



*ROBY PARK*  
*PRIMARY SCHOOL*

# **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

Written December 2018

Review December 2019

Signed – *Mrs Kat Allen*  
(Headteacher)

Signed - *Mrs Heather Haddley*  
(Chair of Governors)

## 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 Attendance Team	
Headteacher	Mrs K Allen
Learning Mentor	Mr M Lunden
Assistant Headteacher	Mrs H McLoughlin
Inclusion Manager	Mrs K Lyon
School Business Manager	Mrs K Carroll
Office Admin Assistant	Mrs C Rothwell
Local Authority School Attendance Service (0151 443 5147)	

### 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 school assemblies

- 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 termly attendance and 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 important that parents/carers 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 Lyon, our Inclusion Manager, or Mr Lundon, 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 a 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 (5 times or more in a half term) 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 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 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 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:**

- Termly certificates 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/hall displays, school website, Twitter and notice boards.
- Website details term dates, attendance guidance for parents/carers and information about punctuality.
- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality by informing parents regularly 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.