




Bright Stars

Rudston Primary School and
Bright Stars Nursery

Attendance Policy
September 2023

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

Approved September 2023
Review Date: September 2025

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.”



Rudston Primary School
DREAM, BELIEVE, ACHIEVE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

‘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’

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; G
- 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; R
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements; C
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and events. R

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 P
- Lateness before or during the school day t
- Absences which have never been properly explained a
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark c
- Truancy, skipping school, looking after other children or birthdays s

- ay 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.

Medical Appointments

Parents/carers are asked to avoid making routine appointments during school hours. If this is not possible and the child does need to leave school during the day, please make sure that they are back in school as soon as possible. Children must return to school after their appointment.

Please be aware that children cannot be collected during lunch time (12-1.15).

For hospital appointments where it may not be possible to select appointment times, parents/carers are asked to bring a copy of the appointment letter from the hospital into the school office before the appointment so that the register can be marked accordingly.

Can I take my child out of school for a family holiday?

No. Headteachers cannot and will not authorise school absence purely for the reason of a family holiday. If you feel you have an exceptional circumstance you must speak to the headteacher prior to making any arrangements or taking any absence.

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children receive education in accordance with section 7 of the Education Act 1996 and if on a school roll that they regularly attend school.

There is, however, a discretionary power held by Headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

Please note: This is not an entitlement and a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.

What is absence from school for exceptional circumstances?

The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her

discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

Evidence would be required in each case.

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

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; C
- send a note, via ArborAPP, on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence; S

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; T
- contact you after three days absence if we have not heard from you; C
- invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absence persists; I
- refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer. R

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

Penalty Notices

Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. School will issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20

schools days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer to case to the local authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

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 logged on the CPOMS computer system

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Miss W Walters (Headteacher)
Mrs S Lamb (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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