



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Rothwell C of E Primary Academy takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within the academy.

## 2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum;
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements;
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance;
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

## 3 EXPECTATIONS

*Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the academy and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.*

### **What we expect of our pupils:**

- To respect themselves and others;
- To do all they can to attend the academy regularly and punctually;
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied;
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging;
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy.

### **What we expect of our Parents/Carers:**

- To ensure that their child attends the academy regularly;
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, either before the absence or on the first day of absence;
- To ensure that their child arrives at the academy on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness;
- To work closely with the academy and other outside agencies to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance;
- To only take holidays in school holiday time;
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS;
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

*Parents/Carers have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children*

*attend regularly, and stay for every lesson after they have registered. Parents/carers should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them.*

*Parents/carers may be prosecuted if a child does not attend the academy regularly and punctually. Prosecutions can be made under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents/carers carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.*

*If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance at school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the academy, Local Authority and social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.*

**What our pupils and parents/carers can expect of the Academy:**

- To create an ethos that pupils want to be part of;
- To meet the legal requirements set out by Government;
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance;
- To develop procedures that enable the academy to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parentally condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention;
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the Education Act (1995);
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance;
- To encourage open communication channels between home and the academy;
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees;
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the Local Authority;
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.
- Offer support for parents/carers and pupils to help them to improve attendance, if that is required.

*The academy will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. Every child's attendance will be positively supported and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount.*

*The academy has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.*

#### 4 ROUTINES & RECORD KEEPING

- The class teacher will take a register recording who is present at and absent from the academy. The register will open at 8.50am.
- If any pupil arrives after 9.00am they are marked as Late on the register.
- The register officially closes at 9.20am and any pupil arriving after this will be marked absent for the session. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the Learning Mentor to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.
- Each register (morning and afternoon) each child’s attendance, non-attendance or lateness is recorded on the electronic registration system. The offered reasons for lateness or absences will be assessed and the appropriate code entered into the system.
- Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone using the main academy telephone number (0113 2739190). A parent may choose to write a letter or send in an appointment card to register the reason for their child’s absence.

**Please note:** A reason for a period of absence is **always** required. The academy will contact parents/carers who have not offered a reason and after a two week process will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided. If a child’s attendance falls below expected levels, evidence of reasons for absence may be requested and daily contact is required.

#### 5 MONITORING

- Daily absence notifications are checked against registers and parents will be contacted if a child is absent and no reason has been given. Home visits may be arranged when deemed necessary.
- 10% non-attendance is now classified as persistent non-attendance by DfE Sept 2015; ALL cases where attendance is 90% or below will be discussed with the attendance officer and may lead to a referral.
- The Learning Mentors and Principal (and when appropriate the Local Education Authority) will regularly review the attendance of all the academy’s pupils. The attendance benchmark set by the government and OFSTED for primary schools is currently 96%.
- Termly letters will be issued to parents to advise them of their child’s attendance. The letters will be printed on coloured paper as follows:

<b>GREEN</b> letters issued to children with attendance of 96% and over, celebrating this achievement
<b>AMBER</b> letters issued to children with attendance between 95%-95.9%
<b>RED</b> letters issued to children with attendance of 94.99% or below

- Attached to each red letter issued will be a return slip; parents will be required to attend a meeting at school to discuss attendance and strategies to make the necessary improvements.
- In this first instance, the school will discuss the concerns with the parents/carers and endeavour to work together to find a solution and offer support. Hopefully this will help to overcome any issues preventing the pupil from attending.
- If non-attendance persists, a further letter will be sent to the parents/carers of any pupil identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and again offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. A face to face meeting with the Principal and Learning Mentor will need to be arranged. A support plan and review date will be agreed at this meeting if not already in place.
- Should the parents/carers not attend the meeting, or after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve, a formal referral to the Local Authority will be made.
- The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues.

## **6 REQUESTS FOR HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

- From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, ALL schools and academies are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for holidays in term time, Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) 2013. Any children absent from the academy for holidays in term time will be marked as unauthorised absences.
- Pupils with unauthorised absences will be reported to the Local Education Authority. The Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice for unauthorised absences in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. The cost of these notices are £60, payable within 21 days; rising to £120 if unpaid and a further 7 days to make payment. This penalty applies to each child for which permission has been refused.

## **7 REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

- If a parent wishes to request a period of leave for exceptional circumstances they are required to complete a Leave of Absence request ahead of the absence period. This form is available from the school administrator. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason and the request will be noted in the electronic register. Please note: Leave of Absence cannot be granted after the absence.

## **8 STRATEGIES USED TO PROMOTE GOOD ATTENDANCE**

- Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.
- Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals.
- Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.

- Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from the academy for a period of time and an education action plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.
- Weekly raffle tickets issued to children achieving 100% attendance in that week with a termly prize draw.
- Periodic campaigns highlighting the importance of attendance and punctuality will be mounted from time to time.
- Personalised support will be tailored to suit each individual family where attendance is a barrier to their child's progress.

## **9 COMPLAINTS**

- An individual wishing to make a complaint about any attendance matter should discuss this with the academy in the first instance.
- If the issue is not resolved, then a formal complaint may be made, following the complaints procedure as set out in the Parent/Carer Complaints Policy (Spring 2015).

## **10 EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

- We will do all we can to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. We shall do this through regular monitoring and evaluation of our policies. On review we shall assess and consult relevant stakeholders on the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of all aspects of equality, as laid down in the Equality Act (2010). This will include, but not necessarily be limited to: race; gender; sexual orientation; disability; ethnicity; religion; cultural beliefs and pregnancy/maternity.