



# Roe Green Infant School

## Attendance Policy

### 2017



#### **Mission Statement**

We welcome value and share the cultures, religions, traditions and languages of all.

As a school we teach and expect everyone to be responsible, independent and show respect and pride in themselves, the school and the community.

#### **Aims of policy**

- To improve pupil attendance
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school and to communicate this effectively
- To raise educational achievement and attainment of all pupils
- To provide support and guidance to parents and pupils
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data
- To promote and reward regular school attendance at whole school, class and individual level

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The lead teacher for attendance, the Headteacher and Education Welfare Service will at the beginning of each school year set an attendance target for the school. The school governors are also responsible for ensuring that pupil's names are recorded on the school admissions and daily register. The headteacher has a responsibility to monitor and report on attendance. Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. The Education Welfare Service has a duty to ensure that parents meet this responsibility and the service can seek legal redress to secure a pupil's attendance if a parent fails in their duty.

## **Working with the Local Authority**

We work in close partnership with the Local Authority and our Education Welfare Officer visits the school on a regular basis to advise staff on managing absences, making appropriate referrals and to meet with parents. We also meet regularly with our School Improvement Partner (SIP).

## **Expectations set out by Ofsted on Pupil Absence**

Our school is inspected by the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted). When the inspectors visit, this is what they are expecting us to achieve:

Under the new category of "Personal development, behaviour & welfare" Attendance and Punctuality forms part of their judgement. 95% is no longer good – Attendance needs to be 96%.

'Where absence causes concern, the effectiveness and impact of the school's steps to improve attendance need to be considered including;

### 1. Inspectors will consider:

- overall absence and persistent absence rates for all pupils, and for different groups in relation to national figures for all pupils
- the extent to which low attenders are improving their attendance over time and whether attendance is consistently low (in the lowest 10%)
- punctuality in arriving at school and at lessons.
- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance. The attendance of pupils who have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence is rising quickly towards the national average.

The effectiveness of the schools use of attendance data at all levels to

- (a) Identify particular groups of pupils or individuals whose absence cause concern
- (b) Track pupil's attendance and

- (c) Monitor and evaluate improvement
- (d) Identify the main causes of absence within the school and take action to address and improve those areas ‘

Our school identifies why a pupil's attendance is poor. Different causes of non-attendance need different responses and school staff should be able to explain what they are doing and why.

This is why our school has effective systems and procedures in place to monitor and report on pupil absence and for encouraging regular school attendance.

## **Why Regular Attendance is so important**

**Learning:-** Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **Safeguarding:**

Our school must be able to demonstrate to Ofsted that it knows the whereabouts of each child and reason for their absence. It is very important for the local authority to be able to track children if they are not attending school and in some cases for schools to make a referral to Social Care. If a parent is moving house can you please let us know that you will no longer require a place for your child, with the date that they will be leaving. It is also helpful to us to have the name of the new school that your child will be attending. If you do not have this information at the time, please leave a forwarding address and telephone number so that we can contact you. Children who leave the school and their whereabouts are unknown will have their details entered on the Brent Children Missing from Education Database.

## **How Our School Manages Pupil Absence**

At our school the attendance of pupils is recorded electronically. This helps the school to produce termly data through the School Census for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). It also helps the school provide information on pupil attendance for Ofsted inspectors. Each reason for pupil absence has a special code and this assists the school to monitor persistent absentees. In our school we expect pupils to have 96% and above attendance. Parents of pupils attending this school have a responsibility to make sure their children reach or exceed 96% attendance. Through data analysis we can see which pupils fall below this threshold and take action. Parents may be invited to school to meet with the attendance co-ordinator and the headteacher. When we have exhausted our attempts to improve a pupil's attendance, we will make a referral to our link Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

### **(a) Unauthorised Absences**

At our school we have an expectation that parents ring school on the first day of their child's absence and send a note on their return. We may not accept a parent's reason for absence especially if the child's attendance is below 96%. Regular unauthorised absences where a parent

has not provided a reason for absence mean that a parent or parents may be breaking the law and could be:

- issued with a fixed penalty charge notice of £60 by the local authority
- found guilty in a magistrates court and fined up to £2,500

In very severe cases parents can be imprisoned for up to 3 months. Because school attendance is a very serious matter, we aim to have good communication about attendance matters with parents through our newsletter, parents' evenings and through attendance certificates at school assemblies. If there is a problem it is better if a parent speaks with a member of staff rather than allow a situation to escalate.

### **(b) Regular Pupil Sickness**

If a child is regularly absent due to sickness a parent may be invited to school to discuss their child's absences, this discussion may include the EWO or school nurse. When a child is regularly absent due to illness the school may request a parent provide medical details from their doctor before continuing to authorise further absences.

### **(c) Requests for Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Our school actively discourages parents making requests to take their children out of school during term time. The school is closed for 14 weeks of the year and parents are expected to use this time for taking holidays and visiting family abroad. We have a request form that a parent in exceptional circumstances may complete and return to the headteacher for consideration. Parents should not under any circumstances make travel arrangements during term time without discussing it with the Headteacher first, as they risk losing money. Children taken out of school for unauthorised leave during term time risk losing their school place as well as receiving a Fixed Penalty Charge Notice. Our school has the full support of our governors and the local authority in this matter with the headteacher's decision being final with no right of appeal.

### **(d) Religious Holidays**

Parents may apply for permission for a child to be absent from school on the day of the religious festival, so that children can enjoy celebrations with their families. The school is unable to sanction leave of absence for longer than one day. Parents taking children out for more than one day will have the absence recorded as unauthorised.

## **Punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8.55am at RGI and 8.50 am at RGS. The register is taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Pupils arriving after the register is closed may not be marked in the register immediately but entered as having an unauthorised absence later on. The school has a 'Late Book' in reception where parents must write their children's names when they are late. As well as recording that a child has arrived at school, this is necessary for health and safety reasons should the building need to be evacuated. Children should be collected from school at 3.15pm at RGI and 3.00pm at RGS. If a parent is going to be late collecting

their child they should ring the school office. Parents may collect their children up to 3.30pm without penalty. If a child is collected after 3.30pm with no notice given a charge of £1.00 per minute can be levied. Any parent who regularly collects their child late will be invited to meet with the headteacher. In very serious cases of children being left late at school the child may be deemed to be abandoned with the local police station being informed.

### **School Census Data**

Our school must submit data to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) on the number of pupil's that are persistently absent, for whatever reason. Currently the DCSF are focusing on pupils with 80% and below attendance.

- 20% absence is the equivalent to one day's absence, every week throughout the school year
- 20% absence over 5 years is the equivalent to a whole year missed!

It is well researched that a pupil's attainment is linked to attendance. 'If a school can improve attendance by 1%, they will see a 5-6% improvement in attainment' (DCSF) Our schools clear message is "every lesson counts".

### **Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND)**

We have high expectations of attendance for children with SEND and there should be no reason why children with SEND have different levels of attendance. Children with SEND may require a higher proportion of medical appointments as a result of their particular needs. As for all children, parents should be encouraged to make appointments out of school time whenever possible. Children with a statement of SEND will have this reviewed annually and at our school, attendance will be considered as an important part of the review process as well as on an ongoing basis.

### **Children on Long Term Leave Due to Illness or Disability**

Occasionally some children have to be away from school over a long period of time due to illness or disability. We will ensure that if they are well enough they can continue their education either in hospital or by arranging home tuition.

### **Dental & Medical Appointments**

Wherever possible, parents should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or at the beginning or end of the school day. An appointment at the beginning of the school day should not result in a whole day's absence from school.

### **Bullying**

Our school does not condone bullying by any member of staff, parent or pupil. If bullying does occur, it will be dealt with as a very serious matter. No child should feel they cannot come to school for fear of being bullied. There is no place in our school for bullying!

## **School Governors**

The headteacher has a responsibility to report on attendance issues at every full meeting of the governing body. One of the governors' many responsibilities is making sure that each pupil's details are recorded, including address and telephone number. These are very important in case of an emergency. Parents should always ensure that school has their current contact details. Our governors support the headteacher in managing requests for pupil leave of absence and take the position that families have "no right" to such leave. Our governors decide the start and finish of the school day and determine the dates for the school term and holiday dates. Our Chair of Governors can be contacted via the school office.

## **How We Celebrate Good Attendance at Our School**

To support and celebrate good attendance we:

- Give weekly attendance certificates to classes with the best attendance.
- Children are rewarded with Paddington Bear
- Children have a special session using the outdoor play equipment
- Annual attendance certificates for those with 100% attendance
- Monthly Star Chart for class attendance and stars put on classroom doors.

## **Support for Parents**

- Drop-in sessions to meet Parent Support Advisers
- Coffee mornings
- Regular workshops on a variety of school/ welfare related topics
- Family learning

## **School Attendance Sweeps**

The Education Welfare Service in cooperation with schools and the police carry out a number of school attendance sweeps in the borough throughout the year. These are carried out in normal school hours and involve stopping any young person believed to be of school age, whether accompanied by an adult or not. The sweeps are to find out whether a young person has a school place and whether they should be in school.