

RUSHEY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

Reviewed by: Resources Committee

Date: January 2022

Signed:

Last reviewed on: September 2020

**Next review due
by:** January 2023

Overview

We believe that every child can only reach their full potential by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. Rushey Green expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents. Pupils, parents, governors and the Local Authority should work in partnership to address the many and varied issues relating to poor attendance. All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. However, children should not attend school if they are unwell.

Aims

- To foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents and pupils, values regular attendance and punctuality.
- To provide a framework with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- To provide support and guidance for parents and pupils.
- To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information.
- To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence.
- To promote effective partnership with the Attendance Welfare Officer and other agencies.
- To use learning mentors to facilitate the improvement of attendance and punctuality.

Communication

The importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained at the Pre-school Induction Meetings held each year for children about to enter Reception Class. This reiterates that parents and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children particularly should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own. Parents are asked to share any worries that their child might have in school. Parents need to be aware that even little things can upset children, which means that they might become unhappy and might not want to come to school.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various Year Groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Head Teacher. At this meeting, the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted, together with other school routines.

Holidays

At this Induction Meeting, parents are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time. At Rushey Green, we prefer that family holidays should be taken during school holidays, so that a child's education is not disrupted.

Parents are reminded in the Newsletter that they should not take their children out of school unnecessarily for holidays or visits. A copy of this policy can be found on the Schools Website. The

Head Teacher contacts those parents who frequently take the family holiday in term time and reminds them of the disruption to their child's education.

At Rushey Green Primary School, parents are asked to complete a request form for leave of absence. If this is not completed before an extended absence, parents will be asked to fill one out on return.

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

The school will send warning letters to parents who take their children out of school for unauthorised holidays. Penalty notices (fines) will be issued by the Local Authority to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. (£60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.)

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents should contact Rushey Green by telephone before 9.00am if their child will be absent or late, noting the reason for the absence. All information is used for Class Registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence, the Admin Assistant will contact the parent/guardian by telephone. It is important that the school has up to date numbers for parents and at least one other person so that the school can easily make contact.

Registration

Rushey Green uses a computerised registration system and the Register is completed in the morning and afternoon. A pupil will receive a late mark after 8:55am. All pupils who are late must report to the office.

Any child who arrives after 9:30am will be marked down as a 'U' code which will be classed as an unauthorised absence. U codes will impact on attendance figures.

The Pastoral Manager is responsible for collating Attendance Records in school and notifies the Local Authority Attendance officer if there is any reason for concern. At the end of the year, each child's attendance is analysed and a copy is given to parents with their child's School Report.

Promoting Good attendance and Punctuality

The School day begins at 9:00am. Children should arrive by 8.50am to prepare for a prompt start. KS1 and KS2 school day ends at 3.15pm.

Parents are reminded that children need to be collected on time.

Concerns

The Attendance records are regularly examined. If there is a frequent pattern of absence, a member of staff will telephone the parents to ascertain the reason for persistent absence. If there are concerns about a child's non-attendance or lateness a letter is sent home to parents detailing the attendance issue. After a letter has been sent no absences will be authorised without medical evidence. If absences or lateness persist, the learning mentor contacts the Attendance and Welfare Officer. The Attendance and Welfare officer will arrange a meeting with the learning mentor and

parent at the school to discuss attendance issues, set targets and offer advice and support. There is then a two week monitoring period.

If attendance continues to fall then parents may receive a court warning or be invited to attend a final attendance panel at Lawrence House. At this meeting targets will be set that if not adhered to could lead to a prosecution.

If a child that is on the Child Protection Register, or is a Looked after Child or is a vulnerable child and they do not attend school, the Admin Assistant will ring the child's home in the first instance and then inform the Head Teacher of non-attendance. The LA also contacts the school on a daily basis to check attendance of Looked after Children. The Education and Welfare Service are notified if there is an issue with non-attendance. Non-attendance linked to safeguarding issues is reported to the Headteacher immediately.

Children that attend an alternative provision will be regularly monitored for attendance and attainment.

Our procedures for improving attendance may be used for any child falling below 90% attendance and who fails to improve. This will be monitored under the category of a persistent absentee. Penalty issues can be issued if there are no improvements and parents/guardians may be fined.

Absence through Illness

Rushey Green continues to provide as much education as the child's medical condition allows to keep up the momentum of their learning.

Rushey Green monitors attendance of those pupils who are absent from school because of short-term or chronic illness and close links are maintained with parents/guardians. If a child is ill for more than two consecutive days then parents are expected to provide medical evidence on the third day for the period of absence. This evidence does not have to be a sick note; it can just be a prescription or doctor's appointment card. The understanding is that if a child is a little unwell, 2 days should give them time to recover enough they are fit for school. If a child is unwell for longer than this it must be more serious and therefore must require medical intervention. If parents are unsure if their child is well enough to come to school (is no longer showing symptoms such as diarrhoea or sickness) it is advised the child is brought into school. If the child is not well enough they will be sent home and will be marked as ill.

Educational support, including the provision of work and materials are provided for those pupils with medical conditions who are absent from school for more than 3 days. The teaching staff liaises with parents so that, during prolonged absence, pupils receive suitable work for their age and ability group.

The reintegration of children into school after a long absence through ill health is considered a high priority. The school consults parents about general concerns, medical issues and the timing and pace of return. Staff, including the Class Teacher and Teaching Assistants, meet to discuss the return to school. Friends and other pupils are encouraged to help the child settle back in school. Extra support is provided (subject to available resources) after an analysis of the child's needs.

Authorised Absences

If a child has a genuine illness and there is risk of infection to others, parents/guardians should notify the school on day of absence between 8.00am and 9.00am.

Where a child will be absent for days of religious observance, notification is required in advance.

All other absences will be seen as unauthorised, unless they are authorised by the Headteacher at her discretion.

Truancy

All staff at Rushey Green believe in the importance of continuity in every child's learning. Staff are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although truancy is very rare at Rushey Green, if staff are suspicious that a child might be playing truant, action is taken immediately.

If truancy is suspected, the Head Teacher and the EWO is notified. Parents/Guardians are contacted either by telephone or a home visit. We encourage parents to bring their child to school, so that the reasons for truancy can be discussed and, we hope, resolved. If the Head Teacher is unable to talk to the parent/guardians, he or she talks to the child to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If problems are identified, these are discussed and resolved with the class teacher/member of staff/other pupils.

At Rushey Green, we endeavour to discover, through discussion with the individual pupils, classes and School Council Meetings, what the children like and dislike about school. The staff consider the children's opinions and, if possible, adjustments are made to teaching and learning procedures and the school environment.

Child Missing Education (CME)

A child will be considered missing in education if they have stopped attending school and their whereabouts are unknown.

This is not the same as non-attendance.

All procedures to be followed as per the policy with any absent children and if by the 10th day of absence there is still no further knowledge of the child's whereabouts, a CME form would need to be completed and emailed to: childrenmissingeducation@lewisham.gov.uk

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Assemblies

The Headteacher talks to the children in a school Assembly. Individual Assemblies on everyday matters relate to attendance, such as, time-keeping, excuses, illness, what Rushey Green can and cannot change.

Class Organisation/Lessons

☒ Lessons on telling the time.

☒ Positive support for those pupils who have been absent for a significant period – planned reintegration as necessary.

☒ Class / Children’s Council discussions on feelings, likes and dislikes about school.

☒ Pupil questionnaires

Rewards

- Certificates are presented to those children with full attendance during the term.
- At the end of every year all children with 100% attendance receive a certificate and voucher.

Additional Policy for Schools with High Levels of Absence

Pupils who have not arrived by 10am, and for whom no message of explanation has been received, are followed up immediately. The parents are telephoned at home/at work/on their mobile phone until someone responds. If no response is received then all other contacts on the child’s file should be called to attempt to find out the reason for absence.

High-level absence results in referral to Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and reviewed by an attendance panel.

Further Information

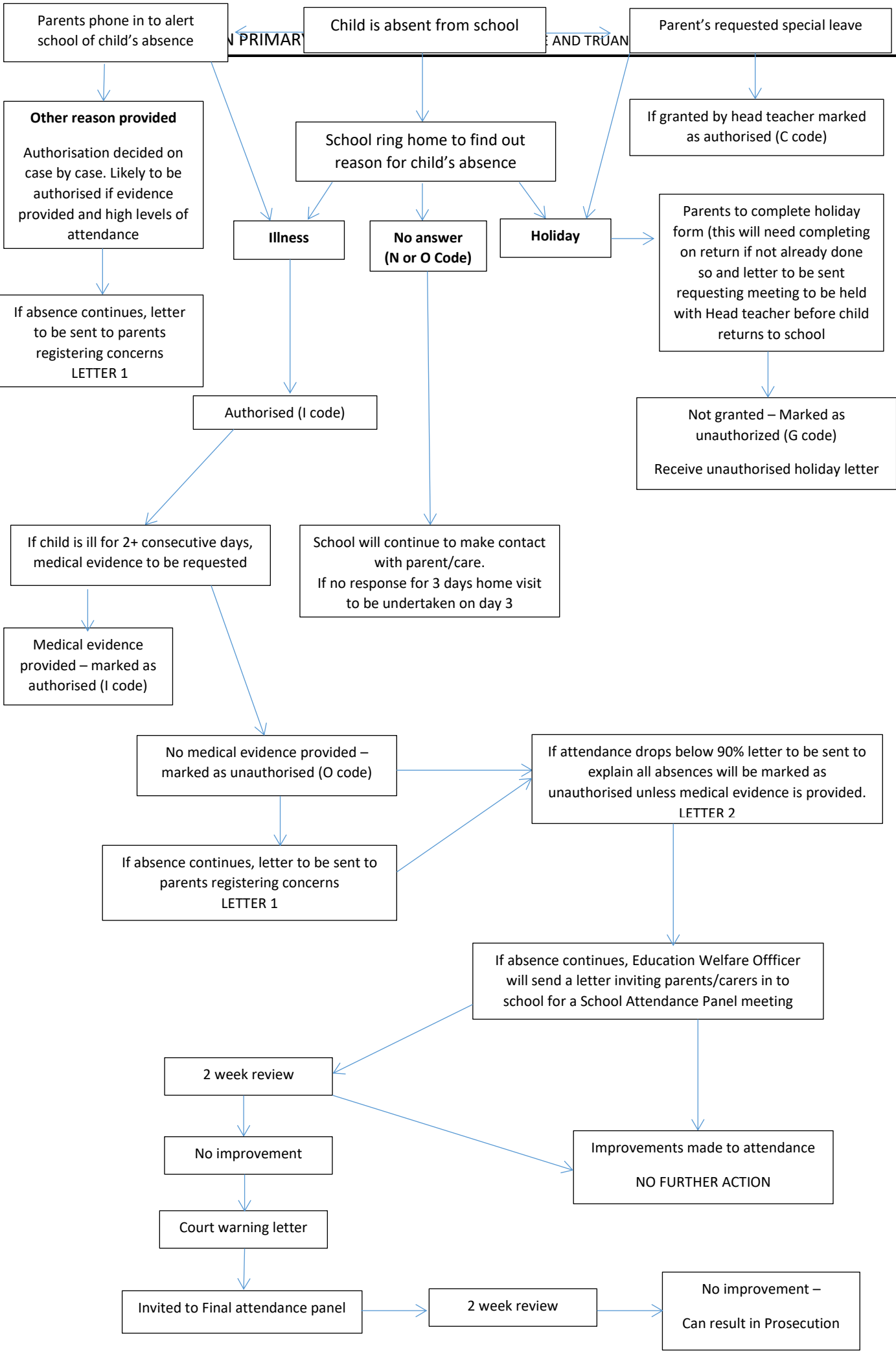
Useful Documents and Resources

DfES Consultation on the Education of Sick Children 2001

DfES LEA Behaviour Support Plans (Circular 1/98)

DfES/Home Office Social Inclusion: Pupil Support (Circular 10/99)

DfES Tackling Truancy Together



Parents phone in to alert school of child's absence

Child is absent from school

Parent's requested special leave

Other reason provided
 Authorisation decided on case by case. Likely to be authorised if evidence provided and high levels of attendance

School ring home to find out reason for child's absence

If granted by head teacher marked as authorised (C code)

Illness

No answer (N or O Code)

Holiday

Parents to complete holiday form (this will need completing on return if not already done so and letter to be sent requesting meeting to be held with Head teacher before child returns to school)

If absence continues, letter to be sent to parents registering concerns
LETTER 1

Authorised (I code)

Not granted – Marked as unauthorised (G code)
 Receive unauthorised holiday letter

If child is ill for 2+ consecutive days, medical evidence to be requested

School will continue to make contact with parent/care.
 If no response for 3 days home visit to be undertaken on day 3

Medical evidence provided – marked as authorised (I code)

No medical evidence provided – marked as unauthorised (O code)

If attendance drops below 90% letter to be sent to explain all absences will be marked as unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.
LETTER 2

If absence continues, letter to be sent to parents registering concerns
LETTER 1

If absence continues, Education Welfare Officer will send a letter inviting parents/carers in to school for a School Attendance Panel meeting

2 week review

No improvement

Improvements made to attendance
NO FURTHER ACTION

Court warning letter

Invited to Final attendance panel

2 week review

No improvement –
 Can result in Prosecution

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Early Help Service

Enforcement Model

School to send letters 1 and 2
 Failure to engage or parent fails to improve attendance. AO/Private EWO/Academy to compile papers.

- = On course for conviction
- = Alternative consequence
- = Closing Legal Action

Close AO Involvement
 After monitoring period, full attendance. Signpost to other agency

School based attendance panel meeting
 Less than 90% and/or failure to provide evidence or improve attendance

Close Enforcement Involvement
 Medical Evidence. Improved attendance

Court Warning letter sent
 AO/Private EWO/Academy to send CWL letter to include a 2 week monitoring period.

Court Panel Meeting

Before agreeing to proceed with a summons a court panel meeting will be held at Lawrence House with the SAO – Start S9

No

Evidence Test

Public Interest Test

No

Education Supervision Order
 Parent/Carer fully engaged with services. Agree a plan to take to Family Court for 12 month

Close Enforcement
 If attendance improves review after 2 week

Gather evidence

YES

Final attendance check 2 weeks after CPM

Section 9 finalised
 School/AO/ Private EWO to prepare and SAO to agree

Summons
 LA Prosecutor/ LA Solicitor to compile file for prosecution. Obtain a court date. Refer to LA solicitor for possible trial.

Prosecute
 LA Prosecutor presents in Magistrates Court. Consider Parenting Order

Outcome

