

## **Race Leys Infant School**



### **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

**Originator: Judith Ward**

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**Ratified by Governors:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**“Learning together we can reach for the stars”**

# Attendance Policy

## INTRODUCTION

At Race Leys Infant School we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

There is a relationship between attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress.

The school is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life.

The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets.

There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with the Headteacher/Attendance Co-ordinator as part of the monitoring and review process.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership team will ensure that the governing body's objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

School staff are responsible to ensure they promote the schools ethos, set an example of attendance for individual pupils.

Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctuality. Pupils have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the school encourages and enables good attendance
- How the school monitors and reviews attendance
- How the school monitors punctuality and lateness

- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

## **ENCOURAGING AND ENABLING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the school and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and at parent consultations. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept on file and are passed to subsequent schools.

*Rewards for good attendance include:*

The class with the best attendance for the week are rewarded with a certificate for their classroom. Individuals in that class receive a celebration certificate to take home.

Each term and at the end of the school year children with excellent/good attendance will receive a certificate.

The School provides a small reward for families with the most improved attendance and a prize drawer for those with consistently high attendance each term.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE**

The school will consider annually, in accordance with its support needs in relation to attendance, whether it wishes to purchase a Traded Service from the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS). The school will be able to continue to access WAS's statutory service in accordance with its referral criteria.

The school will log conversations with parents about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

To enable the appropriate coding of attending or the authorisation of absence, the school may request additional information or evidence, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed/stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication).

All class teachers carry out regular checks on attendance. The Attendance Registers are marked twice a day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Administration staff.

All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes the administration staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

Attendance data is held electronically on the schools SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Headteacher and administration staff who are able to provide comprehensive attendance records on individual children.

The attendance co-ordinator monitors the attendance of pupils each half term. The flow diagram and letters appended, outline the schools approach for monitoring and enabling attendance.

Returns of school data are made termly to the Department of Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Governing body at the Full governing body meeting of the school year.

Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

## **PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS**

The attendance co-ordinator monitors lateness of pupils as being punctual for school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to the pupil's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time, the playgrounds are not supervised, and doors open at 8.55am.

The school day starts five minutes after the doors open at 8.55am for all pupils. Pupils who arrive after these times will be recorded as late to school (L code). The registers close at 9.30am and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). The afternoon begins at 1.15pm, pupils who arrive after this will be recorded as late to school (L code). Registers close at 1.25pm. After this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code).

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the attendance co-ordinator will write to parents/carers using the appended letter about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.

If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness the school may make a formal referral to WAS.

## **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance and it is a requirement for the Headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Headteacher.

Wherever possible parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time.

If a child is absent from school for any reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible of absence and reason for it. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher is informed.

Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; the Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Headteachers **shall not grant any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence as being recorded as 'unauthorised'. This may result in legal action against the parent by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'. This may result in legal action against the parent by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence may be referred to Warwickshire Attendance Service.

The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-school Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>)

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.**

## **WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS**

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance

- 30 days absence (approx..) = 84.2% attendance
- If a child achieves 80% this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

## **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Warwickshire County Council's Education and Learning Business Unit at 01926 742036 or via email to [cme@warwickshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:cme@warwickshire.gcsx.gov.uk)

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes)
- Letter home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbour etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupils file.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school's success.

Race Leys Infant School greatly appreciated parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The school is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

**RACE LEYS INFANT SCHOOL  
FLOWCHART FOR ATTENDANCE MONITORING ESCALATION PROCESS**

