



Attendance Policy

Approved by the Governors of Rose Wood Academy

Date	Amendment
Sept 2017	Changes have been made to reflect latest guidance on attendance.
Feb 2018	P1: Changes to the trigger percentage from 85% to 90%
Sept 2018	Changes to attendance procedures

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

All pupils of statutory school age who are registered at a school must attend regularly, in line with the relevant legislation (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013).

Any absence from school can have a detrimental effect on a child's future progress and continuity of learning. Regular absence for such reasons as holidays taken in term time can have a significant impact on achievement.

AUTHORISING LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers may determine the number of days a child can be away from school if leave is granted for exceptional circumstances.

At Rose Wood Academy, exceptional circumstances and length of absence have been determined as:

- In the case of the terminal illness of a close member of the family (no set time)
- Death of a close family member (up to 5 days)
- Pupils with parents in the forces (10 days)
- Marriage of parent (5 days)
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events
- Any other exceptional circumstance arising, at the Head Teacher's discretion (number of day's absence at the Head Teacher's discretion)

Leave of absence during term time is at the Head Teacher's discretion and should not be considered a parental right.

Shift patterns or holiday allocations from work are not classed as exceptional circumstances.

Decisions made in relation to leave of absence, whether granted or not, will be applied equitably and consistently.

PUNCTUALITY

Pupils who arrive more than 15 minutes after registration will be classed as absent for that session.

SICKNESS/AUTHORISED ABSENCE

If attendance falls below 95%, a letter from school is sent home by school attendance officer. Support is offered through PSA and other staff in school. At 90% attendance a letter is sent out by EWO although the school may seek EWO involvement before this point. Where absence persists, the EWO will be directly involved and may organise a meeting or request a doctor's note for subsequent absences.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

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Day 1	If school have not received a phone call by 9.15am, the office rings to ascertain reason for absence. PSA informed if child absent is a concern and home visit discussed.
Day 2	If child is absent again and school have still not been informed PSA would persist with phone calls and home visit.
Day 3	As above, plus next steps discussed with school attendance officer (LS). EWO may become involved at this stage.
Day 4	If contact has been made and child is absent for medical reasons, updates may be sought by school. Depending on attendance, medical evidence of illness may be asked for eg copy of prescription. If there has still been no contact made EWO informed to decide on next steps.
	LS monitors attendance daily
	If attendance falls below 95%, an attendance letter is sent out by school. Support is offered through PSA and other staff in school
	If attendance falls below 90%, the EWO is informed and an official attendance letter is posted and support offered again to family to help improve attendance. Meetings may also be arranged to discuss child's attendance.
	Holidays which exceed 10 half days will result in fines.
	Punctuality – 10 lates result in EWO involvement. School PSA would intervene before this.

Any parent wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time should seek permission in writing from the Head Teacher, on the appropriate application form, stating reasons for each request. The application should be made at least two weeks in advance.

Applications will then be considered on an individual basis, by the Head Teacher, who will apply the policy fairly and consistently. The Head Teacher may ask for parents to make an appointment to discuss the request.

Parents will receive a written reply to all requests, which states whether or not the application has been successful.

If the application is not granted, the reasons for this will be stated in the letter. The reply will also remind parents of the consequences of disregarding the refusal.

If the application is successful, the length of authorised absence will be stated, along with the date that the child will be expected back in school. The consequences if the child is not back in school by the expected date will be made clear to parents.

PENALTY NOTICES

If parents have received a refusal from the Head Teacher following a request for leave in term time, and they wilfully remove a child from school for 10 or more sessions (5 days), the Head Teacher can request the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice.

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Failure to pay a penalty notice could result in a prosecution in Magistrates Court.

Head Teachers must have a justifiable reason for refusing the request, based on the school's policy. The refusal should be given in writing and must explain why the application does not meet the "exceptional circumstances" criteria as laid down in the policy.

Referrals for a penalty notice can be made when the following conditions have been met:

- Where leave of absence has been taken without the permission of the Head Teacher;
- Where leave of absence has been agreed but the pupil returns to school after the agreed date without a reasonable explanation;
- Where the school is satisfied that the parent had full knowledge of the consequences of failure to adhere to the school's policy

The school has a duty to provide the following evidence when requesting a penalty notice:

- An attendance certificate for the current academic year which includes the period of unauthorised leave of absence;
- A copy of the request for leave of absence;
- A copy of the school's written response, which outlines the reasons why the request was refused and informing the parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice if the family take unauthorised leave of absence during term time;
- Copies of any meetings the school has had with the parent regarding the application;
- Evidence that the school has published their attendance policy and the consequences of failing to adhere to the policy;
- Copies of any supplementary evidence provided by parents eg medical certificates);
- A copy of the letter to parents from the school informing them that they are referring the matter to the Local Authority.

Penalty notice requests will be submitted as soon as possible. The referral will then be dealt with by the Senior Education Welfare Officer. If a fine remains unpaid, the matter will be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Provided that the conditions (as described in Middlesbrough's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct) are met, the Penalty Notice will be issued by the Education Welfare Service. The conditions are:

- That the absences (10 or more in the current term) are registered as unauthorised on the child's register;
- That the Local Authority is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to show that an offence under Section 444 has been committed;
- That the parent has not been issued with a fixed Penalty Notice in the previous 12 months.

For a first offence, a Penalty Notice Warning may be issued, rather than a Penalty Notice. However, a Penalty Notice may be issued for more serious cases, for example, where a family have regularly taken holidays during term time.

PROSECUTION

If a parent fails to pay the Penalty Notice, the notice is withdrawn and the case will proceed to the Magistrate's Court for the original offence of failure to ensure the child's regular attendance at school.

Schools will need to provide the following documentation for court, with the guidance of the SEWO, who will submit forms to the Education Welfare Service:

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- Witness statement: this statement, completed by the Head Teacher, confirms that the leave of absence was not authorised, or that the child did not return by the due date, and that parents were aware of the consequences of taking unauthorised leave of absence;
- School Attendance Certificate: this is an extract from the school register, and gives details of the unauthorised leave of absence.

EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER

The school has its own Education Welfare Officer. The role of the Officer is:

- To liaise with the school regarding issues around poor attendance, offering advice and support where necessary;
- To arrange informal meetings with parents and offer support where there has been a persistent or repeated attendance trigger (ie below 90%, including sickness absence/authorised absence); this may include a request for a doctor's note for subsequent absences;
- To arrange formal meetings with parents where there is a concern about unauthorised absence (ie over 10 unauthorised sessions);
- To issue Penalty Warnings and Penalty Notices where necessary, making home visits where necessary;
- To liaise with the Local Authority where parents are being referred to the Magistrate's Court

For further information, refer to the Middlesbrough Education Welfare Service guidance on the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, to which Rose Wood Academy adheres.