

# Rothersthorpe C of E Primary School



## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

1. Good school attendance is one of the most important factors in achievement at school and at Rothersthorpe CE Primary School we are committed to helping every child achieve their full potential. Any absence from school disrupts a child's learning and missing lessons can damage a pupil's self-confidence and understanding. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. At Rothersthorpe we do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
  - 1.1 School sessions are as follows:

Morning session:	9am to 12.15pm
Afternoon session:	1.15pm to 3.30pm
  - 1.2 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, and be punctual and in school for 9.00am when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Register is promptly taken at 9.00am, with first lesson beginning at 9.05am. Any children arriving in the classroom after 9.00am will be marked as late. At the start of the day the gate is open to pupils from 8.45am and locked at 9am. At the end of the day the gate is open from 3.25pm and locked at 3.40pm
  - 1.3 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 an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
  - 1.4 Parents/carers will be provided with a list of term dates at least once during the preceding school year and they will be published on the school website.

## 2 Definitions

### 2.1 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 guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours or takes a term time holiday, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

### Allowed absence

- Sickness
- Emergency/Specialist medical appointments
- School is closed due to unforeseen circumstances

## 2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## 3. Repeated unauthorised absences

3.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

3.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

## 4. If a child is absent

### 4.1 First day absence:

Parents should ring school to let them know if a child will be absent that day. If no phone call is received by 9.30am the school will ring the parent; if no contact has been made, the school will call the other emergency contacts registered for the pupil.

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 guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

The school keeps a record of the reasons for the pupil absence and this is held for 3 terms before being destroyed.

### 4.2 Subsequent absences:

Parents are expected to notify the school on the morning of each day of absence. If, following medical advice, the pupil is expected to be absent for more than 1 day, parents and carers may notify the school of the expected duration of the absence. However, should a child make a quicker than expected recovery, parents should endeavour to return the child to school as soon as possible.

### 4.3 Unreported absence:

If the school is unable to make contact with parents and carers following three consecutive days of absence, the school will write to parents and may attempt to call personally to the address of the child to ascertain their whereabouts.

If no contact has been made with the school by parents or carers after **5 consecutive days** of absence, the school will contact the Education Welfare Officer.

## 5 Long-term absence

5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

5.2 If the absence 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.

## 6 Persistent Lateness

Morning registration takes place promptly at 9.00am. Parents are asked to contact the School if they know that their child will be late for school due to an emergency/specialist medical appointment or other good reason. Pupils arriving after classroom registration has concluded will be marked as late.

- 6.1 The register will remain open until 9.30am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence.
- 6.2 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has repeated lateness, (five separate occasions within a six week period), to discuss the problem and offer any support that will help to improve punctuality. Northamptonshire County Council may issue a penalty notice to parents for persistent lateness of: *'five consecutive schools days or the equivalent of 5 days within a six week period'*.

If the situation does not improve, a letter will be sent to parents asking them to improve their child's punctuality. If however the situation has still not improved the school will then contact the LA support services.

## **7 Requests for leave of absence**

- 7.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there can be exceptional circumstances which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance. The school has the discretion to allow leave in **exceptional** circumstances such as:

- Family bereavement/crisis
- Family wedding taking part on a school day – 1 day only (not including travelling time)
- Examinations off site
- Visit to a new school – only if family is relocating
- Prison visits
- Service personnel on active duty
- Emergency/Specialist medical appointments
- Attendance at a single event at the request of a public organisation
- Elite Coaching sessions at the request of a public organisation. For authorisation a request must be submitted in writing to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. All requests will be considered using the following criteria: number of sessions; times; dates; term time; pupil's attendance, behaviour, work ethos and current school commitments.

### **Absences not authorised under any circumstances**

- Family holiday no matter what length
- Family trips
- Leaving early to travel to an event

- 7.2 Government guidance states that only under **'exceptional circumstances'** may the Head teacher consider giving permission for a child to be absent from school during term time. Parents or carers who take their children on holiday in term time without school's permission or are late returning from an extended holiday, may receive a Penalty Notice fine.

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices for failure to ensure regular school attendance. 'The Penalty Notice is £60 per parent/adult for each pupil if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of issue. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may instigate legal proceedings under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000'.

Northamptonshire County Council guidelines state they propose to: *'issue penalties when children miss five consecutive school days or the equivalent of 5 days within a six week period from June 2016. This includes any absence marked in the register as unauthorised'*. (See NCC 'A Brief Guide to Penalty Notices' and 'Code of Conduct under the Provision of The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations.

### 7.3 Definition of parent/carers – Section 576 Education Act 1996:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child – having care of a child means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child

‘Parent’ means each and every parent coming within the definition, whether acting jointly or separately.

## 8 Attendance Targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.
- 8.2 At parent consultation evenings, school will comment on each child’s attendance and punctuality and give opportunity for issues to be raised.
- 8.3 When a child’s absence rate falls below 90% a letter will be sent to the parents requesting the parents contact school to discuss the pupil’s attendance rate. If the pupil’s absence rate continues targets will be set with the pupil and the parents.

## 9 SEND, Equality & Inclusion

At Rothersthorpe we aim to ensure that no member of the school community experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination within the learning environment because of their age; any disability they may have; their ethnicity; colour or national origin; their gender; their religion or beliefs.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered in relation to any SEND child regarding their attendance due to their specific disability. For example, attending medical appointments, receiving medical treatment or medicines etc. The health and well-being of all pupils are considered at all times.

## 10 Monitoring and review

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the head teacher. 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 our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 10.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 10.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus.
- 10.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will discuss the situation with the Head teacher, who will then contact the parents or guardians.
- 10.5 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

**Policy reviewed and agreed by Rothersthorpe School Governors**

**This policy is in-line with Northamptonshire County Council guidelines**