# Rakegate Primary School

# Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Headteacher: Mrs Horton
Governor: Mr Hodges
School Attendance Officer: Mrs Harris
Area Education Welfare Officer: Mrs Campbell

## Introduction

This policy was developed and agreed by the governing body and has the full agreement of the whole school community including the Education Welfare Service and MAST team.

## Aims

- To comply with the legal requirements of the Education Act 1996
- To monitor and identify patterns in individual children's attendance and punctuality throughout the year, pinpointing irregularities and cause for concern.
- To endeavour to provide support and guidance where appropriate to improve children's attendance and punctuality.
- To provide information on which to base target setting for future attendance returns.
- To provide evidence and information for reporting to Parents/Carers, Governing body, LA and DFE.
- To ensure each child has full access to all areas of the curriculum and the education they are entitled to.
- To improve attendance to a minimum of 97% and reduce lateness

## Whole School Involvement

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the staff. However, in order to achieve aims specific staff have involvement in the implementation of this policy. These include – Class teachers and teaching assistants, Children, Parents/Carers, School Administration Staff, Head teacher and Senior Management Team, along with Education Welfare Service, School Governors and MAST 6.

## The Legal Position

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the 'parent' is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude.

Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the age of five when a child should attend school from the start commencing on or after their fifth birthday.

If it appears that a child is not receiving suitable education, then under section 437 of the Education Act, the LA / School must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order.

Since March 2001 a higher offence warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court. Prosecution under section 444 can lead to a custodial sentence.

## Registers

Registers are STATUTORY LEGAL DOCUMENTS, which must be completed accurately by a member of teaching staff. Attendance registers are taken twice a day: at the start of the morning session and afternoon sessions.

Instructions for completing registers must be followed. The office staff will find out the reason for absences and enter the correct code. If they are in any doubt they will contact the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher for clarification.

## Absences

Absences can only be authorised once the attendance team or Head/Deputy Head teacher are satisfied that this is an acceptable explanation which has been provided by parent/carer regarding the absence. It is important that absences can only be authorised by the school and not by the parent/carer.

If a member of staff is in doubt about whether an absence should be authorised, then this should be referred to the Head/Deputy Headteacher.

If a valid reason is given verbally or in writing by a Parent/Carer then the absence may be authorised. If the reason is unacceptable or not validated then it should be referred to attendance staff to investigate further.

Marking the school register with a, N, is acceptable until the absence is clarified, but this should be removed within two weeks of the absence. Unauthorised absence should be recorded if no reason is supplied.

## Procedures for Authorising Absence

- Parents are required to contact school on 558608 before 9.30am on the first day of absence to confirm the reason of absence and its likely duration.
- If a child is not in school and no reason for absence has been supplied, parent will be contacted to clarify the reason for absence.
- Parents who routinely fail to make contact with the school will have all absences unauthorised and a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.
- If an absent child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or is a Child in Need attendance staff should inform Head/Deputy Head immediately that the child is absent.

## Acceptable Reason for Absence

- Illness (evidence may be asked for)
- Days agreed by school as Religious observance

## Unacceptable Reasons for Absence

- Truancy (absence without knowledge of Parents/Carers)
- Minding the House
- Shopping/running errands (e.g. buying new shoes clothes
- Looking after sick relatives
- Looking after brothers or sisters
- School clothing in the wash
- Oversleeping
- Head lice
- Birthday
- Parent's illness
- Children in another school on an Inset Day
- Last day of term

- Child tells the parent/carer that they do not want to go to school
- Holiday: whole weeks and odd days
- Routine medical and dental appointments are discouraged in school time (school are happy to support parents if they are having difficulties obtaining appointments outside of school hours.)
- Any other reason that the headteacher deems unacceptable

## Leave During Term Time

We would actively discourage parents and carers from taking children on holiday during term time. We believe that every session missed from school is a missed opportunity for children to learn from a new experience, Learning is progress, if a child misses a step; the next step of learning becomes much more difficult.

Special requests for leave of absence during term time should be made in person to the Headteacher.

Parents have no entitlement to leave of absence and it can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

## Monitoring Attendance

- All children's attendance figures will be printed fortnightly
- Attendance staff will meet fortnightly to analyze attendance patterns
- Individual and whole school attendance, punctuality figures discussed and ways forward suggested.
- Children causing concern will be discussed along with actions taken and progress towards targets.
- All parents receive a letter if attendance falls below 90%.
- Children with attendance less than 96% are identified as causing concern
- Children who are regularly late are also identified as causing concern

## Procedures for when attendance is causing concern

- If at the attendance meeting the child's attendance/punctuality continues to cause concern. parents/carers are invited to attend an attendance/punctuality meeting in school where a Parenting Contract of CAF (Common Assessment Framework) will be offered

- The pupil's attendance/punctuality will be monitored until it is no longer a concern
- Regular meeting with the Education Welfare Officer will discuss attendance issues and advise sort on appropriate action.
- If a child's absence remains a cause of concern and after intervention by the school which will include unauthorised absences then a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.
- The Education Welfare Officer will ask to meet with parents and school along with other professionals such as the school nurse to discuss absence issues.
- If parents/carers fail to attend meetings to discuss attendance issues and attendance or punctuality does not improve within a specific time a Penalty Notice could be served.
- Further absence or lateness could result in further court action and a custodial sentence

## Lateness

Lateness in attending school is an unauthorised absence. The school day begins at 8.50am and the registration period is for 20 minutes.

Children who are late must enter via the school reception and report to the school office. These children will be recorded in the late book as they will be recorded as absent in the class register and it will then be updates accordingly in the register by attendance staff.

Where a child is consistently late over a number of weeks, parents will receive a letter asking why their child is late and ask for cooperation in rectifying the situation.

If punctuality issues continue a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service who may take legal action which could result in a fine.

## Celebrating Good Attendance

- Class teachers are encouraged to praise individual and class attendance regularly.

- Attendance staff will regularly report attendance to other school staff to raise awareness and encourage good attendance.
- Weekly attendance and punctuality awards are presented.
- A class attendance league with an end of term reward.

## Setting Targets

The Local Authority sets target for all schools based upon past performance and national expectations. However, the DfE and OFSTED have specific targets which place schools into national categories and tables which will be published for parental scrutiny each year.

## Race Equality & Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to a full education regardless of their gender, disability or ability. We are committed to providing a safe and happy school free from racist intimidation or harassment of any kind and for all our children to achieve their full potential.

## Reporting Attendance

Attendance is reported to pupil and parents in a variety of ways:

- Annually on the annual written report
- Termly at parent consultations
- Through ongoing intervention throughout the year
- By publishing attendance and punctuality results on the school web site

Information is transferred to other schools by way of;

- Electronic data systems
- Common Transfer forms
- National Curriculum assessment records
- Passing on of annual reports

The school is required to make attendance returns to the DfE and the LA

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher should:

- Ensure legal requirements are being met with regard to attendance and punctuality

- Be responsible for the operational management of the attendance policy
- To review policy and procedures at least annually with all staff
- To discuss attendance and punctuality with new Parents/Carers and children
- To analyse authorised and unauthorised absence regularly with attendance staff and EWO to discuss any attendance issues
- Reward and celebrate attendance
- Send letters home regarding attendance and lateness
- Identify and monitor individual absences and lateness, identifying patterns and trends and target improvements
- Make the school Attendance and Punctuality Policy available to parents
- Hold regular meetings to address attendance issues and implement strategies to increase attendance and reduce Persistent Absence

The Governing Body should:

- Know and understand the school's policy and procedures for absence and lateness
- Have a designated governor responsible for monitoring and supporting the school with attendance and punctuality.
- Our designated governor is Mr Hodges

Attendance Staff Should:

- Monitor individual attendance and lateness daily, identifying any patterns and absences
- Liaise with the Family Support Worker, Head teacher and Education Welfare Officer regarding absence and lateness
- Produce reports for the Headteacher and Governors summarising individual and whole school attendance.
- Communicate with Parents/Carers on attendance and punctuality
- Record and store contact with parents in an appropriate manner
- Follow up data and reports with regard to less than 96% attendance
- Follow up poor punctuality and communicate with parents and children to identify solutions
- Hold regular meetings with Head/Deputy regarding attendance.
- Update attendance log for children causing concern.

Class teachers should:

- Ensure that registers are completed in accordance with Attendance and Punctuality procedures
- Date any written letters received from parents/cares regarding lateness or attendance and file in register wallet
- Record any verbal messages from Parents/Carers regarding attendance or lateness and send to the Attendance Office.
- Raise any concerns regarding attendance or lateness with attendance staff.
- Complete register by 9.00am and 1.30pm and return promptly to the attendance office.

Parents and Carers should:

- Sign home/school agreement and follow the school's policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality
- Ensure children attend school on time every day
- Inform school of any changes in family circumstances particularly new addresses or telephone numbers

THIS POLICY WILLL BE REVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER 2018

Approved: 21st September 2017

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors

Signed: _____ Headteacher