



# **Rowlands Gill Primary School**

## **Policy & Guidelines for Attendance and Punctuality**





## **Introduction**

Excellent attendance and punctuality is important if children are to benefit from everything school has to offer.

There is a clear link between attendance, punctuality and achievement.

We are aware that excellent attendance is not always a priority among some parents and we work, together with a number of outside agencies, to try to alter attitudes where this is the case.

Excellent attendance is important if children are to be encouraged to be valuable members of society.

There is a clear link between non-attendance and social exclusion; this can lead to involvement in crime.

This policy should be read in conjunction with guidelines on exclusion, behaviour, anti bullying and other documentation referring to social inclusion.

## **Aims**

To have a manageable whole school approach to attendance procedures.

To promote excellent attendance and punctuality in order to ensure continuity of education and maximise children's academic potential.

To ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and to work with parents if difficulties arise.

To work alongside other agencies if difficulties arise so that effective action can be carried out.

To ensure children understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality by rewarding children who achieve it.

To monitor attendance and punctuality effectively so difficulties are quickly highlighted.

To make everyone aware of the detrimental effect of absences and lateness on the education of our children.

## **Absence**

All absences will be either authorised or unauthorised. Days of religious observance will be authorised, as will medical appointments. Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for medical clarification if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised, for example it is not acceptable for children to be absent from school due to tiredness, their birthday or needing to go shopping.

If a pupil is sent home before 10.30am, his/her school dinner will be cancelled. If a pupil is sent home after 10.30am, the parent has to pay for the school dinner.

## **Late Arrivals**

It is important that all children arrive at school punctually. This instils a good work ethic in the child, which can last a lifetime. When a child is late it disrupts the working day for both the teacher and the other children in their class. It is also important for a child's socialisation that they are



present to interact with their peers at the start of the day. The doors are shut at 9.05am, children who are late must report to the school office where they are entered into the late book, thereby obtaining their presence mark and ensuring that in case of emergency the school is aware of their presence on site. All late marks are recorded as time in minutes in the schools Sims database. The school day begins at 8.55 and the doors close at 9.05am. Pupils arriving after that time will need to enter school via the main entrance doors. They will be marked as late by the office staff. Any child arriving after 9.30 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (U code).

Where there has been frequent incidents of lateness (10 or more in an academic year) parents /carers will receive a letter from the Family Support Worker informing them they will be visited and support offered to combat the issue.

### **Appointments in school time**

Equally, if a child needs to leave school for an appointment during school hours they must be booked out at the office. If they return to school they will book back into school at the school office. Parents/carers are asked to make every possible effort to make appointments out of school hours.

### **First day Absence**

The school expects parents/carers to make contact as early as possible if a child is absent for the day, giving the reason for the absence and the expected day of return. Specific reasons for absence should be given rather than "sickness". If there is no contact from the parent/carer the school will contact them on the first day by 9.30am. We would also ask parents to contact school on the third day of absence with an update on the child.

### **Procedures for Teachers**

Registers must be taken by 9.05am and 1:15pm.

The list of attendance codes (Appendix 1) must be strictly adhered to.

Registers close at 9.30am and at 1:40pm. If a child attends school after the registers have closed they will be classes as unauthorised. Code U.

The school follows up absences where no reasons are given by sending a letter to the parents (Appendix 2). If the reasons for these absences remain unspecified they will be classed as unauthorised. Code O.

### **Unsatisfactory Attendance**

It is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure their child's good school attendance.

### **Intermittent Absence**

If a pupil has occasional absences spread over a half term leading to attendance of less than 95%, a letter will be sent out to parents/ carers warning them of the importance of attendance for their child. This will be reviewed on a half termly basis. (Appendix 3)

If the absence is still below 95%, in the following half term, the parents/ carers will receive another letter informing them they will be monitored by Rowlands Gill Primary and the Family Support Worker will be visiting them in the home to discuss the issue of poor attendance and how school can support and implement strategies to help resolve the issue and improve attendance. (Appendix 4)



If the absence continues to be below 95%, in a further half term, the parents will receive a third letter inviting them to attend a meeting with the HT and Attendance Governor. The agenda of this meeting is to warn the parents of the importance of attendance for their child(ren), offer any support and advise them of the next steps. (Appendix 5)

If the absence continues to be below 95%, **in a further half term period**, then formal proceedings will take place. (Appendix 6)

### **Monitoring Procedures**

Trends in absences are scrutinised by the Head Teacher, clerk and attendance governor on a half termly basis.

### **Holidays During Term Time**

The rules on holidays in term time have recently changed. Prior to September 2013 regulations allowed Head teachers to grant leave of absences for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten school days leave per year.

Recent amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations, which come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, have removed references to family holidays and extended leave, as well as to the statutory threshold of ten school days (authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher). The amendment reads;

**Head teachers may not grant any leave of absences during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

While leave of absence may not be granted during term time, it is entirely at the Head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right (see Appendix 4).

A holiday during term time for more than a week, is followed by a formal letter to warn the parents of the importance of attendance for their child. This should include a warning that further unauthorised absences (whether in the same academic year or in different academic years will lead to referral to the Local Authority.

Absence from school under exceptional circumstances is slightly different from taking holiday in term time. All leave of absence requests will be considered on an individual basis.

Leave of absence requests must be made in writing on the school's Leave of Absence request form at least **two weeks** prior to the absence. The school will inform the parent in writing whether the absence will be authorised or not.

**Parents who have set holidays due to their work patterns are not considered to be 'exceptional circumstances'.**

**If the request for leave of absence is refused by the Head teacher but the parent takes their child away, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and the Head teacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority. The parent is then at risk of receiving a warning (in the first instance) or a £60 fixed penalty notice.**



## **Failure to pay could lead to prosecution in a Magistrates Court.**

### **Special Circumstances**

If it has been necessary for a child to have extended absence, for example due to illness, the school will work with the child, parents/carers and any other involved agencies to instigate a re-integration programme for that child. The school staff will be receptive to any parent who has a problem in getting their child into school. It is most important that parents discuss any problem with either the class teacher or the Headteacher so that appropriate help can be offered.

### **Attendance Rewards**

Good school attendance will be recognised; schools use reward systems e.g. children with 100% attendance at the end of the year may be awarded a special certificate in assembly.

### **Role of Governors**

Governors determine support and review school policies. They support the aims of this policy by making resources available wherever possible. The Attendance Governor (G.Archer) receives termly reports concerning attendance, which they use for monitoring purposes.

### **Evaluation and Review**

Next review May 2017



## APPENDIX 1

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
@	Do not use	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual Registration	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family Holiday (not agreed or days in excess)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Annual family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness (not medical/dental appointments)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before reg closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised Abs (not covered by any other code)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	DfES X: School closed	Attendance not	Out for whole session



	to pupils	required	
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Do not use	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
!	DfES X: Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
+	School closed to pupils and staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
*	DfES Z: Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session



## APPENDIX 2

Name  
Address1  
Address2  
Town  
Postcode  
Date:  
Dear

**RE: Pupil's Name**

Your child \_\_\_\_\_ was absent from DATE to DATE and we have no reason given for the absence. Please complete the section below to advise school of the reason for the absence.

Medical \_\_\_\_\_ (please provide appointment letter)

Sickness \_\_\_\_\_ (please state illness )

Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please state the reason)

As you know it is important that children attend school regularly.

If there is anything we can do to support you in getting your child into school, please contact me to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely  
**(Headteacher)**



### APPENDIX 3

Name  
Address1  
Address2  
Town  
Postcode  
Date:  
Dear

**RE: Pupil's Name**

From monitoring our registers we find that your child's attendance has dropped to below 95% from **DATE to DATE**.

As you know it is important that children attend school regularly.

If there is anything we can do to support you in getting your child into school, please contact me to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely  
**(Headteacher)**



#### Appendix 4

Name

Address1

Address2

Town

Postcode

Date:

Dear

#### RE: Pupil's Name

We are very concerned at the number of absences that **(pupil's name)** has recorded against **(his/her)** name.

I wrote to you recently about your child's attendance, but unfortunately there has been no improvement and your child's attendance is currently **?%** which falls short of the expected level of attendance. Please see attached copy of **(pupil's name)** attendance register for **DATE to DATE**.

If there is a reason for this level of attendance, I should be grateful if you could contact me to discuss the matter. We shall continue to monitor your child's attendance and hope to see an improvement. If there is not improvement, we will need to arrange a meeting to discuss the matter.

Regular attendance at school is important to ensuring your child's success at school and I would like us to work together to improve **(pupil's name)** attendance.

I look forward to seeing an immediate and sustained improvement in **(pupil's name)** attendance.

Yours sincerely,

**(Headteacher)**



## Appendix 5

Name

Address1

Address2

Town

Postcode

Date:

Dear

### RE: Pupil's Name

Further to my letter of **(date of 2<sup>nd</sup> letter)** I am concerned to see that there is no improvement in **(pupil's name)** attendance. I enclose a copy of **(pupil's name)** attendance register for your information and consideration.

I would like to invite you and **(pupil's name)** to a meeting to discuss **(his/her)** attendance and look at ways of improving the situation. The purpose of the meeting is to complete an Attendance Target in which we will agree how to support **(pupil's name)** in improving **(his/her)** attendance, and to understand the consequences if the situation does not improve.

Under the terms of the 1996 Education Act, it is your legal responsibility to ensure the regular school attendance of your child.

The Education Welfare Officer is aware that I am contacting you and that if the result of the Attendance Target is unsuccessful, I will make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service. The EWS will consider taking legal action.

Please contact me as soon as possible so that we can arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time to meet.

Yours sincerely,

**(Headteacher)**



## Appendix 6

Name

Address1

Address2

Town

Postcode

Date:

Dear

### RE: Pupil's Name

Further to the recent (**correspondence/meeting**) expressing concerns about (**pupil's name**) poor attendance at school I note that there has not been any improvement. (**Pupil's name's**) attendance is currently ?% (see attached certificate).

Attendance at school is important and it is your legal responsibility to ensure that it happens. Poor attendance will affect your child's attainment.

This situation cannot be allowed to continue. I am making an immediate referral to the Education Welfare Service for appropriate action to be taken.

Please contact me if there is anything more that I can do to support you to improve (**pupil's name**) attendance.

Yours sincerely

**(Headteacher)**