



Roman Road Primary School

Attendance Policy

Agreed by Governors
To be reviewed January 2018

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Roman Road is committed to providing each pupil with a full and effective education. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children in the school. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

This policy sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

Principles

These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is parent(s) or carer(s) legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all children attend as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To discharge the school's duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of its ability
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of Newham's children and young people and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood.

Policy objectives:

- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of children
- To reduce persistent absence
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement
- To maximise the potential of every individual pupil

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our schools targets are:

2015/2016 = **95.8%**

2016/2017 = **95.5%**

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Understanding types of absence coding

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, GP note, etc. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time. Parents are asked to inform the school office on the first day of the child's absence and each consecutive day of the absence.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents, birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark
- Truancy

Reluctant attenders/school refusal

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to sort the problem out. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

School Procedures

1. Registration and punctuality procedures

Registers are taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day at 8.40am, and once during the afternoon session. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Pupils arriving before the end of the registration period will be coded **L** (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. The number of minutes late will be recorded in the register. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded **U** (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence.

**The morning registration period will start at 8.40am and end at 9.10am.
The afternoon registration period will start at 1.00pm and end at 1.30pm.**

In cases, for instance, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate attendance code will be entered.

Only the Head teacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as **O** (Unauthorised absence).

If a child is late more than 5 times in a month a letter will be sent to the parent and the child's punctuality will be monitored over the following two weeks. If the child continues to be persistently late the Attendance Officer will arrange a meeting with the parent or carer to attempt to resolve the problem.

2. First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school on the first day of the child's absence if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. This may be in the form of a letter, a phone call, text, email or oral explanation to the office. Explanations by the child are not acceptable. If the school does not receive notification it will text or telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason.

First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived, as quickly as possible.

Any teacher who is unsure about how to mark an absence should seek advice from the Attendance Officer or write the reason as given by the parent on the absence report and leave it for the school attendance officer to code.

Class teachers and administration staff should be attentive for patterns of absences e.g. mostly Mondays or Fridays. If such a pattern is spotted, it should be brought to the attention of the Attendance Officer.

Taking into account the age of our pupils, in most cases of poor attendance or persistent lateness it is the fault of the parent/carer and not the child. All staff should beware of this fact when dealing with the child.

3. Second Day Absence Contact

If the child is still absent on the second day without contact from the family, a text message will be sent to try to ascertain the reason. If the child has been absent due to illness we are requesting that medical evidence be given to support absences. This can be a copy of a prescription, Doctor's certificate or the label from prescribed medicine.

4. Continuing Absence Procedures

If we have sent a text to the family on the first and second day of the child's absence and have had no reply, we will make telephone calls to the family on the third day of absence. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a decision will be taken as appropriate to make a home visit will be made.

5. Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

Regular reviews of the registers will be made to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), that is to say absence of 10% or more in a half term. The school will be responsible for identification of any emerging concerns, and putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers, but if the pattern continues the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical

one. Any child who is absent without explanation for 7 consecutive school days (90%), who has a pattern of erratic attendance (90%), or persistent lateness after registers close will be referred to the Attendance Management Service in order that further investigations can be made. Such cases will be allocated to an Attendance Management Officer who will visit the home, set targets for improvement, signpost sources of support if needed, and ultimately recommend court action or a Penalty Notice if there is no improvement. In cases where there appear to be issues requiring outside intervention to support the family and the child, referral may be made through the Triage system for external agency support.

6. Consequences of Poor Attendance /Punctuality

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

- 1) The school may ask the Council to issue a Penalty Notice on its behalf. 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.
- 2) If attendance fails to improve despite the involvement of the school, the case will be referred to the Local Authority (Attendance Management Service) for a Borough Attendance Panel Hearing (BAPH).
- 3) The school may ask the Council to initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
- 4) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

7. Children who Cease to Attend without Prior Notification (CME) procedures

Procedures for trying to trace children who cease to attend without prior notification are covered in detail in the CME Policy and Procedures. However, if, after ten days continuous absence school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will submit a referral with the child's details to the Local Authority for it to perform further checks that are not available to school. *[This is a legal requirement]*. If after 20 days continuous unauthorised absence, their whereabouts cannot be traced and there are no child protection concerns they will be removed from the school roll. See *Borough's Attendance Guidance for further information*

8. Non starters

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a ten-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to the local authority CME team for further checks.

Example of Process Map for Early identification of Poor Attendance

Identify poor attendance with frequent register trawls for pupils who hit trigger level. Parents contacted to investigate reason for absences and put in place action plan as appropriate



Stage 1 – If no improvement

Letter to be sent to parent/carer regarding poor attendance and actions required



Stage 2 - If no improvement

Home visit to be made or invite parent/carer into school to meet with Attendance Officer



Stage 3 - If no improvement

School to issue an Official Warning Letter to parent/carer



Stage 4 - If no improvement

The school to refer to EIAA for a BAPH or invite parent/carer to a formal meeting with the Head/Deputy Head teacher. Outcomes letter to include clear action plan for parent and young person to comply with to avoid court action.

Outcomes – Refer to court / set review period with meeting date



At review

1. Attendance improved to agreed level. No further action.
2. Attendance improved but below agreed level. Further monitoring period agreed.
3. No improvement or co-operation from parent. Refer to court



Referral to Court

EIAA /designate a member of school staff to check schools section 9 statements and refer to Safeguarding Services Legal Intervention Team for immediate referral to court

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If any child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, and it can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

The school day starts at 8:40am and we expect children to be in their class lines in the playground at that time. Registers are marked by 8:45am. Any child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9:10am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the DFE regulations, if any child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence. This is a U code which means after registers closed.

If any child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be sent a first and second warning letter, stating the number of days and the dates that their child has been late. If poor punctuality continues, parents will be asked to meet with the school attendance officer to resolve this problem. Parents and carers can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Leave of absence during term-time:

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. However in this school that discretion will only be exercised in the **most exceptional** circumstances.

- If a child is taken on holiday during term-time without obtaining the school's agreement a Penalty notice may (but most likely will) be issued as a result of this absence. You may also receive a fine if you delay your return from an extended term-time holiday without school agreement.
- A Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 21 days it rises to £120 per parent, per child. If not paid at all, court action will be initiated.
- Please note we do not accept any medical evidence from overseas. If you or your child has been unwell whilst abroad we will require medical evidence from your GP or Hospital in the UK on your return.

Vulnerable Children

Children who are a Looked After Child (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Child in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Officer. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home, a home visit or by a call to the AMS Duty Desk on 0203730390, in order that a same-day visit can be made. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

- Children on the "at risk" register may not be taken off roll without permission from Social Services.

Nursery Pupils

Nursery children's attendance will be monitored in the same way as the rest of the school. However the school has the right to take a child off roll if the child has been continuously absent for 20 days or more or if the child's attendance has fallen below 85%, which is persistent absence. It is imperative that as parents you communicate with the School Attendance Officer with regards to any absence.

Recognition of Achievement

Our behaviour policy describes a comprehensive system for the recognition and reward of children's achievement. Attendance and punctuality are included. The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

- Termly Certificates for attendance over 95%.
- Bronze/Silver/Gold Certificates for 100% attendances each term. (children must have been admitted within the first term of the academic year)
- Weekly Assembly announcing the class with highest attendance. The winners receive 10 minutes extra playtime.
- Class with highest attendance for the week receives the Attendance Cup.
- At the end of the academic year the children with 100% attendance go into a raffle. The winner receives a bike. The rest of the children will be taken on an outing to a theme park or similar.

Promoting Attendance

The Governors, Head teacher and staff will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home-school agreement, newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to receive a termly attendance report from the school Attendance Officer. This will be incorporated on the Head teacher's termly report to the Governing Body. The Governors should comment on the report, and if possible, make suggestions as to how overall attendance might be improved.