



## **Attendance Policy**

**Date of Review: March 2016**

**Next Review: March 2017**

**Policy to be reviewed annually**

**Based on Hertfordshire Policy last updated: October 2013**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## **ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION**

All children should be in the playground ready to come into school at 8.50 a.m. each day although children are entitled to enter the playground from 8.40 a.m. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances.

Morning registration begins at 8.55 a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as Late. After 9.10 a.m. this will become an Unauthorised Absence. The afternoon register is taken at 1.00 p.m.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / carer outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

## **ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence. A letter explaining the reasons for absence should be sent to the school office when the child returns to school.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Authorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

## **IF A CHILD IS ABSENT**

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.

Parents are, however, expected to email or telephone the school by 9.00a.m. on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.

The school office may contact the parent or carer, if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence. The school office will try to contact parents if their child is absent and parents have told the school that their child travels to school unsupervised by an adult

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Holidays in term time are not authorised. In exceptional circumstances parents are welcome to seek authorisation from the Headteacher.

## **EXAMPLES OF WHAT MAY CONSTITUTE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

- To have a short absence to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- To have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

## **LONG TERM ABSENCE**

If the absence is for medical reasons and is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Unauthorised absences remain on the child's record and may be reported to the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO).

Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the AIO and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. The AIO may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

The Local Authority (LA) has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

At Rickmansworth Park School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and previous term (including unauthorised holiday) the Headteacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60.00 if paid within 21 days of the receipt of the notice, rising to £120.00 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.

## **REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE**

There are special certificates for any child who has 100% for a whole year which will be awarded in the final assembly of the Summer Term.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEWING**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body annually, or earlier if considered necessary.