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# Rossmore School

# Attendance Policy

## Policy Statement

At Rossmore 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. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## Definitions

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, the parent/carer telephones the school before 8:45am and leaves a detailed message on the school absence answerphone to explain the absence.
* Only the school can make an absence authorised, parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent/carer takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

* An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carer. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent or carer.

## Lateness

The school gates open at 8:45 and close at 8:55. At this point the children must enter the school via the main reception and will be given an L (late mark on the register). The amount of minutes the child is late will also be recorded automatically by our signing in system. If a child arrives after 9:25am (30 minutes late) the system will record the mark as a U which will also have a negative affect on the child’s attendance. Families who are repeatedly late will be invited in to meet with the SPIL to discuss strategies, such as the use of the breakfast club, to help improve the child’s lateness.

## Absence Procedures

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence on the register. A parent or carer must contact the school via the school absence line (0151 329 3688) before the school day starts (8:45am) to explain why the child is absent. If no message has been received our Safeguarding, Pastoral and Inclusion Lead (SPIL) will send a text, email and smart message to the parent or carer after the registers close at 9:25am. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence for circumstance such as medical appointments etc.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child. If the school is unable to make contact, both the Head Teacher and the SPIL will visit the home of the child to try to ascertain the reason for non-attendance, as well as, bringing the child into school if appropriate. If no one is at home a note is left for the parents or carers to get in touch asap. If there is further concern the SPIL will contact i-Art.

## Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are special circumstances under which a parent or carer may legitimately request leave of absence e.g. for parents or carers in the services on leave. We expect parents or carers to contact the school at least 2 weeks in advance, but normally this type of request will be granted.

Parents/carers who take their children on holiday in term time will be informed that they will incur a fine and they will have unauthorised absence recorded. The local authority are responsible for issuing FPN's on behalf of your child's school. When they issue a notice they give you the option to pay the fine instead of being prosecuted. The amount of the fine is £60 per child per parent/carer if paid within 21 days. If this is over the 21 days the fine increases to £120 per child per parent/carer. You will still need to pay within 28 days. The school will mark the absence as unauthorised.

## Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, at the request of the parents/carers, the school will do all it can to send materials home so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school in line with Local Authority guidance.

**Absence Procedure**

Every half term a whole school attendance review will be completed by the SPIL. Those children who fall below the school’s targets on the first report of the year will be sent a support letter to help parents/carers to improve their child’s attendance. If the attendance has not improved after the second report and so fourth has been completed the child will progress up the attendance pathway. The pathway is as follows:

**Below the schools’ expected targets = Support letter sent home.**

 Improvement

 No improvement **Improvement letter sent home.**

**Invited into school for an attendance meeting where a support plan with actions is created.**

Improvement

 No improvement **Improvement letter sent home.**

**All future absences will only be authorised if medical evidence can be provided.**

 Medical evidence not provided

**The case will be then handed over to the EWO to begin their process. The first stage is a 15-day monitoring period (further information can be found on the Cheshire West and Chester Website).**

**Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the situation. At this point the Safeguarding, Pastoral and Inclusion Lead and the Head Teacher will offer support solutions, such as the use of the school bus or breakfast club, to try and rectify the issues preventing the child from attending school. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact our Education Welfare Officer (David Williams), who will make a decision whether to visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.
The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child aged 5 to 16 attends school. If your child has unauthorised or irregular attendance then the school will notify the EWO and they will either issue you with a warning or a fine (fixed penalty notice).

**Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)**

The local authority are responsible for issuing FPN's on behalf of your child's school. When they issue a notice, they give you the option to pay the fine instead of being prosecuted. The fine is £60 per parent/carer if paid within 21 days. If you fail to pay within the 21 days, the fine increases to £120 per parent/carer. You will still need to pay within 28 days. Once you have made the payment this will be sent to the team and the case will be closed. If you don't pay the penalty you may be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's attendance at school. You will receive further details from the legal team to confirm the intended prosecution, including details of scheduled court hearings. In this event you will be advised to seek independent legal advice.

**Attendance targets**

Rossmore sets attendance targets each year. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools across the local area and nationally when setting its own targets.

**Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Safeguarding, Pastoral and Inclusion Lead. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. The rates of attendance will be reported in the Head Teachers’ report to the full Governing Body termly.
Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the SPIL immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head Teacher, who with the SPIL will contact the parents or carers.
This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Reviewed January 2024

Next Review January 2026