RAY MAT

Attendance Policy

Roger Ascham Primary School

Approved by:	Board of Trustees	**Date:**	1st March 2023
Last reviewed on:			
Next review due by:	March 2025		

RAY MAT

Attendance policy

Contents

1 Aims

2 Legislation and guidance

3 Roles and responsibilities

4 Recording attendance

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

6 Strategies for promoting attendance

7 Attendance monitoring

8 Monitoring arrangements

9 Links with other policies

Appendix 1

---

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteachers/heads of school to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Trust Leadership Board

The Leadership Board is responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the trust
- Working more intensively with schools who require support with attendance improvement

3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at each school

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Fiona Natai and can be contacted via office@rapsch.co.uk

3.5 The school attendance officer

The school attendance officer at each school is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is [insert name] and can be contacted via [email address].

3.6 Class teachers

Class teachers are expected to:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- Inform the attendance office of concerns about attendance and punctuality.

3.7 Office staff

Office staff will:

- Ensure the successful recording and maintenance of attendance data
- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

3.8 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first morning and afternoon session of each school day.

The register will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at the beginning of the first lesson and will be kept open for 30 minutes after that time. The register for the afternoon will be taken at the beginning of the first lesson and will be kept open for 30 minutes after that time.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carer will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should request leaves of absence by completing the leave of absence request form, available from the office. This should be completed and returned to the office prior to the planned absence. The headteacher will make a decision on the request and the office staff will relay this decision to the parents.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Lessons start promptly at the beginning of school, it is vital that pupils arrive at school punctually so they do not miss learning. A register of late pupils is kept. Pupils are expected to make up any work that is missed during the day of them arriving late.

In cases of persistent absence (considered 3 days or more in a term) the school's attendance officer will contact parents to address the issue. If this is unsuccessful the Headteacher will contact the parents. Ultimately, a parental responsibility order may be issues by the Local Authority.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If we cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, we will visit the home address. If contact cannot be made we will inform the Local Authority Children Missing in Education team
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will involve an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels if the school believes there is an issue with attendance.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as those that have a one-off, unique and significant value to the child that can only take place at the time requested.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. However, the request will not be granted if a pupil's attendance is or will fall below 90%, or in the run up to national assessments.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence using the leave of absence request form. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. No consideration is given to retrospect applications – the absence will be unauthorised

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority, at the school's request, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

It is entirely the school's decision as to whether or not an absence is authorised. If a child is repeatedly absent, with no apparent underlying health issues, schools will require medical validation before any further absence can be authorised.

Parents of children who are regularly absent or regularly late will be issued with a Notice of Parental Responsibility (this is a legal document notifying parents of their legal obligations with regard to regular school attendance) and if things don't improve, a Fixed Penalty Notice. These are issued for unauthorised holidays taken during term time and/or repeated unauthorised absence for any reason (or repeated lateness).

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Each parent is required to pay the fine for each pupil the fine applies to.

Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice will take into account:

- If a pupil has 10 absences within a 6 week period
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

By keeping to the following principles, we believe we will be able to support parents in maintaining their children's good attendance at school:

- Our Attendance Policy will be published on each school's website and will provide clear guidelines for parents to follow;
- Short periods of term time leave can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances; only if requested in advance and only when the child concerned has a long-standing record of excellent attendance;
- We will always notify families if we have a concern over a child's attendance or punctuality;
- We will then invite parents to meet with us and try to find a remedy that will help make things better;
- We will always let parents know if there is a risk of a Notice of Parental Responsibility or Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

In turn, we ask all parents to ensure that:

- All children attend school, on time, every day unless they are too unwell to do so;
- Any absence is reported immediately to school with the reason clearly given;
- Following illness, children return to school as soon as they are able;
- They let us know if there is any underlying issue that may be an obstacle to good attendance or punctuality – we will listen and try to help if we can;
- They understand that unless there are underlying issues that are recognised by the school, good attendance needs to be above 95% - attendance below 95% is in need of improvement and anything below 90% is classified as persistent absence.

Other strategies

- The need for good attendance and punctuality is a key feature of school and phase assemblies
- Teachers regularly extol the same values
- Full attendance is celebrated and rewarded on a half-termly basis (e.g. additional break time). This can be for individuals and/or classes
- Termly and yearly awards are given for full attendance to individuals (e.g. certificates, learning related items or vouchers)
- Class attendance is publicly displayed on a weekly basis
- Pupils who miss learning time because of absence or lateness are given the opportunity to make this up

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Teachers will raise concerns about attendance, absence and punctuality with the attendance officer if they have any concerns.

The attendance officer will monitor attendance, absence and punctuality on a weekly basis across the school and at an individual pupil level.

The designated senior lead will monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.

Staff will identify whether or not there are particular individuals or groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the LGB.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and school leader, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

- Move along a support and prevention of absence process through discussion and support of parents and pupils. Where sufficient pupil attendance cannot be achieved the sanctions process will be applied.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the LGB.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day