# Why is attendance important?

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance at school is an important part of giving your child the best possible start in life, ensuring your child is able to meet their full potential. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both Primary and Secondary school.

The school is committed to a positive policy of encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. The school will work with parents to secure this aim.

Facts about poor attendance

* 90% attendance is like having a day off every two weeks.
* 80% attendance is the same as having a day off every week.
* Prolonged absence from school can lead to loneliness. It can make it harder for your child to get along with other children and make friends.
* Keep an eye out for early signs of your child not wanting to go to school, such as moodiness, headaches, or stomach aches, especially at important times like the transition into a new year group or after the school holidays. Act upon these signs early, please don’t be frightened to speak to someone in school or ring the Participation Officer allocated to the school.

## Arriving at School

The table below indicates the timings for the start of the school day. Children are expected to arrive promptly for school.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Gates open at | Official start time | Classroom doors and gates will be shut at | Your child will be marked late if they arrive after |
| Morning nursery | 8.30am | 8.45am | 8.55am | 8.56am |
| Afternoon nursery | 12.15pm | 12.30pm | 12.40pm | 12.41pm |
| Reception, Year 1,  Year 2, Year 3, Year 4,  Year 5 & Year 6 | 8.30am | 8.50am | 8.50am | 8.51am |

## Children from Reception to Year 4 must be dropped to the classroom door, Year 5 pupils with prior written consent can come on their own as can Year 6.

**Lateness at school**

* Children who arrive after the official start time indicated above will need to buzz the main Reception gate to be allowed entrance onto the school premises.
* Parents must escort their children to the main Reception and sign them in; dropping them at the school gate is only acceptable for children in year 5 and 6 who are allowed to walk to and from school with their parents’ permission.
* Children who are late will receive a red card once they have signed in at reception, this card must then be presented to the class teacher to show they have been registered. Any late child who does not receive a red card will be sent back to reception to be signed in properly.
* If a child arrives no later than 30 minutes after the official start time then they will be marked as ‘Late before registration closes’. If a child arrives more than 30 minutes late, they will be marked as an ‘Unauthorised absence, Late after the register closes’.

Late letters will be sent at the beginning of each half term to parents if their child is late on more than two occasions in the previous term. If a child has persistently poor punctuality without good reason, parents may be invited in to meet with the Head Teacher. The school has the authority to mark all lates as unauthorised.

## Our procedures for absence

* Each school day consists of two sessions, an AM and a PM session. Therefore if a child is absent from school for one whole day this will equate to two sessions of absence.
* There are two types of absence; authorised and unauthorised. The school is responsible for deciding whether your child’s absence is authorised or unauthorised therefore the information you give us determines the outcome of the absence. As a school, any authorised absences ultimately will be the decision of the Head Teacher, the school has the right to request any evidence of any absence
* Although Medical appointments and illness constitute as authorised absence they will still affect a child’s percentage attendance and we need to be able to prove why they have been authorised so may request documentation i.e. hospital letters.
* Where a child is absent un-expectantly (such as illness etc.) parents must inform the school via the main school number 01895 547036. Parents must clearly leave their child’s name, class and reason for absence, a reason must be given. The school must be informed on each day of illness.
* If no reason has been provided within three days of the absence, parents will receive a letter asking for details. Failure to inform the school within one week of the absence than the absence will be marked as unauthorised. All absences must be reported by the end of the week they have occurred in.
* Following guidance from Public Health England, we operate a strict period of 48 hours leave before a child is allowed to return to school from the last spell of sickness/diarrhoea.

Contact telephone numbers

It is essential that we have current up to date contact numbers for your child so we can inform you when your child is absent. It is also crucial to have up to date contact information in case of emergencies or if we need to contact you if your child is unwell or injured.

Please ensure we are updated if you change your contact number.

## Medical/Dental appointments and Medical evidence

Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible. When appointments are made during school hours we require an advance letter and a medical note on return. Medical notes are available from most Medical and Dental surgeries.

The school may ask for medical proof of any illness if a child has been absent for longer than 5 days we will need to see medical evidence for the period of time off.

## School procedures

The school will regularly send parents reminders of their children’s attendance.

* Reminder letters will be sent out to parents whose child’s attendance falls below 96%.
* If there has been no improvement then parents will be invited in to meet with the Attendance Officer. At this point parents will be expected to provide medical evidence for all future absences. If this is not provided absences will be marked as unauthorised.
* If there is still no improvement, parents will be invited in to meet with the Head Teacher and the Attendance Officer.

If there is still no improvement, or parents do not respond to the schools letters or fail to show up for arranged meetings then the school will refer the family to the London Borough of Hillingdon Participation Team.

## Persistent absenteeism

Children should aim to achieve 100% attendance throughout the year. Due to reformed guidelines in September 2015 by the London Borough of Hillingdon, if a child’s attendance drops below 95% the school will begin monitoring them. If a pupil’s attendance drops below 90% they will be referred to the Participation Officer as they will have fallen into the category of persistent absentee.

## The Participation Officer (Formerly Education Welfare Officer)

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Participation Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance fail and unauthorised absences persist, the Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices (Currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice) or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

“If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence”.

Alternatively parents may wish to contact the Participation Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858.

## Exceptional Leave in Term Time

The school will not authorise any leave in term time for any reason. If you feel it necessary to take your child out of school for an extended period due to unavoidable and extreme circumstances then you must make a formal request in writing to the Head Teacher at least one week before you intend to leave.

If you are late returning from a period of leave, the school requires you to produce documentation for evidence of this.

There is no right of appeal in regards to any decision made concerning requests for Exceptional Leave in Term Time.

Where holidays are taken which have not been authorised, then through the Local Authority Participation Team, this could incur a penalty notice of £60 per parent per child, if not paid on time it advances to £120 per parent per child or summons from the magistrate’s court.

If children are absent for more than a 20 day period the child can be removed from the school roll and referred to the Local Authority Participation Team.

## Rewards

It is our expectation that children attend school every day to achieve 100%.

* Certificates are awarded to children who achieve 100% attendance on a termly and yearly basis.
* During each weekly, whole school assembly, one class will win a certificate for having the best attendance.
* On a termly basis rewards will be given to children with good attendance. For example, over the course of a term every child who achieves a full week’s attendance is entered into a draw to win a prize. Children are entered into the draw each time they achieve 100% attendance in a weeks’ time period. Every child who has achieved 100% attendance over the term will receive a certificate.
* Class rewards are also given using our Marble Jar reward system. Each class also has a marble jar. The classes can receive two marbles a day; one for everybody being in school and another if everybody is on time. When the class reaches 30 marbles they will receive a marble party.

## Support

* Children whose attendance falls below 96% may be placed on an Attendance Card. For children with poor attendance in the lower school they will be placed on an Attendance Chart. The cards and charts are for the children to monitor their own attendance under the attendance officer’s supervision. Each day will be recorded on their card or chart and at the end of the week they may be rewarded for improved attendance.
* Children and parents are encouraged to speak with a member of staff about any attendance concerns. It is never too late to ask for support, the sooner you ask the sooner the issue can be resolved.

## Ryefield Primary School is committed to helping our pupils and parents gain the most they can from their time at the school. If at any time you would like to discuss your child’s attendance or punctuality please contact our office who will be happy to help.

Addendum to Attendance Policy - Coronavirus - June 2020

Covid 19 – Policy Addendum

On the 28th May 2020 the Department for Education (DfE) published guidance for recording attendance and attendance expectations of students. The key points outlined in this document are the following:

- at this time, all student absences will be authorised

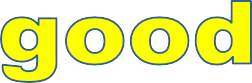
- clinically extremely vulnerable students have been advised to shield and therefore should not attend school

- clinically vulnerable students should follow advice from their doctor regarding attendance to school

- a child or young person who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend school

- if a child or young person lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, it is advised they only attend school if they can observe the stringent social distancing measures put in place by the school

- children or young people should not attend school if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household



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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| GOLD 100% | Is your attendance 100%? | **Your attendance is excellent** | Pupils will be rewarded in the following ways:   * They will help their class to win the weekly attendance prize. * Certificates termly. * Termly prizes |
| SILVER 98%-99% | Is your attendance 98% plus (Having fewer than 4 days absence in a year)? | **Your attendance is Good** | Pupils will be rewarded in the following ways:   * They will help their class to win the weekly attendance certificate. * Termly prizes |
| BRONZE  96%-97% | Is your attendance 96% plus (Having fewer than 8 days absence in a year)? | **Expected attendance** | If your attendance is between 96%-97%:   * Your attendance is the minimum we expect each child to achieve. * It is possible to improve this attendance. |
| AMBER 91%-95% | Is your attendance between 91%-  95% (Having  fewer than 19 days absence in a year)? | **Your attendance is poor** | If your attendance is between 91% - 95%   * A letter will be sent home. * Pupils may struggle with class work and friendship groups. * You may be asked to provide medical evidence for absence. * An action plan may be devised. |
| RED  Below 90% | If your attendance is below 90%  (More than 20 days absence a year) you must take action now! | **Persistent absentee** | If your attendance is below 90%;   * The Participation are likely to contact you. * Parents may be fined. * Parents may face prosecution. |

# The impact absence has on attendance

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attendance during 1 school year.** | **Approximate number of days absence** | **Which is about this many weeks absent** | **This means missing approximately this many weeks over 7 years at school.** |
| 95% | 10 days | 2 weeks | 14 weeks |
| 90% | 20 days | 4 weeks | 28 weeks |
| 85% | 30 days | 6 weeks | 42 weeks |
| 80% | 40 days | 8 weeks | 56 weeks |

## Revision History

**Date of this revision**: March 2017

**Date of next revision**: March 2018

The policy should be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Revision**  **date** | **By** | **Summary of Changes Made** |
| *March 2016* | *Curriculum Committee* |  |
|  |  |  |

**Approval**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Signature** | **Title** | **Date of**  **Issue** | **Versi**  **on** |
| P Nash | P Nash | *Chair of Governors* | *March*  *16* | *1* |

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