



ROBY PARK
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

September 2016

Introduction

For the children of Roby Park Primary School to gain the greatest benefit from their education and reach their full potential, it is vital that they have a high level of attendance and that they arrive at school, on time, ready to learn, every day that the school is open; unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that everyone strives for all children to, at the very least meet our school and the national target of **97%** for attendance. This policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Aims of this policy:

- To promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- To improve the overall attendance percentage of pupils at school.
- To give clear guidelines and support to parents and pupils on our expectations regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To promote a whole school ethos of improving attendance and punctuality, understanding the impact it can have on a child's academic achievement and social and emotional development.
- To maintain a positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- To promote effective partnerships with school attendance service and other agencies in order to increase attendance and punctuality.
- To carry out first day response calls to ensure the safety of any absent child is **accounted for**.
- To take prompt action against persistent non-attending/late families in line with local authority guidance.

Roby Park Primary School Attendance Team:

Mrs South	Learning Mentor
Mr Hatton	Headteacher
Mrs Carroll	School Business Manager
Mrs Rothwell	Office Admin Assistant
Mrs McLoughlin	KS2 Leader
Mrs McCormick	EYFS/KS1 Leader
P. Ball/N.Edwards	Local Authority School Attendance Improvement Officers (0151 443 5134)

Why is regular attendance is so important?

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, thus affecting the learning of others in the same class.

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

Promoting Excellent Attendance:

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

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Talk about attendance in every school assembly.
- Give parents/carers details and information on attendance in our regular newsletter and the school web site;
- Tell parents/carers regularly how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Invite parents/carers into school to work alongside the school attendance team at an attendance panel where concerns about attendance and punctuality can be raised and support provided.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying class achievements on our Attendance League display in the school hall.
- Reward good attendance through our weekly attendance and punctuality rewards and termly attendance prize giving assemblies to celebrate individual, class and whole school achievements.
- Launch whole school initiatives and competitions to promote good attendance and punctuality on a termly basis.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school must to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is the reason why information about the cause of any 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. These are usually given an 'M' mark in the register. However, it is preferable that parents/carers try to make dental and non emergency medical appointments outside of school time. If this isn't possible, they are required to show appointment cards at the school office, so that we are able to authorise this absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or for which no reason for absence has been given. It is this type of absence which can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings such as fixed penalty fines and prosecution, these include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark after 9.15am.
- Shopping, looking after other children, birthdays and other celebrations
- 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/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend school then contact should be made with Mrs.South, our Learning Mentor. It is never better to cover up an absence or to give in to pressure to excuse a child from attending, as this gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

We will inform parents/carers, both verbally and in writing at regular intervals throughout the year, if a child's attendance falls below 95% and we will closely monitor this until it improves and reaches the expected target.

Local Authority School Attendance Improvement Officer:

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage, to work with the staff in resolving any problems together and this is almost always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, we may need to refer a child to the Local Authority School Attendance Improvement Officer. 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 fixed penalty notices or prosecutions, in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from school or the Local Authority.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

In our school, a pupil is regarded as a persistent absentee (PA) when they miss 5% or more of their schooling across the school year, **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level will be causing considerable damage to a child's education and welfare and we therefore need the parents'/carers' full support to address this. 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/carers will be informed of this immediately, so that together we can put a plan in place to get the child back into school and attending school regularly. Outlined below is the measure used by the School Attendance Service to trigger their intervention. Persistent absence is a new measure for measuring attendance.

The thresholds for triggering persistent concerns are:-

Half term 1:	14+ absences
Half term 1 - 2:	28+ absences
Half term 1-3:	40+ absences
Half term 1-4:	52+ absences
Half term 1-5:	64+ absences

The 5 Stages of concern of School Attendance Service:

- Stage 1:** School Monitor Attendance
- Stage 2:** School Work with children and Families
- Stage 3:** One off visit and support from School Attendance Service
- Stage 4:** Case Work by School Attendance Service
- Stage 5:** Preparation for Court

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent, parents/carers must contact school as soon as possible (by 9:00am) on the first day of absence, by telephone or email or speaking with any member of staff at the school office. In addition to this, they must send a note in on the first day that they return, with an explanation of the absence. This will be recorded by a member of our office staff and our Learning Mentor

If a child is absent we will:

Day 1- Contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.00am. In the case of a persistent absentee or if we have safeguarding concerns, we will contact the Local Authority School Attendance Officer.

Day 2- Contact parents/carers again by telephone and leave a phone message if we have still not heard from them, school concerns are to be raised with the school safeguarding team.

Day 3- Refer the matter to our Local Authority Attendance Team, who will try to contact parents/carers via telephone or a potential home visit. The Attendance Team will provide feedback to school and school may conduct a meeting with the child's family on their return to school to offer support and guidance, if deemed necessary.

Telephone numbers:

There are many occasions when we need to contact parents/carers, for various reasons, including absence. Therefore, we need to have the correct contact numbers at all times. Parents must ensure that school always has the correct contact details and must inform school of any changes. School regularly sends a contact details form home for parents/carers to update.

Missing Children:

If a child has not attended school for 10 days and no reason has been given the child is then reported to the attendance service as a missing child. The child is known as a **CME (child missing in education)**. Missing children procedures are then followed by the Attendance Service. This also applies if has child has left the area and no future destination has been given. Roby Park Primary School will only remove pupils from roll when it has been confirmed by the new school that they have arrived.

Holidays During Term Time:

Taking holidays during term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers **not** to take children away during school time. Any savings that parents/carers may make by taking a holiday during school time are offset by the cost to a child's education.

It is important that parents/carers understand that leave during term time will NEVER be agreed by school unless clear evidence is provided that the holiday is being taken in exceptional circumstances.

The law gives no entitlement to parents/carers to take their children on holiday during term time. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school will be classed as unauthorised, and will attract sanctions such as fixed penalty fines.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is unacceptable as this impacts on the school day for the child who is late, as well as others. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss vital input from their teacher, as well as missing any important news for the day. Late arrival of pupils disrupts lessons and can be embarrassing for the child. Lateness can also encourage absence. Parents/carers are asked to bring their child to the school office and sign their child in and provide a reason for their lateness. We will also inform parents /carers in writing if a child is persistently late or appears to have a regular pattern of lateness which parents/carers will be invited to discuss at a half termly attendance panel with members of the school attendance team. The Local Authority Attendance Team will often be on site at peak times of the school day/week to discuss punctuality with parents/carers and offer guidance and support.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect every child to be in class and seated at their desk/on the carpet by **8.50am**. Registers are marked at **8.50am** and a child will receive a late mark if they are not in class by that time.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed - in accordance with the Local Authority guidance. If a child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be present on site for the morning session, **but this will not count as a present mark** in law and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. The child will then receive a present mark for the afternoon.

This means that parents/ carers may face the possibility of a fixed penalty notice, if the problem persists.

If a child does have a persistent late record then parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Learning Mentor and Headteacher, as well as the Local Authority School Attendance Officer, to resolve the problem. Parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Expectations of all those involved in promoting good attendance/punctuality:

Pupils:

- To attend school regularly unless absence is genuinely unavoidable.
- To arrive on time and with the correct equipment for the school day ahead.
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are unhappy/anxious or there are barriers to them attending school.

Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends school on every day at 8.45am.
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason must be offered for any lateness and recorded at the school office.
- To inform a member of staff of any problem that may hinder their child from attending school.
- To ensure they contact the school promptly whenever their child is unable to attend on the first day of their child's absence before 9.00am.
- To send a letter/medical evidence into school if their child has been absent on their return to school.
- To inform the school in advance, in writing, when their child has a medical/dental appointment (Ideally, where possible, these appointments should be arranged out of school hours).
- To provide correct contact details and inform and inform of any changes to these immediately.
- To avoid wherever possible term time absence especially during KS1/2 SATS (May) and KS1 Phonics Screening (June) weeks as this may seriously affect your child's progress.
- To work closely with the school and Attendance Service to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.

Head Teacher:

- To highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality to pupils through assemblies and individually
- To reward good attendance of individuals and classes through whole school assemblies
- To work with and challenge parents where there are concerns about poor school attendance
- To provide parents with regular information about their child's attendance
- To report to *Governors* information about attendance linked to school targets
- To ensure that all necessary attendance returns are completed for the LA and DFE
- To ensure the school provides a climate that is welcoming and a curriculum that supports and encourages all pupils
- To monitor procedures within the policy
- To support staff who have concerns over poor attendance and punctuality
- To meet regularly with Learning Mentor to evaluate impact of attendance strategies
- To work with and challenge the School Attendance Service to ensure they are providing an appropriate service

Learning Mentor:

- To ensure there are effective procedures in place to identify poor attendance and punctuality
- To work closely with the class teacher to improve attendance/punctuality
- To work closely with individual pupils and families to support them in removing the barriers to poor attendance and punctuality
- To work closely with School Attendance Service to support and challenge poor attendance and punctuality
- To keep teachers informed of any information received from parents or attendance service
- To ensure the Headteacher is regularly informed of attendance data and individual pupil attendance issues
- To collate weekly attendance figures for weekly Attendance League celebrations in assembly on Friday afternoons.
- To chair half termly Attendance Panel meetings with parents/carers of children who are causing concern and support/action is needed.
- To co-ordinate termly attendance prize giving celebration to be organised celebrating individual and class achievements as well as most improved attender prizes.
- To provide attendance and punctuality data for class teachers to set termly targets with individual pupils to improve their attendance and punctuality.

Class Teachers:

- To ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To discuss attendance and punctuality with class and parents/carers on a regular basis.
- To liaise with the Headteacher and Learning Mentor over any concerns.
- Encourage a positive attendance and punctuality ethos in class time.
- Set termly attendance and punctuality targets with each child as part of our 'Behaviours for Learning' initiative aimed at raising standards.

Local Authority Attendance Service:

- Support learning mentor/attendance team with school based attendance initiatives and parent meetings/home visits.
- To send letters, make phone calls and initiate home visits to students with poor attendance;
- To provide regular updates to the learning mentor on the children they are monitoring.
- School Attendance Officers, Phil Ball/Nicky Edwards, to work closely with the school and meet regularly with the Learning Mentor dealing with any pupils whose attendance /lateness is causing concern.
- To issue fixed penalty notice warnings and fixed penalties.
- To promote improved punctuality at school by meeting parents and providing information about the impact of poor punctuality.
- To provide punctuality support on days when lates are identified as particularly high.
- To organise an 'attendance blitz' on specific days and visit absent children at home and receive notification from families regarding the absence.
- To launch and run attendance incentives to help address attendance issues at key points in the school year.

School Administrators:

- To provide support to the learning mentor/attendance team in the management of SIMS attendance and punctuality data.
- To document punctuality on a daily basis.
- To record reasons for absence in the school attendance diary.
- To provide the Attendance Service with contact details of pupils causing concern with their attendance.

Strategies used to promote/ensure good attendance and punctuality:

- Certificates/rewards half termly and termly for full, good and improved attendance.
- Weekly award for best class attendance and punctuality.
- Half termly incentive activities and/or rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Promoting school attendance strategies through newsletters, classroom/hal displays, school website, Twitter and notice boards.
- Pupil planners detail term dates, attendance guidance for parents/carers and information about punctuality.
- Attendance and punctuality targets are set each term and shared via pupil planners for pupils and families to see daily and achieve.
- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality by informing parents half termly of their child's attendance level. Those deemed to be unsatisfactory will be invited to meet with the Headteacher/Learning Mentor.
- Half termly attendance panels to be held in school with members of the Attendance Team.
- School provides daily breakfast club from 8.00-8.45am to enable pupils to be on school on time and have breakfast and play with their friends before school.
- School provides short term support to families by picking children up for school using the school minibus to ensure pupils come to school each day.

Date presented to and adopted by Governors:	September 2016
Signed by:	 (Chair) <i>Steven Hatton</i> (Headteacher)
Date of Policy Review to take place:	September 2017

Appendices:

1. School register codes and their meanings:

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

Key to Codes	
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (not Dual Reg.)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration (attending other estab.)
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
H	Annual family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not medical/dental)
J	Interview
L	Late (before reg closed)
M	Medical/Dental
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised circumstances
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit
W	Work Experience
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

2. Guidance for parents about Education Penalty Notices:



EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICES

A Guide for Parents/Carers
January 2016

WHAT IS AN EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICE?

As a parent/carer it is an offence if your child fails to attend school regularly. Absences are classed as unauthorised if without a valid reason or school cannot or has not given permission.

In some circumstances parents/carers may be prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

An Education Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and aims to improve attendance. If paid within the timescale, this prevents the matter escalating to the Magistrates Court for the period concerned.

WHY AM I BEING SENT THIS LEAFLET?

This leaflet has been sent to all parents/carers and confirms the commitment of all schools to improve attendance. It aims to raise awareness of the need for your child(ren) to attend regularly and on time in order to achieve their best. It is important parents/carers understand their responsibilities and the consequences of unauthorised absence. Parents/carers of children who have had at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during this academic year at school are at risk of receiving an Education Penalty Notice.

WHEN ARE EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICES USED?

You may be issued with an Education Penalty Notice for any of the following reasons:

- 10 sessions (5 days) in any 10 week period of **consecutive** unauthorised absence including an unauthorised leave of absence (e.g. holiday).
- 10 sessions (5 days) in any 10 week period of **non-consecutive** unauthorised absences.
- Unauthorised absence due to truancy – including pupils stopped on truancy operations.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed).
- Being found in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I RECEIVE AN EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICE?

- Payment within 28 days of a notice is £120.
- Payment is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

HOW IS A PENALTY NOTICE ISSUED?

By post, to your home address.

HOW DO I PAY?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Education Penalty Notice. You cannot pay in part or in instalments.

CAN I APPEAL?

There is no right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but you can discuss with the school/ School Attendance Service when you have received an Education Penalty Notice.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT PAY?

You have up to 28 days to pay the Penalty Notice in full. After which the authority has a statutory duty to consider instigating legal proceedings.

If proven, this can result in a range of fines up to £2500 and/or a range of disposals such as parenting orders or community sentences.

CAN I GET HELP IF MY CHILD IS NOT ATTENDING REGULARLY?

Yes, the Local Authority and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need to help secure an improvement in your child's attendance. It is crucial that you speak with the School or the School Attendance Service at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries about your child's attendance.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS OFF SCHOOL?

- Telephone the school as early as possible on the first morning of their absence to give the reason.
- Make routine dental and doctor appointments after school or during school holidays.
- If you have to make an appointment during school hours let the school know about the appointment in advance. You may be asked for medical evidence or an appointment card if your child is regularly absent due to illness or dental/medical appointments.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS TRUANTING?

- Talk to them to find out why.
- Try to understand what is happening to your child and help them to resolve the problem.
- Contact the school to discuss the situation and look for solutions

USEFUL CONTACTS:

If you have any queries regarding your child's attendance or you wish to discuss an Education Penalty Notice you have received, then please contact:

**KNOWSLEY COUNCIL
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SERVICE
C/O HUYTON MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS
ARCHWAY ROAD
HUYTON
L36 9YU**

TEL: 0151 443 5147