



Attendance Policy

Ropery Walk Primary School

Academic Year

2020/21

Task	Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Signatories
	September 2020 (in line with updated AIT Policy template)	Angela Bell	
Review	September 2021		
Review			
Review			

Ropery Walk Primary School- Attendance Policy

Ropery Walk Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

We believe that all students benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular attendance. Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

It is a parent's legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time. As a school, we will work with pupils and their families to support parents to meet these legal duties and to ensure children can benefit from attending school regularly.

The school has established an effective system, which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

This policy has been reviewed and rewritten in line with the DfE 'School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' (October 2014), 'School attendance parental responsibility measures' (January 2015) and DfE 'Guidance for full opening of school' 31 July 2020.

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying and behaviour.

1. Attendance and Attainment

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

We will ensure that:

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

2. The Law

Parents need to make sure their child attends school regularly and on time. Parents are responsible for this duty in law and will be **breaking the law** if they do not do this and there are no good reasons for missing school.

The School and Local Authority **want to help if there are any problems**. If attendance does not get better or a parent does not accept help and support offered, the Council may issue a warning notice, Penalty Notice or a parent to attend an interview to ask questions about whether the law has been broken.

If a parent goes to court and is found guilty of an offence, a fine up to £1,000 for a less serious offence may be issued or up to £2,500 if the law breaking is more serious. **In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.**

3. Attendance Procedures

a) On the first day off

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, a child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If a child is well enough to come back to school following the appointment, they need to

do so.

Periods of extended absence (not related to coronavirus)

Please contact the school daily with an update on the child's absence. If a phone call is not received then the school will contact home to verify the absence.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

How we will support you as a school:

- School will ask why a child is off.
- Reasons for absence will be correctly recorded on the register. Where parents have done all that has been asked in reporting absences these absences will be authorised by the school.
- School will follow all safety measures set out by the government.
- If any additional support is needed let school know.

b) Coronavirus symptoms

If a child, or a member of the household, has any of the following symptoms; new and persistent cough, a high temperature or loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell then **the following actions** must be taken **immediately**:

- Report the reason for absence to school
- Self-isolate
- Arrange a coronavirus test
- Provide school with the results of that test

Self-isolating - the person with symptoms and the rest of the household must self-isolate for the timescales stated by the government and NHS.

Anyone self-isolating should not leave the home. This includes going to work/school, going shopping even for medication or going for exercise. You should also not have any visitors.

- If pupils are self-isolating but do not have symptoms, school will provide work for them to do at home, stay in touch and monitor the work that they are doing.

c) Help & Support:

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker the problem is known, the quicker we can work together to solve it. A plan will be put together which will meet the child's

needs and ensure that the child benefits from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that the child and family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

d) Communication:

All parents need to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure that contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if a child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The School will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if a child's absence is lower than national and school requirements. If school has concerns regarding a child's attendance then we may contact parents by phone, letter, invite parents to a meeting or make a home visit.

As a parent, you may identify concerns about school attendance early on, if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance does not ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

e) Enforcement Action:

If, following the schools attempts to intervene there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or you have not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation the school are required to refer the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action.

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. If a child misses school a lot because of illness, or if school do not know of any serious health issue that would mean a child could miss school a lot, the school may ask to you to provide medical evidence to authorise absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

f) Punctuality:

A pupil must be on time for their registration time. Registration takes place twice a day, for the morning session and the afternoon session. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after the registration time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). When registers are closed children, arriving later will be recorded as (U) which is

a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued).

Late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance database (SIMs).

1. If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions;

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way to improve punctuality.

2. If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason –

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues, which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

3. If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality;

Then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

g) Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are not able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form, which is available from the school. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

5. Promoting good attendance and punctuality

In order to promote attendance the school will review attendance weekly and the class with the best attendance gets a reward. Further to this, any children who achieve 100% attendance over each half term will receive a certificate. Attendance percentages will be shared with parents at parents' meetings and annual reports to parents will contain a record of individual pupils' attendance.

6. Children Missing from Education:

If a child moves from the area and the family's whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove a child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence.

It is **vital that school is informed of any change of details** and regularly updated if details change. A child may be at risk of losing their school place if a family's whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if a family leaves the area, details are provided of where and how the family can be contacted. If this is not done and the school is unable to trace a child, it will be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed to parents and staff.
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and students to implement the policy effectively.
- The governor's meetings will review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to be fully aware and supportive of expected attendance targets for the year.
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off site.

School Leadership Team:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

Teachers and support staff:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the senior manager responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to students that may affect their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents, carers, students and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure that the correct systems for recording attendance are being used and that attendance registers are taken each session.

Parents / Carers:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances, which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home, as they do at school about the importance of attendance.