



**Roe Lee Park  
Primary School & Nursery**

*Free to Flourish*

***Attendance and Punctuality  
Policy***

## **Introduction**

Roe Lee Park Primary School is a successful school and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to flourish. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is important, therefore, that all children attend school regularly and this policy sets out the systems in place to ensure that all children achieve this.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

## **Key personnel**

- Headteacher – Mrs. Gillian Wilton
- Attendance Lead – Mrs. Debs Campbell
- Attendance Officer – Mrs. Pauline Campbell

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy & Principles Statement
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

## **Roles and responsibilities**

**The Governing Board** has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

**The Headteacher and Attendance Lead** (Debs Campbell) are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

**Staff** are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

**The Attendance Officer** is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

**Pupils** are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

**Parents** are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

### **The Importance of Regular Attendance**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is **a legal responsibility as a parent** and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

**To support regular attendance we will:**

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- Give parents details about their child's attendance termly;
- Report to parents termly about how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance.

## **Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher.

Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence may be authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription or appointment card or similar.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend school, it is better to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may cause further issues.

## **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level can do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and school requests parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this. All absence is monitored thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be given priority consideration, and parents will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA pupils and their parents would become subject to an action plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and participation

in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority Inclusion Team.

### **Training of staff**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

### **Pupil expectations**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, 96% throughout the year.

### **Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)**

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Inviting parents / carers in to school to discuss attendance levels and any barriers.
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Having a weekly or monthly attendance reviews with parents and pupils.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams (in the event of ten unauthorised sessions and attendance under 90%).
  - Using fixed penalty notices (where unauthorised leave of absence exceeds 10 session – five days).
  - Creating attendance support sessions with the Attendance Lead.

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil at risk of persistent absenteeism (PA) is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with pupils and parents / carers to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

### **Absence procedures**

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

A telephone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Local Authority attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 scLA hool days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 85%, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

### **Parental involvement**

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

### **Attendance register**

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances



- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

### **Attendance officer**

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the LA attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence, and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

### **Lateness**

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

The school day starts at 8:50am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by 9:10am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 9:20am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- After lunch, all registers are marked by 1:30pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 1:30pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- Pupils attending after 9:10am will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

### **Term-time leave**

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the Headteacher will be **unable to authorise holidays during term-time** in most cases. The Headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the Headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The Headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the

Headteacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines. **In line with Local Authority guidance, penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised holidays taken during term time of 10 sessions (5 school days). The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. If not paid, this rises to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If not paid within this time, it may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates court.**

### **Leave during lunch times**

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Headteacher – it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the Headteacher will ensure a lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Our lunch time hours are 12:00pm - 1:00pm (EYFS & KS1) and 12:30pm – 1:30pm (KS2). Any pupils authorised to leave the premises during lunchtime should leave the school within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff has given their permission.

If a pupil is expected to be leaving the school premises, they are required to do so – pupils should go home as soon as they leave the site. If a pupil expected to leave no longer has reason to do so, e.g. a medical appointment is cancelled, they will inform a member of staff at the school office immediately.

The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the Headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

## **Truancy**

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a phone call will be made to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken. This will be followed up by letter.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **Missing children**

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets

- Intervention rooms
- The Library & ICT suite
- The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after ten minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy & Principles Statement.

The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

### **Religious observances**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

### **Appointments**

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible. Parents arriving back into school following an appointment should be signed in at the school office by a parent / carer.

### **Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities**

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

### **Young carers**

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

### **Rewarding good attendance**

There are a variety of attendance rewards in place at Roe Lee to promote good attendance. These include:

- Weekly key stage class award
- Termly best class (key stage) award
- Parent / carer afternoon sessions in class to celebrate class attendance
- Individual, termly 100% and 96%+ awards
- An end of year raffle for all children who have achieved 100% attendance across a term or more.
- Most improved attendance (termly) – class and individual.

## **Attendance Monitoring Procedures**

Roe Lee Park has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the SLT and attendance officer detailing monthly and annual attendance to date. This is analysed in terms of whole school and pupil groups. Any trends are identified and acted on.
2. Pupil absence - contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the Attendance Lead daily.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96%, the Attendance Lead makes contact with the parent / carer to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The attendance officer also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents. This is followed up by letter and an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being further monitored, and the Attendance Lead meet with the parents to discuss this.
6. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the LA Attendance Officer, who will then conduct a home visit.
7. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the Headteacher to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96%.
8. If targets are not met, school makes a referral to the LA Attendance Officer. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

## **Policy Monitoring and Review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96% – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the gov.uk compare school performance website:

<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/119127/roe-lee-park-primary-school/absence-and-pupil-population>

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Attendance Lead. The next scheduled review date for this policy is April 2023. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

***Policy written by: Gillian Wilton (Headteacher) & Debs Campbell (Attendance Lead)***

***Date: May 2022***

***Review date: May 2023***