



Approved by LGB	Jan 23
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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

### Aims and Objectives

- To ensure all pupils take full advantage of opportunities for learning in school
- To ensure the well-being and safety of children at Rushton CE First School
- To set school targets for attendance
- To monitor pupil absence and the reasons

### Intentions

- To actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all pupils
- To celebrate at the end of every term 100% attendance in individual pupils
- To monitor regular or extended absence and take steps to resolve this
- To work with EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) to ensure no child is absent without school being aware of the reason
- To ensure that discretionary power to grant leave is only used in exceptional circumstances
- To use the School Information Management System to analyse and monitor pupils' patterns of absence and work with parents to rectify patterns

### Teaching and Learning Impact

Rushton CE First School will endeavour to reduce the disruption to children's learning through unnecessary absence and will work with families towards avoiding lateness or avoidable time off from school.

### Equality and Inclusion

All children will be dealt with in the same manner. Allowances within this policy will be made for children with severe disabilities or illnesses who require additional time off for administration or medication.

### Safeguarding

If a child is absent for any reason unknown to the school, Parents or Carers must contact the school office in some way before 9.00am on the first day of absence.

### Registration of pupils

- Rushton CE First School will ensure that staff are aware of any new legislation with pupil registration
- Registers are to be completed accurately at the beginning of every session i.e. morning and afternoon
- Parents to be aware of importance of contacting school to report absence before 9.00am
- Senior Managers and School Governors to ensure evaluation of attendance procedures
- Regular reports will be provided for the Governing Body of Rushton CE First School
- All absences will be reported by the Headteacher to the Educational Welfare Officer on their half termly visit.

## **Contents of the Attendance Register**

Each class teacher will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. On each occasion they will record whether every pupil is present or absent.

The school will follow up any absences to:

1. Ascertain the reason;
2. Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
3. Identify whether the absence is authorised or not; and,
4. Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

## **Registration and Absence Procedures**

All absences will be recorded on school registers using the national codes attached. Any pupil who is on roll but not present in school must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised Absence – This is for pupils where no reason has been given or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This can occur if a child arrives after 9.10am.
2. Authorised Absence – This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.
3. Approved Educational Activity – This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken offsite but with the approval of the school.

Children who arrive late to school (after 8:40am) must enter the building via the main entrance and report to the school office. They will receive a late mark on the register. If they arrive after registers have closed (from 9.10am) they will receive a late after registers closed mark in the register; accompanied with the number of minutes late the child was. A record of late minutes is kept for individual children and the same procedure for absence is followed if the minutes late a child is raises concern.

The Education Welfare Officers hold 'late gates'; issue notices to parents/carers who arrive to school late.

## **Reporting Absences**

It is a parent's responsibility to inform school of any reasons for a child's absence, before 9.00am, each day that they are absent from school (unless otherwise arranged with school) and to provide further information as required. The process for notification is included as part of the school's prospectus and indicates a phone call or contact on the first day of absence. The school will contact all emergency contacts available if they have not received a reason for absence by 9.00am on the first day of absence.

We will send a letter requesting information if an explanation has not been received. We will refer the matter to the school's EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) if no response is forthcoming.

## **Leave of Absence during Term Time**

Amendments to the Education Regulations 2006 make it clear that head teachers should only grant a leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances to justify this.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations also removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**What should parents do if they wish to request a leave of absence?** Parents should complete a Request to Leave form at least 10 days in advance of the planned leave.

**What happens if a child goes on holiday in term time or takes leave of absence for other reasons without permission from the school?** The absences will be marked in the school register as unauthorised absences and this may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120) per parent per child being issued by the Local Authority. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

### **Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

### **Penalty Notice for Persistent Unauthorised Absence**

- Parents whose child is repeatedly absent will now only receive one warning notice period to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no further formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

### **Medical Appointments**

Parents of children attending a medical appointment during the school day need to produce an appointment card/letter or similar paperwork prior to the appointment. Where possible all medical/dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. We can then confirm lateness as a 'medical' absence and therefore authorised.

### **School Action on Repeated Absence and Persistent Lateness**

Where a child is persistently late or absent, even if the Headteacher has been informed, the following steps will be taken:

- A letter will be sent home informing parents of the number of late arrivals.
- If lateness persists then the parents will be contacted by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Please note that any lateness or unexplained absence will be monitored by the EWO as a matter of course.
- Schools and EWOs must now adhere to the 'Code of Conduct under the Provision of the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2007', 'Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices Sept 2017' and 'Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003'.

### **Penalty Notice for persistent lateness**

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. **This has now changed to 10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

### **Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness**

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve-week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

These changes have been agreed with local head teachers and have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance to school. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education).

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Attendance is overseen by the school's admin officer. A record is maintained of children's attendance rates and reasons for absence. The admin officer meets regularly with the Headteacher to review children's attendance. Children causing concerns are identified at this point and appropriate procedures, as outlined in the policy are followed. In addition to 'in-house' roles Rushton works closely with the Local Support Team

to discuss individual cases and decide on appropriate next steps, hold 'late-gates' and look at whole-school improvements or concerns relating to attendance statistics.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Links to documents:

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

## Appendix 1

### Attendance Codes

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other Authorised Circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family Holiday (NOT Agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Exceptional Leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised (not covered by any other code)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study Leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after register closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational Visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils and staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced Closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
—	All should attend. No mark recorded	No Mark	No Mark for session

## Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Rushton CE First School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. The SLT and attendance officer view and monitor the attendance on a weekly basis.
2. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to 96 percent, the Headteacher speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The Headteacher also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer contacts the parents to discuss this.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the headteacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
9. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the headteacher to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.
10. If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.