

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed by: Mr D Wallace (December 2019)
Approved by: Head Teacher and Chair of Governors
Next Review: December 2021

Introduction

Parents or carers of children of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full time education by attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996). If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly their parent is committing an offence.

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995, the school must maintain an up-to-date, accurate attendance register.

Aim

Rauceby Church of England Primary School is a caring school which always has the best interests of its children at the heart of everything it does. In order for our children to gain maximum benefit from their time with us, a high level of attendance and arriving in time for the start of the school day is vital. Whilst we appreciate that occasionally absences are unavoidable, we aim to discourage absence where possible. The school will work with parents and children to secure this aim. This policy will ensure that there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that children who should be attending the school have registered twice daily, or a reason for non-attendance is known to the school.

Taking the register

Children of compulsory school age and those children who are not compulsory school age but are in full time education must have their attendance registered twice per day.

The register must be updated twice daily at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The register must record the following:

- Whether a child is present or absent.
- Whether any absence is AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.
- The nature of the absence.

The school gates are opened at 0830 and children can gather on the playground from that time. The children will enter the school buildings from 0845.

The registers will be taken by the class teacher, or other authorised adult, at 08.55 and at 1300.

- Arrival after 8.55am will constitute a late code "L".
- Children arriving late, **for whatever reason**, will always be marked as such. This also includes lateness due to transport issues; either personal or public transport.
- Any child arriving at school after 8.55am will have to enter school through the school office and they will be noted as late by the school office staff.
- A signing in/out book in the school office will be used for children arriving/leaving the school during the day for medical appointments.
- Staff responsible for signing children out should ensure that the person collecting, if not a parent, has the authority to do so. Staff must follow the procedure laid down in appendix 1.

Inspection

School admission and attendance registers must be available for inspection by HMIs and registered inspectors.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- approve the policy and any proposed changes;
- receive reports from the Head Teacher regarding attendance; and
- review the working policy in the light of the Head Teacher's report.

The Head Teacher will:

- ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school, and is known by the parents;
- ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school;
- deal with issues of inadequate registering;
- oversee the attendance arrangements;
- make periodic checks of the registers to monitor children's absence;
- determine in whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's Leave of Absence form, or absences which have taken place where no request was made;
- make regular checks on reasons for absence;
- report to the Governing Body termly regarding attendance;
- report to parents where attendance fall below acceptable levels and instigate meetings to ascertain where assistance may be given
- contact parents regarding concerns over children's absences, where appropriate, and in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy;
- follow up cases of unaccounted absence or unacceptable notes;
- notify parents, as appropriate, that if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence;
- initiate, with appropriate staff, strategies to improve attendance;
- liaise with the Local Authority ("LA") over persistent absences; and
- ensure that unaccounted for absences are followed up.

Class Teachers will:

- ensure children are registered accurately by 0900 and 1300;
- ensure the register is with the office staff as soon as possible after completing so that absences can be followed up on;
- record correctly in the register or inform the office of any known planned absences;
- keep the Head Teacher informed of any extended periods of absence; and
- inform the Head Teacher of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences.

Office staff will:

- check the register for absences daily and make calls to parents where there is no known reason for the absence;
- complete the 'call register' following call to parents;
- make additional phone calls if necessary to contact parents;
- inform Head Teacher if contact cannot be made with parents.

Parents are required to:

- ensure that their child/children arrive at school on time and are in school uniform, prepared for the school day;
- when their child is ill and off school, inform the school of the absence on the first day of non-attendance and call again each day that the absence continues, unless the child has been vomiting or has diarrhoea in which case the child should not return to school until 48 hours after the last incident;
- where your child has a medical appointment, ensure that this has been properly communicated to their class teacher through the home/school diary, or directly to the school office by phone call or email, and that your child is collected/returned to school as close to the appointment time as possible; and
- make any request for leave of absence on the school's Leave of Absence form.

Leave of Absence

Parents are expected to complete the school's official Leave of Absence Application Form (appendix 2) before any planned absence, other than medical appointments, as soon as is possible before the proposed dates. Absence can only be granted on the approval of the Head Teacher and will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances** with each application being looked at individually.

Exceptional circumstances may include the following (not an exhaustive list):

- to attend a family funeral;
- where the parent may, through work, need to be away for an extended period and the absence is prior to or following the period;
- illness of close family member;
- close family weddings (the wedding day itself);
- music exam or sporting commitments;
- to observe religious festivals;
- performances accompanied by a performance licence.

Cheaper holidays during term time **do not** count as exceptional circumstances. The governing body has also agreed that fitting in with parents' work patterns or split families are also not classed as exceptional circumstances.

If parents still take the child out of school for time which has not been approved, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absence due to illness

Children who are genuinely poorly are not expected to attend school and an authorised code will be used.

Where a child's repeated absence due to illness is becoming a concern to the school and particularly if it is more than 10 days, the Head Teacher may ask the parent to provide information that supports the parents' view that the child is too unwell to return/attend school. The information may be kept on file and where appropriate the Local Authority will be informed.

School Closure

The Head Teacher will make every effort to ensure the school remains open. However, in some circumstances the school may have to close. The Head Teacher will always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person who uses the school site. If at any point to use the school building would be detrimental to a person's health, safety and welfare, then the Head Teacher must close part or all of the school.

If a decision is made to close the school, the Head Teacher will endeavour to inform parents with the details, and of any alternative arrangements that have been put into place.

Adverse weather

Absences due to adverse weather, such as snow or flooding, will be treated on an individual basis.

In the event that severe weather is forecast or is developing, the Head Teacher will consider either closing the school in advance of the school day, closing the school early, or opening the school later than usual. The decision taken will always result from consideration of the children, parents and staff, and any “significant risk of serious injury” in school or whilst travelling to or from school.

Any decision taken, will be communicated to parents as quickly as possible via the school’s text round service. Any school closure due to adverse weather will also be communicated to local radio (Lincs FM and Radio Lincolnshire), and will form part of their regular bulletins.

Taking a child off the register

A child’s name can only be taken off the register:

- where a child has left Rauceby Church of England Primary School and has been registered at another school;
- where the parent has notified the school that the child is being Electively Home Educated (the LA will also be informed via the relevant documentation);
- where a child is granted leave of more than ten days and the school is unable to establish the whereabouts of the child and/or family. In such cases, the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer will be informed;
- where a child is certified by a medical officer that they are unfit to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- where the child has been absent continuously for a period of not less than four weeks and neither the LA or the school, after reasonable enquiry, has been able to locate the child; and
- where the child has been permanently excluded.

Ensuring attendance

The school will always attempt to work with parents to ensure that children attend. This may involve enlisting the services of the Education Welfare Officer and/or the Family Support Worker. The Head Teacher and Governing Body have a responsibility to inform the Safeguarding Customer Services team when a child’s attendance becomes a matter of concern. In extreme cases the Local Authority may prosecute parents who fail to make every effort to ensure that their child attends school.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility – parents, children and all members of staff. To help us all focus on this the school will:

- report to parents/carers on their child’s attendance within the annual and termly school reports;
- contact parents/carers should their child’s attendance fall below 90% and 95%;
- celebrate good attendance on a weekly basis;
- pupils with 100% attendance will be celebrated in the end of term newsletter.

Complaints

Any parent who is aggrieved with the decision made regarding an absence should follow the school’s normal complaints procedure.

Appendix 1 – Protocol for releasing children during or at the end of the school day.

Protocol for a child being collected for an appointment in school hours.

- If the person collecting is a recognised parent of the child then the child needs to be signed out in the relevant signing out book.
- If the person collecting is not a recognised parent of the child then the member of staff signing the child out of school must ensure the identity of the person by:
 - Checking the child's home/school diary for a message from parents;
 - Checking with the school office, or the class teacher, as to whether a message has been received from parents by email or telephone.
- If none of the above is the case then the child must not be handed over until confirmation is gained from the parents of the child.

If the person collecting is not happy with this procedure then please refer them to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Protocol for a child being collected after school.

- Class teacher to identify parent at the school gate before letting the child walk to them.
- If the parent cannot be identified then the child will stay with the teacher.
- If the person said to be collecting the child is not a recognised parent (or childminder) then the member of staff must establish the identity of the person by:
 - Checking the child's home/school diary for a message from parents;
 - Checking with the school office, or the class teacher, as to whether a message has been received from parents by email or telephone.
- If none of the above is the case then the child must not be handed over until confirmation is gained from the parents of the child.

If the person collecting is not happy with this procedure then please refer them to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Appendix 2 – Leave of absence request form

Full school attendance is vital for your child’s educational progress and attainment. Parents or carers of children of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full time education by attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996).

Absence during term-time will only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances**, and will be at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Please complete this form and return to the school office as soon as possible before the requested period of absence.

Child’s name:		Date of Birth:		Year Group:	
Child’s name:		Date of Birth:		Year Group:	
Child’s name:		Date of Birth:		Year Group:	

Period of absence requested:	From:	To:	Total number of school days:
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Please give reasons for the absence request:

Do you have children in other local schools? Please give details.	Child’s name:		School attending:	
	Child’s name:		School attending:	
	Child’s name:		School attending:	
	Child’s name:		School attending:	

Parents/carers name:		Signed:		Date:	
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