

## ROACH VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Roach Vale Primary School is committed to encouraging full regular attendance by all of its pupils in order to ensure that every child is given the maximum opportunity for quality learning and is thus able to achieve their potential.

In law it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the child attends school regularly. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at a school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law.

An offence has not been committed if the absence has been authorized by the Headteacher or the Head's representative. **Only** the Head (or representative) is able to authorize an absence.

Absences for the following reasons are usually authorized:

- Observance of a religious festival
- The child is sick
- The child attends a school that is beyond walking distance and the Local Authority is unable to provide suitable transport when they have agreed to do so
- Attendance at an approved sporting activity, field study or work experience

Other reasons for absence may be authorized at the Head's or Governing Body's discretion.

With effect from September 2013 the law states that Headteachers can no longer authorize any term time holiday unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

#### Registers

These are called at 8.50am and 1.15pm by the class teachers. They are marked as follows:

CODES	MEANINGS
/(am) \ (pm)	Present
<b>I</b>	Sickness
<b>L</b>	Late (between 8.50-9.00am)
<b>U</b>	Late after register has closed (9.00am)
<b>C</b>	Other authorised circumstances
<b>H</b>	Holiday (authorized only in extenuating circumstances)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised circumstances
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dentist (out for whole session)
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday
<b>V</b>	Present <b>but</b> on a visit
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure

Registers are checked every few weeks by the Headteacher. The Head and representatives from 'Attendance Solutions' discuss children whose attendance or punctuality are giving cause for concern and agree on any necessary follow-up. Follow-up may take the form of a letter from the school inviting parents to attend a School Attendance Meeting (SAM). If attendance does not show improvement 'Attendance Solutions' will visit the home and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Regular lateness is recorded as unauthorized absence and will be followed up in the same way.

### **Daily Absence Contact**

Parents are requested to contact the school office by telephone before 8.45am if their child is not able to attend school for any reason. Office staff telephone the home of every child not marked present in the register and for whom no reason for absence has been received. Such telephone calls are recorded and the Head is made aware of them on a daily basis.

Parents of children who are regularly late or absent will receive a letter from the school identifying the number of absences/late entries, and such cases will be brought to the attention of the Attendance Solutions representative.

### **Monitoring of Attendance**

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring attendance on a daily basis.

The school uses the support of 'Attendance Solutions' to manage attendance issues.

All attendance reports are shared with the governor with responsibility for attendance – **Mrs Sue de Rozarieux**.

The DFE Attendance returns are completed each term and % of authorized and unauthorized absence are reported to parents in the School Prospectus and on the weekly newsletters.

### **What can parents do to help?**

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away. Preferably before 8.45am on the first day of absence

- Try to make appointments outside school time.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

*If you are worried about your child's attendance at school you should...*

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple.
- Talk to the Headteacher and staff at the school.

*If it continues...*

- The school may refer to the Education Welfare Service.
- You may contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation.

(Telephone number available from the School Office).

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness.

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never helpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Attendance Policy

Reviewed March 2016

Reviewed annually

### **Persistent Absenteeism :**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

### **The Education Welfare Officer:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Officer at 'Attendance Solutions'. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or pass the information to the Local Authority who may then prosecute in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.50am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.00am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Holidays In Term Time:**

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday, but the school may choose to grant leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances. All such cases should be discussed with the Headteacher. A child who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date, can legally be removed from the school roll.

Headteachers are not allowed, in law, to authorize term time holidays unless there are **extreme extenuating circumstances**. This would be a 'one off' instance, not something repeated annually.

Holidays which are taken for the following reasons cannot be authorised:

- Availability of cheap holidays;
- Availability of the desired accommodation;
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice

All requests should be submitted on the holiday request form available from the School Office, at least two weeks before the first day of intended absence.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which should be avoided at all cost.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

### **Attendance Targets**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The attendance target for this school is **96%** and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

### **Reporting Attendance**

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance annually with their child's report.

Excellent attendance of 100% is rewarded with a prize at the end of term.