



# **Rawmarsh Sandhill Primary School**

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

Updated Autumn 2020 to cover Covid -19 procedures

## **Introduction**

This policy has been developed in conjunction with DfE and Local Authority Guidance and adopted by the Rawmarsh Sandhill Primary School.

Reference to Parent/Carer throughout this document also includes any person who has parental responsibility or who cares for children.

Rawmarsh Sandhill Primary School will work effectively to improve attendance working with various partners, parent/carers and pupils. Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the school and encouraging pupils to achieve good attendance levels.

School understands that non-school attendance is a safeguarding issue. Only when a pupil is in school can a true responsibility be taken for safeguarding all the interests of the pupil.

There is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement. Rawmarsh Sandhill Primary School is committed to maximising the achievement of all pupils. This policy intends to boost attainment and achievement levels by increasing and maintaining high levels of attendance.

Regular and punctual attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit full from academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the school. A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at school.

The school will take appropriate action to promote good attendance.

## **Aims and Principles of Good Attendance**

- ❖ Rawmarsh Sandhill Primary School is committed to maximising the achievement and attainment of all pupils.
- ❖ There is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement.
- ❖ Regular and punctual attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the school.
- ❖ Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the school and encouraging pupils to reach good attendance levels.
- ❖ A broad and balanced education is dependant on regular attendance at the school.
- ❖ Rawmarsh Sandhill Primary School will take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance.
- ❖ National target for attendance is 96%. The target set for Sandhill Primary School is 96.5%.

## **Statement of Expectations**

### **What the school expects of the pupils:**

- ❖ To attend regularly.
- ❖ To arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- ❖ To report to reception/attendance office when late.

### **What the school expects of the parents/carers:**

- ❖ To fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time.
- ❖ To ensure that they contact school on the first day their child is unable to attend giving a valid reason for absence and also each day the child is absent from school.
- ❖ To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day.
- ❖ To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- ❖ To contact school on each day of absence due to illness to update school on the current situation
- ❖ Work in partnership with school and other agencies as and when appropriate to resolve issues relating to non attendance/punctuality.
- ❖ To inform school of any forthcoming appointments, giving copies of letters and appointment cards to school and where possible, arrange appointments outside of the school day.
  - Where appointments are booked for after registration time pupils must attend school first.
  - The pupil needs to return to school as soon as possible after the appointment, where this is possible

*If a pupil leaves the school premises for any reason during the school day, staff will ensure that this is recorded, to comply with Health & Safety Regulations.*

### **What Parents and pupils can expect of the school:**

- ❖ A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- ❖ The encouragement and promotion of good attendance with a rewards system in place.
- ❖ Efficient and accurate recordings of attendances and punctuality with strategies to improve.
- ❖ First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school and also subsequent days.
- ❖ Any barriers to attendance, dealt with efficiently.

- ❖ To respond promptly to any issue that may lead to none or irregular attendance with support from the learning mentor.
- ❖ Be sensitive to the needs of the individual parent/carer. This will be reflected in the ways in which attendance issues are addressed. For example, school should recognise that some parent/carers have difficulty understanding written communications, (school will also recognise the reluctance of some parent/carers to come into the school).
- ❖ Be alert to critical times for example, return to school after a period of long term sickness or traumatic event.
- ❖ An attendance policy which is consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parent/carers.
- ❖ The encouragement and promotion of good attendance. Information is on display in school
- ❖ Notification to parents/carers of attendance through letters home and meetings in school.
- ❖ When a pupil's attendance falls below 96% in a half term, parents will be sent a letter advising that their child's attendance is of concern and support will be offered to improve attendance.

It will also state that failure to attend school regularly and on time could result in prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act. If there is no improvement parents/carers will be required to meet with the school's Attendance Panel.

#### **What the school can expect of the Education Welfare Service:**

- ❖ The Education Welfare service has a key function in working closely with school and families in order to promote excellent levels attendance and punctuality at school, there by contributing to raising pupil attainment.
- ❖ To support school to fulfil legal responsibilities with regard to pupil attendance.

#### **Leave of Absence Requests**

Section 7 of the Education Act states that:

*“Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential in order for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Rotherham Education Welfare Service will continue to investigate cases of regular absence from school and, following appropriate casework intervention, will instigate legal action if applicable”.*

In line with amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 with effect from 01 September 2013, the following will now apply:

- **No requests for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time can be authorised, except in exceptional circumstances.**

The definition of exceptional circumstances is:

- Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specific time in the year. **This must be evidenced with written proof from the employer at the time of application.** The child's current attendance will be taken into account prior to authorisation and must be above 96% for it to be considered.
- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a child or parent's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. **Evidence must be produced from a doctor or professional body.**

If a parent/carer takes their child out of school during term time without authorisation, the Head Teacher will have to make a request to the Local Authority to issue a **Fixed Penalty Notice**.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, the penalty is £60 per child per parent/carer when the payment is made within 21 days. After that time it will increase to £120. Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that the parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Please note that a separate Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each child and all monies are payable to the Local Authority.

Should a request for Leave of Absence need to be made, a Leave of Absence form must be completed and brought in for the Head Teacher's attention, including any evidence as stated above.

### **Understanding Different Types of Absence**

Only the school can authorise absence, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required to ensure a pupil's attendance is correctly categorised.

**Authorised Absences** = Mornings or afternoons away from school for an acceptable reason, for example, illness and/or medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in the school day, emergencies or other unavoidable reasons and compassionate leave at the Head Teacher's discretion.

**Unauthorised Absences** = Absences which school does not consider to be reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. These include:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absence that has never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive in school too late to receive their mark
- Shopping, looking after other children (including siblings who are ill) or birthdays
- Leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday in term time that have not been agreed with the Head Teacher.

Whilst most pupils will be away from school because of illness, some individuals can be reluctant to attend. Any such problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school and the family.

If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we encourage the family to work with all involved to understand the root problem. When necessary we engage the support of other agencies such as the School Nurse and Early Help.

- Each day counts for 2 (am/pm) marks of attendance or absence.

## **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES See amendments for Covid-19 Procedures**

### **Registration procedure**

- ❖ Foundation Stage 1 sessions are 8.30am, with the register closing at 8.50, until 11.30am each morning and 12.00noon until 3.00pm in the afternoon.
- ❖ Foundation Stage 2 registration begins at 9.00am, children arriving into the classroom after 9.05 will be marked as late, Afternoon registration is 12.30pm each afternoon.
- ❖ Key Stage 1 registration begins at 8.55am each morning and children arriving into the classroom after 9.05 am will be marked as late. Afternoon registration is at 1.00pm.
- ❖ Key Stage 2 registration begins at 8.50am each morning. Children are marked as late if they arrive into the classroom after 8.55am. Afternoon registration is at 1.00pm.
- ❖ Any child who arrives in school after these times stated above, dependant on which Key Stage, will have to report to the school office to receive their mark.
- ❖ Class teachers should insert a mark for every pupil whether it is a present mark or an absent mark. Registers are to be completed on SIMS
- ❖ The register will close at the start of the session and any child not present at that point will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Unless a medical appointment has been attended and evidence provided, where a medical mark will be made.

### **Responding to lateness**

All pupils should be in their appropriate line at the start of the school day. This is 8.40am for KS2 pupils and 8.45am for KS1 pupils. This is to allow for children to organise themselves for the school day. Pupils arriving after the class has been taken into school should enter through the KS2 door if they are in KS2 or through the front door if they are in KS1. All doors into school will be closed at 8.50am and gates will be locked at 9.05am for safeguarding reasons. Any instances of lateness will be recorded, reasons gathered and monitored.

- ❖ When lateness becomes a concern, and all procedures have been followed (see Punctuality Procedures in appendix the safeguarding governor will become involved. In extreme circumstances, where lateness is causing a major concern, children arriving after 9.30am will be marked as absent and then absence procedures will be followed which could ultimately result in prosecution.



## **Responding to attendance Issues**

- ❖ This policy and procedures document to improve attendance will be reviewed each Spring Term or earlier if necessary.
- ❖ The school will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. (See appendix for flow chart)
- ❖ Returns on persistent absences will be made to the Local Authority each half term.
- ❖ Appropriate strategies will be employed in order to address the attendance of individual pupils.
- ❖ After long periods of absence, reintegration procedures will be followed.
- ❖ Attendance data will be collected, analysed and monitored. The school will respond to any areas of concern identified.

## **Safeguarding**

- ❖ Non-attendance at school is a safeguarding issue – see the school's Safeguarding policy. It is therefore vital that ALL registers must be marked correctly and up to date.
- ❖ Rotherham's CME policy is to be read alongside this policy and processes adhered to

# Attendance Flow Chart

RAWMARSH SANDHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Fixed Penalty Notice flowchart for unauthorised absence



# Absence Process

## **If a child is not in school**

Parents should contact school giving a valid reason for absence.

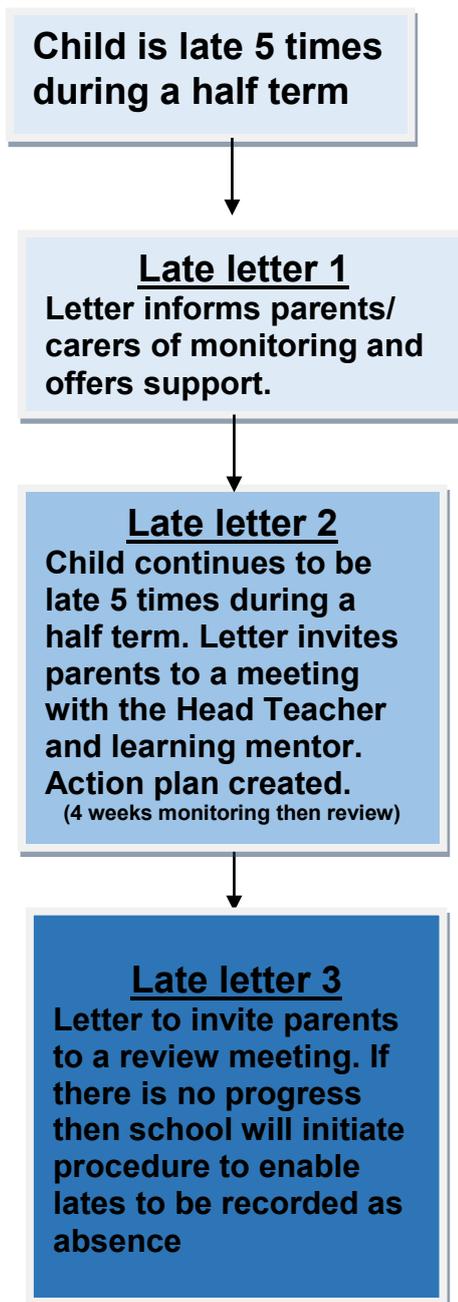
If school have not been contacted by 9.30am, a reminder text will be sent. If there is no response, school will attempt to contact parent.

All numbers on the emergency contact record will be called until a reason can be gained.

If no contact can be made, school will carry out a home visit.

If no contact can be made at the family home, the Police will be contacted to investigate further and ensure the safety of the child.

# Punctuality Process



## Covid-19 amendment

During the management of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are some alterations to the timings of the school day. These are as follows:

- ❖ Pupils can arrive between 8.30 am and 8.55 am in order to ease congestion in school and enable social distancing to take place.
- ❖ Pupils can be collected at the end of the day between 2.45pm and 3.15pm to ease congestion.
- ❖ Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are encouraged to walk home on their own to minimise the number of adults on site. They must have a signed permission slip to do this
- ❖ Any child arriving after 9.05am will be recorded as late and a record of lost learning time will be kept
- ❖ Attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures will be followed in line with this policy, however, pupils will not be penalised for absence due to Covid-19 isolation.