

RFPS

ATTENDANCE POLICY
(version 0.1)

Name of the School: Rectory Farm Primary School
Committee/Person(s) Responsible L & M Committee
Review Date: May 2016
Review Term: 1 Year

Document Reviews

Version	L&M	Adopted Full Govs	Comments	Initial
0.1	11.5.15	pending	New Policy	SH
0.1	13.07.17	Full Govs	New Policy approved.	SH

Rectory Farm Primary Attendance Policy

Aims:

- To emphasise the importance of, and secure maximum attendance at school to enable pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunities.
- To make explicit to all relevant parties the schools expectations for attendance levels.
- To promote a consistent approach across the school to all matters relating to attendance.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents, pupils) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are authorised.
- To stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it, the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; absence results in missed learning. It is a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age receive full-time education, and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school. Irregular attendance results in pupils not fulfilling their true potential, being placed at risk and being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. Therefore, we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our pupils.

Attendance is a national priority and we submit data electronically (both in an aggregated form and on an individual pupil basis) every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school. National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and high academic performance.

Acceptable absence

Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period. What is sought are unbroken weeks (i.e. those where the pupil is marked present on all ten sessions. A session is either a morning or afternoon): pupils should not have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school.

Authorised absence

The Department for Education (DFE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention and medical evidence has been supplied.
- Days of religious observance notified in advance:
- Absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).

There are other absences, such as 'Approved Sporting Activity', that can be authorised and there are events affecting families, some unforeseen, which necessitate absence whether the absence can be authorised. You can request leave of absence forms from the school office.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum; routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those where:

No letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s) / carers:

The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

The pupil is already on the attendance monitoring system and no evidence has been provided to the school to support the absence.

The DFE guidelines state that the following activities would classify as unauthorised:

- Term time holidays
- Minding the house
- Caring for relatives
- Awaiting repair people
- Shopping
- A birthday or family celebration

We ask parents to notify the school in writing, well in advance of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. Individual cases would need to be judged on their merits and fine judgements will have on occasions, to be made.

The DFE guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not.

New legislation

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice.

Parents just, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Home – School Partnership.

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. **Our expectations are in our Home-School Agreement**, and communicated in newsletters. To this end we ask parents:

- To ensure their child arrives on time for morning and afternoon school.
- If their child is ill, to notify the school on the first day before 9.00am via the pupil absence line, with an estimation of the likely length of absence.
- To inform the school at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude to school.

The school:

- Contacts home on day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home by 9.15am. The school will continue to contact home until a reason has been provided.
- Takes action promptly over any unexplained absences.
- Pursues promptly any concerns that parents provide that may be affecting their child's attitude to or feeling of wellbeing in school.
- Supports pupils re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances where necessary.
- Engages parents in meeting and discussions.
- Sets up and monitors parent contracts.
- Regularly and consistently reminds pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Rewards good or improving attendance.

Attendance data provided to Class Teachers

Classes are checked for non-attending pupils and each week attendance for each class is shown to the school. Each week, the class with the highest rate of attendance will be presented with a certificate and a trophy in Celebration Assembly..

At the end of the year, children achieving 96+% attendance will receive a certificate and children with 100% attendance are rewarded with a special lunch and ice-cream.

Lateness

Lateness is defined as arriving in the school building after the register has closed at 9.05am in the morning and at 1.15 in the afternoon. This is closely monitored and addressed with the parents by means of letters, monitoring and parent meetings.

Education Inclusion and Partnership Team

In extreme cases the school will refer cases to the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team with a view to initiate proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their responsibility of getting their child to school, or stuck to the agreement set out in their parent contract.

Parents will be reported for a fixed penalty fine/ legal action if attendance is cause for concern. The following may be reasons for the school to report:

- Taking a child on holiday during term time
- If attendance falls below 96% because the child has been absent on more than one occasion over a 5-week period with no valid reason provided (e.g. no medical evidence supplied)

Action may include formal PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) interviews fixed penalty notices, court action or imprisonment. The prime aim of all action is to get the child attending school on a regular basis.

Staff Guide to Registers and Associated Procedures

Introduction.

Registers are important legal documents and we rely on accurate completion in order to pursue any concerns as well as for data analysis.

Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care and it is vital that the information recorded is accurate.

Marking the register

Our office administrator is responsible for the initial enquiries about absences and communicating concerns to the Family Support Worker or Head Teacher.

There should be a mark for every pupil.

Teachers should enter either:

/\ for present pupils.

N, for absent pupils without reasons provided for absence.

C, for absent pupils with reasons provided. (Insert comments beside register mark – and by whom reasons were provided by. Send note to office for filing.)

L mark if the child has entered the classroom at least 5 minutes late for morning/ afternoon register.

Class registers close at 9.05am. Pupils arriving after 9.30am receive a **U** mark (which is the same as a whole missed session). An exception would be attendance at a medical appointment if evidence has been provided.

Reading the registers.

The registers data is read every morning and entered onto the Sims system by the class teacher/ office. The school operates a policy of first day response regarding absence.

The First Day Response Procedure;

- Registers are entered onto Sims.
- Classrooms are checked to establish if the children marked as absent have since arrived at school late and the reason noted.
- Contact home and take action promptly over any unexplained absences
- Record reason for absence on Sims or details of any messages or action taken.
- Record any late marks and reasons into Sims.
- Our office administrator will check monitoring sheet to determine '**0**' (unauthorised), '**I**' (Illness) or '**C**' mark authorised circumstances. (Notes must be provided and authorised. Attendance officer may change C if pupil is being monitored).

Appendix

Flow chart

Parent contract

Fixed penalty notice letter

Staged letters