



Attendance and children missing education policy

Parents, schools and the LEA share responsibilities with regards to school attendance and the recording of information. The school follows the Department for Education (DfE) regulations and guidance. Regular school attendance is a legal responsibility on parents. The School is required by law to record absences and late arrivals on a pupil's annual report.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Ensure that all children attending Rawdhatul Uloom Primary School receive their entitlement to education
- Ensure that action is taken to support children who are on a school roll but have been out of education for three weeks or more
- Ensure rigorous systems are in place and embedded in working practice to locate, assess, register, monitor and track children who may be missing from education

The Department for Education (DfE) states that **schools must open for 190 pupil days per year, plus five INSET (teacher training) days**. Schools can also have up to three occasional days per year (where the school is closed to pupils for reasons other than staff training, such as for religious festivals) as long as they don't eat into the 190 statutory pupil days.

We expect our pupils to have an attendance percentage record of over 95%. The School will notify the appropriate local authority if a pupil has a low attendance of 85% or below, or if they is absent continuously without the school's authorisation for ten or more school days. An admission form must be completed for all pupils and pupil details recorded in the school admission register. Pupil's details are held on the office data base. An index system will be available in the office.

Registration

- Registers will be taken before morning and afternoon sessions.

Morning	–	9:00am
Afternoon	–	1.00am
- Registers will be marked in red for present and in blue for absent. Pencils must not be used and gaps must not be left.
- Registers must be kept in a secure place. Registers will stay in each class till the end of the school day. This will allow the class teachers to take the registers out with them immediately in the event of an emergency.
- Any child arriving between 9:00am and 9:20am will be marked "L" in the register. Any child arriving after 9.20am will be classed as a late 'unauthorised absence' and the relevant marking (U) used.

- The absence of pupils should be recorded with the correct symbols as shown at the back of all registers. If in doubt, **please ask**.
- The admin is responsible for keeping a record of weekly and termly totals.
- Registers must **not** be taken off the premises.
- Registers must be kept in school for a period of 3 years. *Please remember, attendance registers are legal documents. They are the subject of regular screening by OfSTED. Please ensure you complete them in a manner which reflects their importance.*

The first registration takes place at 09.00am. If a pupil arrives after the register has been taken, they will be marked 'late' in the register. A pupil is classed as late when they arrive between 09.00 am and 09.20 am. After this time if pupils arrive, it is classed as an absence. Parents of pupils who are persistently late will be invited in to discuss the reasons for their child's punctuality.

The second registration will take place at 1.00pm after lunch. Registers are then to be returned to the office. Any pupil not present that was present in the morning will be looked into if no reason or information has been given by parents.

Authorised absence procedures

Authorised absences are those where the school gives permission for a child to be away in advance, or accepts the explanation offered afterwards. These include being absent due to illness, a funeral, a medical appointment or a religious observance.

Non-emergency medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours. Appointment letters for specialist or hospital treatment should be shown to the teacher in advance of the appointment.

Authorised absence is where the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards by parents as satisfactory justification. All other absences will be classified as unauthorised.

Acceptable reasons for absence would normally be only illness and bereavement.

Parents are asked **to telephone the School Office on every morning of absence before 10 am.** A member of the Administrative Staff will try to contact you if we have not received a reason for the absence from you. If the Administrative Staff are unable to contact you by telephone, a text message will be sent. Absence will remain unauthorised until contact has been made.

The school should be informed by a parent/guardian about the reason for the absence on the day that the pupil returns to school. This must be signed by a parent and dated. Letters, telephone calls, texts and verbal messages are all acceptable. The office is responsible for pursuing unauthorised absences and must inform the headteacher of any concerns. Unauthorised absences are recorded on the pupil's annual school report.

If a pupil is absent for ten days or more, the parent must provide the school with a medical certificate from the GP, or from the practitioner who is providing medical treatment.

If a pupil has been absent with an infectious illness that has to be notified to public health authorities, a parent should send in a medical certificate on her return. This should state the nature of the illness and certify freedom from infection. All cases of infectious illness in the home should be reported to the School immediately by telephone to allow school to make a decision on whether to inform other parents of the risk, should there be more than three cases in school.

Leave of absence for holidays

The School does not normally authorise absence for holidays in term-time and strongly discourages parents from making such requests. Leave of absence will not be authorized if the pupil's attendance is low. Requests for leave of absence will only be considered on receipt of a completed holiday request form, which can be obtained from the school office. Each request will be considered individually. Requests must be received by the Head Teacher before bookings are made, and at least two weeks (during term time) before the absence. Absence will always be classified as unauthorised if the holiday has not been agreed in advance or if less than two weeks' notice is given. If a pupil fails to return to school on the agreed date following leave of absence, the school will give the parents a penalty notice. All absence over the number of days requested will be classed as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absences are not approved by the school, and typically include holidays and outings, or absences with no explanation. A school with lots of unauthorised absence is likely to come under scrutiny from both Ofsted and the local authority. Parents also have a legal responsibility concerning their children's attendance, and local authorities can bring legal action against families where attendance levels cause concern.

The School is bound by DfE regulations. The DfE regards all absence which has not been authorised by the school as truancy. Absence is classified as unauthorised in the following cases:-

- If the reason for absence is unacceptable to the School
- If the pupil does not bring a written explanation of absence from a parent
- If the pupil leaves the school site without the advance written permission of a parent, authorised by the teacher or head teacher
- If a pupil takes leave of absence without obtaining prior written permission
- If a pupil fails to return to school on the agreed date following an authorised leave of absence. – This includes unauthorised extension of authorised holidays.

Punctuality

Pupils must make every effort to avoid lateness. Punctuality is regarded by the school as an important indicator of pupil self-discipline and good time management.

Penalty Notices So can we take a term-time holiday?

Since September 2013, legislation concerning term-time holidays has changed. Previously, schools were allowed to grant leave for family holidays of up to 10 days per year, and of over 10 days in 'exceptional circumstances,' at the head teacher's discretion. Now, however, head teachers can't grant any authorised absence during term-time, unless in exceptional circumstances. At Rawdha those circumstances are up to the head, but essentially, term-time holidays will no longer be authorised.

Penalty Notices are fines given to parents of school age children who are out of school without permission from the Headteacher. Penalty Notices can be issued to both parents of a child. Penalty Notices can also be issued to each child in the family. Penalty Notices can be used by the school in any the follows instances:

- Unauthorised (not agreed) Holidays in Term Time- A fine can be issued to parents taking their child out of school for a family holiday of 10 days or more where the school have not agreed to the holiday.
- Condoned (allowed by the parent) absence- A fine can be issued to parents of pupils who have 20 half days absence not agreed by school recorded on the school register within ten school weeks. The school must allow 15 days for the attendance to improve before a fine will be issued.
- Being late for school- A fine can be issued to parents of pupils who arrive very late (after school have closed the register) ten or more times within ten school weeks.

How much is a Penalty Notice fine?

The fine is £60 if you pay within 21 days of the day the fine was issued. The penalty fine is per parent per child, so a family with two parents will pay two fines if one of their children fails to go to school. If the fine is not paid in 21 days it will go up to £120, you are then allowed 7 more days to pay the £120.

Procedures for monitoring attendance

Children and young people may miss education for many reasons, some of which can be identified and procedures put in place to resolve. Whilst others maybe more complex and can not be predicted, informing the LA promptly ensures pupils do not become “lost”. For example:

- Families moving into or out of an authority and not securing a new school place
- Pupils failing to return after a family holiday
- Changes in family circumstances
- Families fleeing domestic violence
- Families from abroad who are unsure of the education system
- Pupils who are not enrolled at school age 5 or fail to transfer successfully to secondary school

The DfE have identified that some children living in certain circumstances are at greater risk of becoming missing from education - CME. Amongst these are:

- Young offenders
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
- Children living in women’s refuges
- Runaways
- Children of homeless families living in temporary accommodation
- Children of refugees and asylum seeking families
- Looked after children
- Children of new immigrant families
- Children who are on the child protection register
- Children who are permanently excluded from school
- Children of parents with mental health problems
- Children with long term medical or emotional problems

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places the following obligation on parents:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) To his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) To any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”

Children can go missing either when they fail to register with a school, or when they fall out of the education system and there is no systematic process in place to identify them and ensure they re-engage with appropriate provision.

Actions to be taken for pupils whom attendance is a cause for concern

The following are examples of when action needs to be taken when attendance is a cause for concern:

- Pupils who are absent on a certain day on a regular basis, will have a letter sent to parents to discuss their concern.
- Too many absences on a certain day due to medical appointments
- Pupils who fail to return to school at the end of an authorised leave of absence
- Pupils who go on holiday without gaining school permission:
 - recorded as 'N' in registers
 - Parents are contacted by the head teacher
- Pupils regularly attend school after registration is closed: pupils/parents should be reminded that punctuality is important and that attending once registration has been completed is marked as an unauthorised absence 'U'
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% the parents are called in for a meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss the matter.
- If a pupil's attendance does not improve once the parents have been brought in, the parents may be asked to withdraw their child from the school. This is at the Head Teachers discretion.

At Rawdha the following procedures are used to monitor attendance and pupils becoming missing from education:

a) First day contact

The purpose of first-contact is to:

- Provide a way in which parents can let the school know that a pupil is unable to come to school, the reasons for this and the expected date of return
- Enable the school to contact parents/carer to notify them their child has not arrived in school. Either the headteacher or the office staff will be responsible for contacting parents on the first day of absence.
- Registers will be checked at 9.30am and pupils who are first day absent will be identified
- The office member will contact parents by phone to query the absence (ensure correct phone/ mobile number is used) If contact is not possible then a text message will be sent
- Records of all absence contacts made to parents must be kept
- A note will be made for reason of absence (denoted by a little red triangle next to the register mark for that day)
- A pupil will have their absence authorised once contact has been made with parent and suitable reason for absence has been given

b) Following up absences

- Parents must send a written note to explain their child's absences on the first day they return back to school unless they have rang or let the school know in any other way.

- If the pupil is absent for **two consecutive days** and the office failed to contact parents, then on the third day of absence school will send a letter to parents urging them to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence.
- Within three school days of the date of the letter, if the parents have still not contacted the school the head teacher will be informed and contact through all means is tried again.
- After three weeks maximum if a child is still absent with no reason why from parents then the Headteacher must contact the CME (Child Missing Education 01454 863380) or First Point (01454 860000 or email FirstPoint@southglos.gov) and let the Local Authority know.