

**Red Oaks Primary School**  
**Attendance Policy**  
Review Date September 2019  
Next Review Date due September 2020

### **Introduction**

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored regularly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience.

We encourage children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

The Governors and Head Teacher, in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

### **Parental Responsibility**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk. The school share the attendance percentage with parents on reports and more frequently where there are concerns. **It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that your child is safe.**

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.30am and 8.40am, when the doors are open and children go to class. Doors will close at 8.40am and the register will be taken. All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office where they are registered and their meal requirements noted.

### **Illness and Medical Appointments**

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- c) If your child is absent due to vomiting, they should not return to school for **the next 48 hours** after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.
- d) For more than three days of absence the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- e) Medical certificates are required for absence greater than five days.

## The Role of the School Staff

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. Pupil attendance is monitored regularly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

### Attendance Officers:

Attendance Administration: Mrs J Ponting, Mrs M Tyler

It is the responsibility of the school attendance team to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence and a reason obtained
- Where it is not possible to make contact, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is recorded as unauthorised
- The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register
- Ask parents to provide a letter or email for absence more than 3 days and a medical note for more than 5 days. These should be kept on the child's file

### Action for Low Attendance

96%+	Excellent - Well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
94-95%	Irregular - Strive to build on this. Work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to 96%+
90-93%	Poor - Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School may contact parent directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance and/or send a letter to highlight the need to improve attendance.
Below 90%	Unacceptable - Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement may be called. If improvement is not achieved a referral is made to the Education Welfare Officer [EWO] Penalty Notice considered where absence is not authorised.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.
- b) Prior to the engagement of the EWO, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

### **Children Missing Education**

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Head Teacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to Education Welfare. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

### **Lateness**

The class register is taken at 8.40am and at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as absent before registration has closed (Code 'L'). The register will close at 9am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U').

Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at open evenings and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

### **Definitions**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

#### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

#### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head Teacher.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Holidays or other reasons not agreed.

### **Authorising Absence**

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school. The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that **will not be authorised**:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Parental illness [alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school - emergencies excepted]
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday/family celebrations
- Shopping trip
- Absence during SATs for any other reason than illness
- Family work commitments

\* There are no concessions for Armed Forces (unless R&R from Afghanistan or Iraq etc.) or servicing Police Officers unless notified by the Home office i.e. Olympics when all Police Leave of Absence was cancelled. The Head Teacher will ask for evidence.

### **Local Authority Action**

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance school must consider the following:

#### *Education Welfare Officer Actions*

This may include:

- Home visits
- Multi agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social
- Services and Family Group Conference Service
- Fast Track to Prosecution

## **Leave of Absence/Holiday Absence**

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. Schools have the discretion, in exceptional circumstances to authorise leave absence.

## **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Holiday Absence**

*There have been some changes to the issue of penalty notices for unauthorised absence in term time.*

- The school may refer to the Local Authority if a child is persistently late - more than 10 occasions in a term. This will be marked as 'U' in the register.
- Parents who take children out of school repeatedly, either within the same academic year or from year to year, must be referred to the Local Authority who may send a penalty notice or take the decision to prosecute through the Magistrates Courts. A letter will be sent to parents if it is deemed necessary to warn them of this possibility.
- Any monies claimed by the Local Authority through penalty notices does not come back to the school.
- The Attendance Service issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child)
- This charge is £60 for each child per parent/carer rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If this charge is not paid, this can lead to prosecution.

There is no right of appeal to parents when contesting the Head Teacher's decision. If parents are aggrieved by the decision they should seek legal advice.

Governors or the courts cannot over-ride the Head Teacher's discretion to decline. Therefore, they should seek legal advice and proceed to judicial review.

Parents do have the right to complain but the Head Teacher's decision cannot be overruled by the Governors/SLT/Courts.

If a parent provides further information after notification of the Head Teacher's decision to decline the request, the decision does not have to be changed.

## **Rewards for Positive Attendance**

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

### Individual children

Certificates are awarded at the end of each year for 100% attendance. This is celebrated in the final whole school assembly.

### Individual incentives.

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance. Individual sticker rewards are sometimes employed as an additional incentive where appropriate; these are designed according to the child's particular needs.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed according to the schedule for policy review.



Holidays in term time cannot be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absence will be recorded on the child's report and families can be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). In some cases where holiday has been unauthorised parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice by the EWO; this is £60 from each parent/carer for each individual child, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days.

Please explain the reason for absence requests below, schools can only authorise absence for if there are special reasons. Holiday prices and the fact that parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school are not special reasons.

**Please note that holidays during SATs Week will not be authorised under any circumstances.**

- If agreement for leave is given, 'H' will be shown on the student's record and this will count as authorised absence.
- If a parent/carer takes their child out of school without permission being granted, this will count as an 'unauthorised absence' and will show a 'G' on the student's attendance record.
- We understand that some parents have no choice about when to take holidays. However, the law requires attendance at school and many parents are not aware it is not a parental right to take children out of school during term time.
- Every school day counts and any absence from school will result in lost learning and a risk of underachievement.
- There are 13 weeks of the year during which the school is closed.
- A leave of absence form must be completed if you would like to take your child out of school during term time.
- For parents serving in the armed forces, proof of leave will be required.
- Please be aware that if you have already received a penalty notice, further unauthorised absence may lead to prosecution.

To read the full Attendance Policy, please see [www.redoaks.org/parents/policies/AttendanceReport](http://www.redoaks.org/parents/policies/AttendanceReport)

-----  
Please complete the information below (use a separate form if you have more than one child in school):

I have read and understood the above information and have read the Attendance Policy [ ]

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Requested absence dates (inclusive): From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for absence in term: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this the first absence request in: a) Current Academic Year [ ] b) Last 12 month period [ ]

Do you have siblings at another school? [ ] If so, which school \_\_\_\_\_

Number of school days child will be absent from school: \_\_\_\_\_ days

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Carer) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(To be completed by the Head Teacher)**

Child's attendance rate to end of last week \_\_\_\_\_ % Nos of days absence for holidays this year \_\_\_\_\_

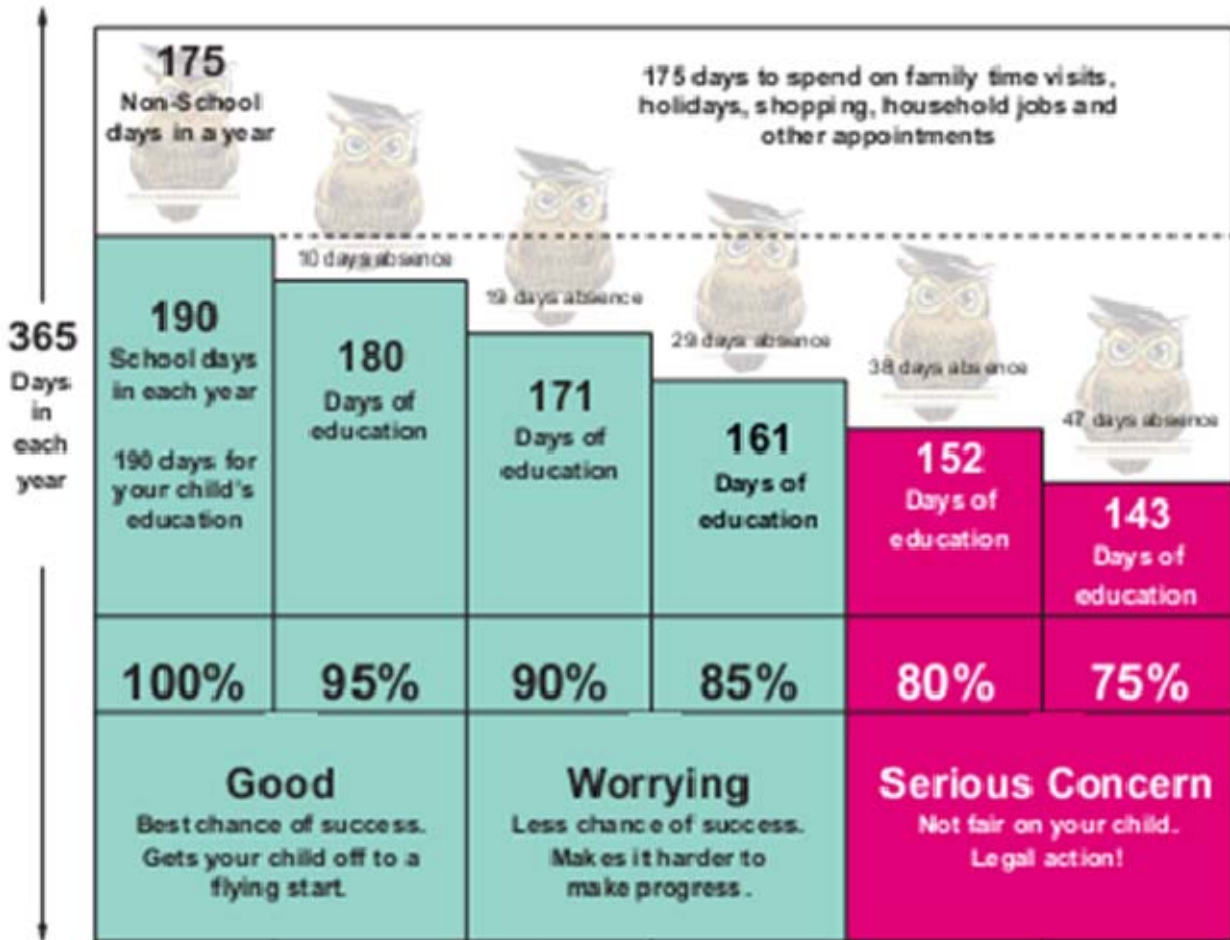
Request: Authorised \_\_\_\_\_ Unauthorised \_\_\_\_\_ (See Paragraph 1 above)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Head Teacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Every school day counts!



- Days off school add up to lost learning.
- Please don't let your children miss out on the education they deserve.
- Every school day counts.



If you are worried about your child's attendance please talk to your school or contact CAF/TAC Admin on 01793 466408