

	<h2>Attendance and Punctuality Policy</h2>
This policy was reviewed by the Full Governing Body: 19th September 2019	Coordinator: A Jackson
Chair of Governors: Mrs E Lee	Review Date: Summer 2022
Head Teacher: 	

All information that is collected and stored relating to this policy is subject to the school's Data Protection Policy.

This document has been agreed between schools in the Rushden and Higham Cluster of schools. This policy has been produced to ensure a consistent approach towards attendance throughout the cluster.

Aim:

Education provides a means of advancement for all young people to improve their life chances. Regular school attendance is a legal requirement for those registered at a school. Without it, the efforts of the best teachers and schools will come to nothing.

Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines that educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Organisation

The class register is to be completed every morning and every afternoon. Registers open at **8.50am** and close at **9:00am**. Pupils arriving between **9:00am** and **9.30am** will be marked as late.

Any latecomers will be marked in the register appropriately: -

- L - late **9:00am up until 9.30am** classed as present
- U - **after 9:30am** classed as unauthorised absence

Continued lateness will be reported and discussed with the parents. Adults must sign latecomers into the Late Book that is in the Foyer. If assembly has already started, then parents will need to stay with their child in the entrance area until the assembly is finished.

Absences must be recorded by staff using the correct absences and attendance code as issued by the Department for Education.

All letters explaining absences are to be kept until the end of the school year and then filed with the registers. School originated telephone messages from parents may be disposed of at the end of each half term as the office has a duplicate record of them that will be archived.

Parents and carers should report an absence either by telephone, in person or in a written form that is signed.

Staff will use their knowledge of their pupil, known history and use their discretion in ascertaining whether action is needed in contacting the parents. As a first day response, the office staff will telephone parents.

A set of standard letters will be sent to parents where persistent lateness and/or absence are in evidence. Where school cannot make contact with parents then the Parent Support Advisor (PSA) will be contacted. Attendance below 90% for the previous term and annual figure will trigger action by school and targets **will** be set. If issues cannot be resolved, then school will work with parents to establish an action plan. School will analyse lateness and attendance on termly basis.

If a pupil continues to have more than 10% unauthorised absence and their overall attendance is less than 90%, then an interview is arranged between the head teacher and parents. If the child has not been in for 10 days and school have tried but have been unable to contact home, then the Educational Inclusion Partnership Team will be contacted.

If a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan any absences must be reported immediately and these will be investigated.

Leave and Holidays in Term time

There is no law that gives entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. The Head Teacher would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents can be fined by the local authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school.

The Local Authority's decision to issue a fixed Penalty Notice is based on information submitted by the school.

Triggers for the fixed Notice Penalty will be

- 18 sessions (9 days) of unauthorised absence in the last 6 weeks
- 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence
- An accumulation of unauthorised absence leading to an attendance of 85% or less.

It is important that parents understand that the initial fixed penalty notice of £60 is issued to each parent for each child. A two-parent family with two children would be fined £240.

Requests for leave must be given using the 'Request for Leave of Absence Form' to the Head Teacher and if necessary a meeting will be arranged to discuss the exceptional circumstance.

In order for consideration to be given, requests for absence must be for exceptional circumstances only. The Rushden and Higham cluster of schools agree to follow the law, in such that the provision for the Head Teacher to authorise absence purely for the purpose of a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances **could** include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside the above, the Head Teacher must liaise with other schools where other siblings attend.

Education (Penalty Notice) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- **Penalty Notices for term time absence**

These will be issued as an alternative to Magistrates Court Proceedings whenever it is appropriate and in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct. To issue a Penalty Notice (PN), there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more of consecutive unauthorised absence.

Determining Whether To Issue A Penalty Notice Or To Take Court Proceedings:

- If a Parenting Order is appropriate – COURT PROCEEDINGS
- If the parent/carer has been to court within the last 1 year – the PN Code of Conduct indicates that we should usually RETURN TO COURT – normally on the aggravated offence if the additional evidential tests can be satisfied.
- If the parent/carer has had a PN within the last 12 months for the child in question – COURT PROCEEDINGS (unless the PN related to a holiday in which case a further PN can be issued).
- If by issuing a PN vital evidence will be lost if the PN is unpaid – COURT PROCEEDINGS
- If the EIPT is already moving towards a prosecution relating to ongoing unauthorised absence and the pupil has unauthorised leave of absence, no PN should be issued for this and the unauthorised absence should be included in the prosecution period.
- **Where a child has had 2 periods of unauthorised leave for which the parent has been issued with a PN, on the third occasion, no PN will be issued and that parent will be prosecuted under S444(1) as long as parent was warned that this would happen**
- Where a parent has previously been prosecuted for a period of unauthorised leave, unless there is a reason not to, the usual action for a further occasion of unauthorised leave would be to proceed to Court and not to issue a further PN.

Leaving School during the School Day

No child will be allowed to leave the premises during school time unless collected by a parent or responsible adult. All departures must be entered into the Late/Signing book outside the school office. At special events, school will organise individual class lists for parents to sign.

Targets

Targets will be set for individual children when their attendance falls below 90%. This is subject to the reasons for the low attendance.

Responsibility:

The overall responsibility of monitoring pupils' attendance lies with the Head Teacher. The Office staff support the Head Teacher in the collection of attendance data and producing appropriate responses.

Points of Identification, Monitoring:

At the beginning of each term the school will identify:

Children whose attendance has fallen below 90% for the previous term **and** for the current year.

The registers will be analysed to find the reasons and patterns. An initial letter will be sent out to set a target of 90% for the next term.

Children who continue to have attendance below 90% but have improved receive a letter and are set a new target

Children who continue to have attendance below 90% and have not improved will be sent a letter requesting a meeting between the Head Teacher and Parent.

Children whose attendance is below 85%

Letters will be sent to the Parents/Carers of these children to set targets if appropriate. If targets are not achieved, then a referral will be made to the PSA (Parent Support Advisor).

Children who have 10% unauthorised absence.

The parents of these children will be sent letters setting targets for their children.

Children who have persistent absence will have a letter to explain that a referral will be made to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team.

A process diagram is used to record what actions have been taken and this will act as an audit trail.