



The
Rise
Partnership
Trust

Love • Learn • Laugh

RPT Pupil Attendance Policy

October 2023

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With Reference to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' – September 2023

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1. Introduction:

At RPT schools we aim for learning environments which enable and encourage all members of the community to love, learn and laugh together. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and therefore parents/ carers should ensure that their child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important that parents/ carers make sure their child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

2. Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents/ carers and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: - Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of RPT schools, promoting welfare and life opportunities is paramount.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

3. Promoting Regular Attendance:

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

Parents have legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends the school every day and on time, unless prevented from doing so by illness or other exceptional circumstances.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/ carers details on attendance via letters home.
- Report to parents/carers on how your child is performing in school
- Reward good or improving attendance.

4. The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

5. The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Human Rights Act 1998

Article 2 – Right to Education.

"No person shall be denied a right to an education."

6. Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like 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 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 too late to get a mark
- Term time leave which has not been agreed.

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 your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

The school is required to follow Education Regulations 2006 and Amendment Regulations 2013 in regards to school attendance register.

7. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and RPT need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support.

Children missing Education (CME)

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. School responsibilities are to enter pupils on admission registers on the first day that pupils should attend school, monitor attendance closely through the daily register referring poor attendance where necessary to the local authority and making reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of pupils who do not attend school. School must arrange fulltime education for any excluded pupils from the sixth day of a fixed period exclusion.

8. Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send in a copy of any documentation you receive from a GP or doctor (this can include showing us the prescription or labelled medicine your child receives).

If your child is absent without authorisation we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. If we cannot contact you we will try other contacts on our system to verify that everything is ok and ensure that we are following our statutory safeguarding duties as outlined in

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023 and Working Together to Safeguard Children).

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with a Designated Safeguarding Lead, if absences are unauthorised;
- If unauthorised absence continues, invite you to a pre-referral meeting with the Brent Council's Education Welfare Officer.
- Refer the matter to Brent Council's Education Welfare officer if attendance is below 85% and the majority of absence is unauthorised. Unauthorised absence needs to be 10% or above for casework procedures to lead to a possible penalty notice or prosecution.
- The Education Welfare Service may take no action, issue a written warning, issue a penalty notice or move into prosecution proceedings.

9. Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. In order to fulfil our safeguarding statutory duty we ask parents for 3 contact numbers in case of emergency. If a child is not at school and we have not been notified of the reason and cannot contact a parent/ carer we will telephone emergency contacts to ensure that everyone is safe. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year and this information is verified during an Annual Reviews.

10. RPT Attendance monitoring:

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 Brent Council's Education Welfare Service. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Education Welfare Officer can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available on Brent Council's website on www.brent.gov.uk

11. Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your 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, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **9am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.10am** and your 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 Regulations, if your 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 they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice or prosecution if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher or Deputy Head to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

12. Term Time Leave:

Taking your child out of school during term time will affect your child's learning and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. The Head Teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and all decisions are at the discretion of the Head Teacher. In making a decision we will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking term time leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and we may refer you to Brent Council's Education Welfare Service. You may receive a Formal Warning, Education Penalty Notice or be prosecuted in court.

13. School targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Our school attendance target is 94% and we will keep you updated about progress towards this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

14. Those people responsible for attendance matters in RPT schools:

The Avenue School –Rachel Rai (Head Teacher) / Esen Fikret (Deputy Head)

Manor School – Magdalena Gruszczynska-Lis (DSL) / Angela Boast (Deputy Head)

15. Summary:

RPT schools have a legal duty to publish absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as this is the best way to ensure that a high level of attendance is achieved and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

16. Date of Policy

September 2023

