

# Rushwick C of E Primary School

## *Ask, Seek, Knock*

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7.*

# Attendance Policy

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Last reviewed on: November 2023

Next review due by: Summer 2025

## Attendance Policy

### AIMS OF THE POLICY

Our school vision is for every child to “Ask, seek, knock,” and attendance plays a huge role in this. We wish to promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning, and enabling them to flourish socially and academically.

A school’s attendance policy shapes the school ethos and makes a statement about how the school values and includes all people in it. Regular attendance and punctuality is an important life skill which is vital as pupils seek to become organised and reliable, and enables children the confidence to be committed to their learning.

Successful schools extend themselves beyond their obvious physical and social limitations and are not fixated on academic performance.

They maintain successful learning environments for all pupils, and this begins a culture in which staff and students are encouraged to enjoy membership of a cheerful and collaborative community that is concerned for human potential in its fullest meaning.

There definitely is a ‘happiness’ factor to schools that are successful and fully inclusive.

Our attendance goal is to be **above 96%**

In order for your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly. **Your child should be at school, on time, every day that the school is open.** To enable us to achieve our overall goal of at least 96%, we expect every child to achieve at least this level of attendance.

Any safeguarding concerns involving attendance and lateness will be dealt with in line with the school’s safeguarding policy. Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

### WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child’s absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of other children in the class too.

Ensuring your child’s attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without an exceptional reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

In order to achieve our attendance goal of above 96%, school, parents and children need to work together.

#### Expectations:

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend school with all the appropriate equipment e.g. P.E. kit, reading books, swimming kit.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibility
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of any absence, before 9.00am
- Notify school immediately upon the child’s return in writing of the reasons for the child’s absence
- Notify the school immediately of any change to emergency contact details

The school will:

- Provide a safe, welcoming learning environment
- Keep regular and accurate records of am and pm attendance and punctuality both for individual children and whole school
- Monitor attendance on a weekly basis and provide support where needed
- Report attendance percentages to governors each term
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend (if no message has been received to explain absence)
- Inform parents and carers of their child's punctuality and poor attendance via letter Carry out a home visit by the third day of absence, where no communication has been received from home
- Letters will be sent to parents whose child has low attendance
- The school will hold regular attendance meetings with parents and signpost to other agencies if further support is needed

### **Understanding types of absence**

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent) and this is why we ask parents to inform us in writing, telephone or in person, the reason for any absence.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an unavoidable reason such as:

- Illness
- Hospital appointments
- Emergency doctor or dental appointments.

Unauthorised absences are those which are not considered reasonable and for which no leave has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children arriving too late at school to get a mark-after 9.30am;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed;
- Staying at home because other family members are unwell;
- Buying school uniform or shoes;
- Picking up or taking relatives to the airport.

Whilst any child may be too unwell to attend school, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Keeping them at home for this reason does not solve this issue and is best sorted with the school as soon as possible.

If unauthorised absence continues to be recorded following school intervention, then the school may refer to the Local Authority for their consideration to initiate court action under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996 which could lead to fines of up to £2500 or even imprisonment.

In some cases, action may be taken under the Children's Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

### **PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA):**

A pupil becomes a "persistent absentee" when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. There is a clear link between attainment and attendance. The

more school a child misses the greater the impact is on their overall attainment. As a school, we monitor all absences and you will be notified in writing if your child is heading towards this situation.

If a child's attendance falls to below 50% and there are not genuine reasons for this level the school have a legal duty to notify Childre's Services. A child with an attendance of below 50% is classed as severely absent from school.

### **Termtime Absence**

The Department of Education has announced that parents have no right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must be made in exceptional circumstances by completing a leave of absence form, which can be obtained from the school office.

The leadership team will consider each application in line with statutory requirements. The factors taken into consideration will be:

- The pupils' general absence/attendance record
- Length of proposed leave
- Pupil's educational needs
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Frequency of the activity
- When the request was made
- Pupil's ability to catch up with work
- Proximity of SATS and tests
- Timing within the term
- Age of pupil

We authorise absence for religious reasons on the same basis as for leave of absence.

Parents may be fined by means of Penalty Notices or Prosecutions in the Magistrates Court **by the Local Authority** for taking their child out of school during term time without consent from the school.

A Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 per parent per child. If the fine is not paid within 20 days it rises to £120 per parent per child. If not paid at all, court action will be initiated.

### **LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the beginning of the day they can miss work. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

The school day begins at 8.45 am and we expect your child to be in school no later than 9am. Registers are taken at 9am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by this time.

If your child arrives after 8.55am and the doors are shut, please escort your child to the front office and sign them in. Please give a reason for lateness.

At 9.30am registers are closed. Anyone arriving after 9.30am without a valid reason will be recorded as U – unauthorised late, if they have had a medical appointment, it will be M. If there is an arrangement in place with school that a child can have a staggered start to school, then this will be recorded as L or as an authorised absence – I or C.

Attendance and punctuality are monitored weekly by the attendance team and data is shared with SLT. The Headteacher will also share attendance data with School Governors each half-term.

### **Vulnerable children**

Children who are LAC (Looked After Children), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP),

Children In Need (CIN) will be treated with the highest priority. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately with a telephone call and external agencies involved will be notified. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised and learning supported as much as possible.

**Children who fail to attend or cease to attend without prior notification:**

As part of our safeguarding requirements and in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) if a child has 10 days continuous absence, school has been unable to locate the whereabouts of a child, we will refer to the Local Authority for further checks that are not available to school. If the child fails to start after being allocated a place, they will also have checks run. If the school is unable to make contact with the family after 10 days, the Local Authority will be contacted. In both cases the child will be treated as CME (Child Missing in Education).

