

RIVINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



Revised February 2014

The Mission Statement

"With the intention of enabling all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, Rivington Primary School aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality".

Statutory Framework

A pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter/message authorises the absence.

Rights and Responsibilities

School

Rivington Primary School expects all pupils to attend regularly and to arrive on time in a fit condition to learn.

Staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality with all pupils and will lead through personal example.

The school employs a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and works closely with parents when attendance/punctuality gives cause for concern.

Parents who use English as a second language or who have literacy problems will be offered support from school in matters of communication if school are made aware of these issues.

Parents will be informed promptly by school or the schools Education Welfare Officer of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend regularly and on arrive on time.

Pupils will be encouraged to achieve and maintain a good attendance through assemblies, incentives and reward certificates.

Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

Parents are responsible for informing the school before 9.30am or as soon as possible on the first day of any absence of the reason why their child is absent by phone call or personal visit. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to support absences.

Parents should avoid medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours unless it is a specialist appointment that cannot be arranged outside school hours. Parents should inform school

before an appointment and a copy of any documentation should be shown to the school office so that the absence can be authorised.

Parents are expected to attend meetings on request if concerns arise about their child's attendance.

Registration

The attendance register is a legal requirement and must be taken twice daily. The register is taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. School must distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences.

Registration is an important time when children are welcomed by the class teacher and news and information is shared. Children who arrive late miss out on this crucial time.

Registers are recorded electronically and coded in accordance with current government advice. Pupil absence will be recorded as 'N' (reason not known) until school accept a reason for the absence. This will then be changed to either an authorised or unauthorised code. School will make the decision whether an absence will be authorised.

The schools register will inform the fire evacuation register.

If the computer system fails a paper register will be taken by the class teacher. This will be entered on to the system at the first opportunity.

The school day

Children are expected to be on the playground to be admitted into school by 8.45am.

Registration begins at 8.50am.

Registration ends at 9.00am, at this time the school doors are closed and the gates are locked.

Children arriving after 9.00am must enter through the front door with a parent, they must be signed in by the school office. The office will record the time of arrival in the late book and the child will be coded 'L' late on the register.

The register closes at 9.30am

Children arriving after this time will be coded 'U' (this counts as an unauthorised absence) OR any other code the school decides to record the late arrival correctly.

Afternoon registers times are:

1 to 1.05 pm. (K.S.2)

1.20 to 1.25 pm. (K.S.1)

Punctuality issues are taken very seriously by school and if not addressed promptly by parents, can lead to legal sanctions to address the issue.

Parents of children who arrive late on a regular basis will invited into school to discuss the issues and concerns around the punctuality of their child.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

All absences should be explained by the parent before 9.30am or as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

School employ a 'first day response' system for chasing up unexplained absence, this is a safeguarding strategy. If school cannot make contact with parents of absent children the schools Education Welfare Officer will be requested to visit the home to confirm the reason why children are absent. School will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence. Parents are requested to return their child to school as soon as possible after an absence even if there is only one day of the school week left.

Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- illness
- Unavoidable medical appointments (with evidence)
- Days of religious observance (with evidence)
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

If a child's absence is a cause for concern school can ask the parent for medical evidence such as prescriptive medicine, doctors stamped appointment cards, care at the chemist booklet etc in order to authorise further absence. Parents will not be asked for doctor's notes that incur a cost.

The school nurse is always available to give assistance and advice to parents.

Absence from school will **not** be authorised for:

- Shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays

Parents of children with a high incidence of unauthorised absence may be subjected to Legal Sanctions such as Penalty Notice fines OR prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Leave of absence during term time

School cannot authorise time off for family holidays during in term time and Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays.

Parents can only apply for leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. Parents must apply in writing to the headteacher well in advance of the absence. The headteacher will decide if the Leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised.

If the headteacher does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents decide to take the leave anyway, the absence will be unauthorised and the parents may receive Penalty Notice fines. Penalty Notice Fines can be issued to each parent for every child concerned.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Rivington Primary school will strive to make pupils feel welcome and valued and will encourage good attendance with praise, incentives and rewards through:

- Weekly class award
- Termly merit awards
- End of year certificate and prize
- Assemblies
- KS1 and Reception have an attendance raffle and 'Marvin the Monkey' visits for the weekend

Parents and pupils will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, parents' evenings etc.) of the importance and value of good attendance.

Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.

The school employs the services of a Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to support the school in meeting its legal obligations with regard to school attendance. The EWO will investigate all arising attendance issues in accordance with current government guidance and legislation.

Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 95% may be invited to agree an attendance action plan OR a Parenting Contract with the EWO and the headteacher to help improve their child's attendance; this may include supportive referrals to the school nurse or a parenting course.

A pupil with an attendance of 85% or below is categorised by the government as persistent absentee (PA). All PA's will be targeted for improvement by the EWO and the headteacher. Parents of PA's with a high incidence of unauthorised absence may be the subjects of legal sanctions including Penalty Notices OR Prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

The school will support Pupils who are absent through long term chronic or life threatening illness by adhering to current government guidance for children with medical needs, this may involve a plan of support with home tuition and a re-integration plan back into school.

Teachers and support staff who become aware of issues which may lead to attendance difficulties will report the issues in a timely manner to the Headteacher.

When appropriate school will liaise with other agencies – Educational Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service, Social Services, the School Nurse and other agencies to support and help pupils with attendance difficulties.

The Head Teacher will report to the school's governing body termly on attendance matters.

This attendance policy adheres to current government legislation and guidance. For further information please refer to:

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995
The Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) 1997
The Education (Pupil Registration) England 2001