where necessary, inform parents of persistent lateness and apply appropriate consequences. Registers are closed at 9.10am, and 1.10pm: Pupils arriving after registers are closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) unless an absence has been reported to the school office

Only authorise pupil absence in exceptional circumstances.

Maintain strong home-school liaison to inform and support parents with their child's attendance advising them as early as possible if there are cases of unauthorised absence, persistent lateness or their child's attendance becomes a cause for concern

Work closely with the school Educational Welfare Officer and other appropriate agencies where there are concerns regarding attendance.

Help to investigate, identify and resolve any issues with children and their families which prevent full attendance at Rydon School and will do everything possible to help return pupils to full attendance.

Promote the importance of attendance through celebration assemblies each half term for pupils who achieve 100% attendance.

- **Parents should:**

Ensure their children arrive on time to school in the correct school uniform.

Be aware that any person who has the care of a child or who has parental responsibility is responsible for ensuring good attendance.

Ensure that they are fully aware of school procedures – these are communicated via the school website, school newsletters and in the school prospectus.

5. Reporting Absences

Procedures are detailed in Appendix A - Rydon Primary School Attendance Flowchart.

- **On the 1st Days' Absence**

- It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence by 9.30 a.m. on the day of absence and the expected date of their return
- The school will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of an absent pupil will be contacted by the School Office.

- **After 3 Consecutive Days' Absence**

- Parent/carer must contact the School Office on 3rd day of absence giving expected date of return.
- Where there has been no parental/carer notification after 3 consecutive days, the Head/Deputy Head Teacher will contact parents/carer.
- Where there has been an absence of more than 4 consecutive days and parents/carers have not made contact or cannot be contacted by school, Education Welfare Office (EWO) will be informed.
- In the case of long term illness the school should be notified so that teachers can set work. If it is known that the pupil will be absent for more than 2 weeks, the EWO should be notified.

- **Methods of Reporting Absences**

In any case of absence, parents/carers should contact the school by one of the following methods:

- By phone to the School Office whereby a note is then passed to the class teacher
- The parent makes personal contact with the school office where a note is then passed to the class teacher
- Notification by fax and e-mail can be accepted.

Where over the course of an academic year, a pupil has 20 sessions¹ of illness, the School will write to parents to ask them to come in and discuss the situation further.

6. Authorised Absence

- **Reasons for Absence**

Be aware that absence from school will only be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but parents should be encouraged to make these after school if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement or marriage of immediate family member
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

- **Family Holidays during Term Time**

From the 1st September 2013, all schools are unable to authorise any requests for absence relating to holidays in term time. This has been brought about by an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registrations) England) Regulations 2006 which has removed reference to holidays and the ten day period.

These changes reinforce the government's views that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absence by the school, in exceptional circumstances e.g. illness, exclusions, or due to other unavoidable causes.

If an absence request is made it will be considered by the Headteacher using the criteria outlined in Appendix B – Holiday in Term Time, Guidance Flow Chart. A child's educational progress will also

¹ 1 session refers to either a morning or an afternoon in school. Each school day therefore has 2 sessions within it.

be considered alongside their existing attendance rate and previous absence requests that may have been made.

Absence Request Form S2 which is available from the school office must be submitted with at least two weeks prior notice to the absence being requested. The holiday will only be authorised at the Head or Deputy Head Teacher's discretion. The Head Teacher will make final decisions on all Absence Requests

In exceptional circumstances a parent/carer can apply for an absence of longer than 10 days. In this situation the Head Teacher or Governors will decide if this can be authorised.

If a parent/carer is refused an absence request and the pupil is still taken out of school by the parent/carer, the school will be forced to consider a Penalty Notice. This is in the form of a £60 fine per parent for each child, if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days (details are on the S2 Absence Request form)

7. Truancy

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends school. Parents/carers will be informed by the Deputy/Head Teacher if their child has been identified as truanting from the school. Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice or taking legal action.

8. When Attendance causes concern

- School will set targets to encourage good attendance and to address any concerns
- Contact will be made with parents to advise them of poor attendance
- If there are a high number of absences due to illness, school may be in the position to stop authorising them if they have any concerns.
- A referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service and your child may be placed on the 'Fast Track to Attendance' scheme.

9. Punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving to school on time. Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

Appendix A – Staff Guidance and Procedures

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Promoting attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Responsibilities and procedures are identified as follows;

1 Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Governing Body: Reviews policy annually, receives termly report via Head teachers' Report to Governors.

Role of Senior Leadership Team: Deputy Head Teacher monitors adherence to procedures and implementation of policy; production of data for SLT / Governors on a termly basis. Intervene with pupils and parents identified as having significant attendance and punctuality problems with the aim of improving attendance rate. Head teacher to become involved when procedures in place with families are not being adhered to.

School Administrative Staff: Administration of attendance and punctuality data within the framework of the policy, first day contacts, production of statutory attendance data for EWO, production of half termly reports.

Class teacher: Keeping an accurate register and follow up of absences and lateness within the systems and procedures in this policy; communicating information to the School Administrative Staff when it has been made available to them.

Education Welfare Officer: Implementation of Devon Local Authority procedures in enforcing attendance and with assisting in advising pupils and parents of the legal consequences of failing to meet these obligations. The EWO is the attendance enforcement arm of the LA. Through home visiting the EWO will assess the non-attender's problems in the family context and is a valuable resource in linking with other agencies.

2 Attendance Procedures

- There should be a clear start to registration at 9:00am and 1:00pm when all teachers take their registers; pupils will be encouraged to value the registration session each morning and afternoon with their teacher; and staff will make pupils feel valued.
- Teachers will take a class register for the morning and afternoon of the children they teach as part of safeguarding procedures and alert the school immediately to any missing child.
- The Head and Deputy Head Teacher will reinforce the importance of good attendance and punctuality through assemblies.
- The Head and Deputy Head Teacher have responsibility for following up any concerns for attendance, informing parents where there are concerns regarding attendance, and for reporting persistent absenteeism problems further.
- The Head and Deputy Teacher will actively promote 100% attendance and will praise pupils with improving attendance.
- The pupil's annual written report to parents/carers will include summative information on attendance.
- Parents should inform the school by telephone by 9.30a.m. on the first day their child is absent
- Parents will be contacted by a member of the School Administrative staff on the first day of absence whenever any pupil is absent without reason, or persistently late. The Deputy /Head teacher will contact the parents to remind them, if necessary, of their legal responsibility for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

- Parents will be encouraged to assist in promoting their child's attendance, and discouraged from taking family holidays within term time.
- The Deputy Head Teacher will regularly review the progress of any pupil causing concern and will consult with the Head Teacher and the Education Welfare Service to develop and maintain good practice for attendance.

The Attendance Policy Flowchart details the procedures if a pupil is absent in Appendix C.

3 Distribution of Data

The Deputy Head Teacher will produce the following attendance and punctuality data:

For Class teachers:

- Half termly reports identifying all pupils with below 90% attendance their class.

For EWO

- Half termly - all pupils below 90%

For SLT/Head Teacher

- Half termly reports of pupils attendance for below 90%
- Half termly report on absences across the school

This will be produced for all pupils in school; however we will aim to identify pupils with a problem within 2 weeks.

4 User Codes and Reconciliation of Registers

- If a pupil is absent, to ensure that a mark is written in ink against their name for each session, using either a 'present' mark or a 'red circle'.
- The school administrative staff will add the relevant codes and reconcile the registers.
- If a pupil is late during registration, Code L will be entered
- Only the national attendance codes issued can be used. These are listed in every class register.

5 Absence from School

Authorisation of absences from School:

- Teacher to insist on a written, signed note from parent/carer on pupils return, unless parents/carer has informed the School Administration Staff by another acceptable means.
- Teachers to hand in absence notes/records as they are received to the school office. These will be archived for 3 years.

Follow up procedures for unauthorised absence from School:

- The School Office to contact parents in first instance to try to clear all absences.
- Deputy Head Teacher provides EWO with names of pupils who have over 10 unauthorised absences and then to decide on appropriate intervention.
- Deputy Head provides Head Teacher and EWO with names of pupils with less than 90% attendance and then decides on appropriate intervention. EWO may consider pupil for referral or 'Fast-Track to Attendance' prosecution if appropriate.

Persistent Absences (PA)

- Where over the course of each half term a pupil's absence is 85% and less, they will be considered as a persistent absentee. It is the responsibility of the school and the EWS to investigate and monitor all cases of PA and intervene and improve the attendance of these children.

6 Truancy

Truancy from Lessons

- Pupils out of lessons without authorisation will be considered as truanting. Parents will receive a telephone call or letter from the Deputy Head Teacher. It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that their children attend full time education and therefore attend all lessons.

7 Agreed Attendance Intervention Levels

All figures are calculated from the beginning of the academic year. Attendance data will be produced and discussed with the Head Teacher and EWO on a half termly basis.

At 95%: Class Teachers to be made aware of pupils' attendance rate.

At 93%: First letter (Green – gentle reminder) may be sent by Head/ Deputy Head Teacher.

At 90%: Discussed with SLT and EWO. Second letter (Amber) may be sent if agreed. Individual Attendance Action Plan to be put in place if appropriate with parents.

Below 85%: EWO involvement to consider referral or Fast Track to Attendance if appropriate. Attendance monitored weekly for low attendance, illness or persistent lateness, until improvement in attendance is achieved.

8 Rewards and Interventions

100% Full attendance certificates to be issued each term in Celebration Assemblies. In certain instances this may also be for a pupil who has made a much improved attendance level in school.

9 Punctuality

Lateness to School in the Morning

- Registration is at 9:00am and 1:00pm. Pupils arriving between 9:00am and 9:10am or 1:00pm and 1:10pm are marked as late (Code L).
- Anyone arriving after 9:10 a.m. (or 1:10 p.m.) will be marked as unauthorised absence (Code U – Late after Registers have closed). Parents / carers will be contacted by Head/Deputy Head.
- Pupils who are persistently late after 9.10 a.m. (Code U) will be referred by the Head/Deputy Head to the EWO (after 10 incidents). The EWO will consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

Follow up procedures for lateness to School in the Morning:

- Deputy Head will alert the Head teacher to any pupil who has 10 or more lates in any half term and contact parents. If the lateness continues to persist, the EWO will be alerted who may consider instigating legal procedures.