



Rowley Park
Primary Academy
Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

Rowley Park Academy seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. Rowley Park Academy encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and all recognise that *“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly”* (DfE 1999).

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards that acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Rowley Park Academy will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support through documentation, verbal communications (phones call, home visits, meetings..) and attendance clinics.

Attendance of the children will be monitored and overseen by the Senior Leadership team and the Education Welfare Officer.

Statements of expectations;

What is expected of the pupils?

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

- To respect themselves and others
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

What is expected of the Parents?

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-

operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child(ren) arrive at school punctually at 8.50am ready for the school day in the correct school uniform – if children are late they are to enter through the office and the late book must be signed offering a reason for their lateness.
- To notify the school on the first day of absence through telephone communication or voice message by **9am**, in cases where no phone call has been received by 9.30am a first day phone call will be made by the office staff.
- To ensure medical appointments are taken outside of school hours where possible. If taken during school hours parents must provide the school with adequate evidence for absence – appointment card, letter, prescription etc...
- To take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.
- Any LOA request is submitted at **least 2 weeks prior**.
- To communicate and work in partnership with the school to ensure any issues surrounding attendance and punctuality are resolved in a timely manner.

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

What is expected of the School?

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- To meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum
- To work alongside the local authority to tackle poor attendance.
- Develop, alongside pupils, systems of praise and reward to encourage good attendance (see appendix 1)

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions in line with the 1995 education act. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Monitoring Attendance

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will monitor attendance for all pupils on a weekly basis focusing on any pupil identified as cause for concern or with less than 90% attendance on a more regular basis. Home visits can be carried out and letters will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if after a four week period there appears to be no improvement, the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the EWO and family support worker to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending.

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues. The EWO will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

The school office will conduct first day calling for children that are absent with no communication with the school. Where no contact is made by parents/carers

What is expected of the EWO?

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To monitor children that are at risk of becoming persistent absentees. (93% and below)
- To investigate lateness which impacts upon children's attendance and learning.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To conduct home-visits/well-fare checks, in circumstances where no contact has been made between the school and the parents.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

Children Missing in Education

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a Child Missing in Education case for the Local Authority. Click link to find DfE guidance regarding [Children Missing in Education](#).

Requests for leave of absence

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are required to complete the leave of absence form and hand in to school. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason by letter and the request will be noted in the electronic register. Rowley Park has a zero tolerance approach to term time holidays and they will not be authorised. If the leave is still taken it will be down as unauthorised and parents may be liable for a penalty notice. Leave of absence will **not** be offered to pupils for family holidays except under special / exceptional circumstances.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines, only issued by the locality support team, on behalf of the local authority, for a child's unauthorised absence from school. They are not issued by the school and the school does not benefit financially.

Penalty Issues can be issued to each parent liable for the absence offence (£60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days).

Review

The governing body reviews this policy every year. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Appendix B

Attendance During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

During national lockdowns, unless guided by DfE, all pupils are required to attend school. As such, the arrangements set out in the main body of this policy (above) will be adhered to. This appendix has been developed in line with the latest government guidance to set out the additional measures that have been put in place to support pupils' attendance at school.

The school will have due regard for the DfE's 'Recording attendance during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak' guidance when recording attendance during the pandemic.

Attendance expectations from September, when schools are fully open.

When schools are fully open, the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- The school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, in line with the procedures in the main body of this policy.
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Shielding or self-isolating pupils

Shielding advice for all adults and children changes in line with government guidance. When shielding is paused, this means that pupils who were shielding can return to school, as can pupils who have family members who were shielding. Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, they will be immediately offered access to remote learning, in line with the Pupil Remote Learning Guidance from DfE.

Pupils who are no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional should discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. Parents should inform the school of any particular measures that need to be in place to ensure their child can return to school safely.

The school understands that there will be occasions where some pupils may not be able to attend school due to coronavirus, including for the following reasons:

- They are self-isolating and have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus.
- Rates of coronavirus in the local area have risen and certain individuals are asked to temporarily shield.

- Absences relating to pupils following clinical and/or public health advice will not be penalised.

Reluctance to return to school

Parents will be advised to contact the school if they have concerns about their child returning to school.

If a parent raises a concern, a relevant staff member will hold a discussion with the parent to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance on the measures that are in place to reduce risk in the school.

Monitoring attendance

Education Welfare Office will monitor and work alongside the well-being team to monitor the school's attendance rates once the school whilst the school is fully open or working through a partial closure. Any trends in non-attendance will be identified (e.g. due to anxiety) and measures will be put in place to reengage affected pupils with the school in discussion with the Senior Leadership team.

During a national lockdown

Children will be given a place in school in line with the government guidance for critical workers and vulnerable criteria. The school will also take into consideration, their knowledge of a child, family and their home circumstances to allocate places.

During a period of partial closure, it is compulsory that children engage with the remote learning offer that is on offer.

Teaching staff and Leaders will track and monitor engagement as they would attendance. They will identify where engagement is low and work with parents to improve this. If children are not engaging with online sessions and work is not being submitted due to the level of support at home, children will be offered a place in school.

The well-being team will continue to contact parents with concerns raised and home visits will be conducted where no contact is made.