



Rudston Primary School and
Bright Stars Nursery

Attendance Policy
September 2021

This policy and all school policies are produced in accordance to guidance set out in our school legislation and guidance policy.

Approved September 2021
Review Date: September 2023

Our Mission Statement:

To develop a love of learning,
enabling all children
to reach their full potential.

* Respect * Resilience *
* Responsibility * Enjoyment * *
Challenge *

Safeguarding Statement:

“Rudston Primary school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.”



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Introduction:

This is a successful and happy school and your child plays their part in making it so. However, for our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Attendance is not optional:

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Research has shown that:

- Absence is damaging: it breaks the continuity of learning and as a consequence children miss important work and underachieve
- On returning to school, poor attenders suffer a loss of confidence due to the fact that they are unable to understand the work and that this loss of confidence can lead to attention seeking through disruptive behaviour and behavioural problems
- Poor attenders’ friendship groups shrink and eventually close, leading to further isolation
- Regular attenders are affected when absentees return through the diversion of teacher time and class disruption
- Regular attenders feel irritated by the absences of poor attenders

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance regularly through our website and newsletters;
- Report to you yearly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

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 each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. It is this type of absence which can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings and 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 which have not been agreed.

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 better 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 makes things worse.

Our Procedures to Manage Attendance

- **Leave of absence:** The Education Regulations 2013 made clear that schools cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless “exceptional circumstances” exist.
- For the purposes of absences, EXCEPTIONAL has been defined as RARE, SIGNIFICANT, UNAVOIDABLE AND SHORT.
- UNAVOIDABLE has been defined as “cannot reasonably be scheduled at another time” i.e. in the 175 days, including holidays and weekends that children and families have to spend together.
- Therefore if an event can reasonably be scheduled in these 175 days it will not be authorised.
- Absence during term times for holidays is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance and may result in a fine from the local authority
- Absences during term time to visit family members are also not considered exceptional circumstances.
- Partial absences for medical appointments will only be authorised on production of a valid appointment card or letter.
- Children will not be released early without a valid appointment card or in other circumstances without the permission of the headteacher.
- Early release on a regular basis will only occur with prior permission of the headteacher and the request being made by an authorised third party.
- Absences to visit an ill relative or attend a wedding of an immediate family member or a funeral are considered exceptional circumstances. Although schools are required to take into account a pupil’s previous record of attendance.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing great harm and we need parent’s fullest support to address this.

We will give priority to any pupil either at the PA level **or at danger of reaching it** and parents will be informed of this immediately so that together we can put a plan in place to get that child back into school. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note, via Parent APP, on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence;

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Contact you after three days absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absence persists;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer.

Punctuality

- Our school day begins at 8.55 when the main gate is locked
- Children arriving late are required to go to the office where they will have to sign in using the electronic system

THE EFFECTS OF LATE ARRIVAL TO CLASS

Arriving 5 minutes late each day:

- 5 days a week = 25 minutes lost learning time a week
- 39 weeks a year = 16 hours and 15 minutes lost learning time a year
- 7 years in our school = 113 hours and 45 minutes learning time lost

WHY PUNCTUALITY IS SUCH A GOOD THING

Being on time:

- Gets your child's day off to a good start so he/she can settle straight into the school day
- Sets positive patterns for the future
- Leads to good attendance
- Leads to better achievement
- Leads to understanding that school is important and education is valuable

WHY LATENESS IS SUCH A BAD THING

Being Late:

- Gets your child's day off to a bad start
- Disrupts the lesson for everyone
- Can place your child in an embarrassing situation as other children notice and comment upon them being late
- May lead to your child feeling confused all day. He/she will have missed out on vital instructions, information and bits of news at the start of the day
- Creates a bad habit that is hard to break and can lead to poor attendance – If your child thinks that it is okay to be late for school they can soon think it's okay not to go to school at all!

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM GETTING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL ON TIME

- Talk to your child
- Talk to the school and ask for help – remember it's better to get help early on to stop little problems from becoming big ones

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. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

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 Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. 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 unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions 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 PAEWO 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 or by contacting the Local Authority on 0151 225 4980

Holidays In Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Current regulations do not allow the headteacher to authorise holidays taken in term time.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually including any previous pattern of leave in term time. ***Please be aware however that in line with Local Authority and Government guidance, leave of absence in term time will only be considered in the most exceptional of circumstances.***

It is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **never**

be agreed by us:

- when a pupil is just starting the school or is moving between the Inf-Juniors. This is very important as your child needs to settle into a new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS)
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (95%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

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.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

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

Targets and weekly attendance for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should encourage your child to look for them and for you to access them on the school website weekly.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95.75% and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares to this level.

Our target is to achieve better than 97 %. We are aiming for this level because that is the attendance needed for pupils to achieve the best from their schooling and we believe we can achieve this and be amongst the best attended schools in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Governors

The board of governors is responsible for monitoring attendance. The governors also hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school and for monitoring absence data and reporting it to governors.

The School Attendance Lead

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Office Staff

The office staff take and record messages from parents about absences in the school attendance file. They also monitor class registers and contact parents of any absent children for whom no reason has been provided. All messages and calls are then recorded on the SIMS computer system

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Miss W Walters (Headteacher)
Mrs T. Sillifant (Admin Officer)
EWO

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.

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