



Transform Trust Attendance Policy September 2019

Robert Shaw Primary & Nursery School

Mission Statement

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Robert Shaw Primary & Nursery School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality. We expect all pupils to attend school every day.

Legal Responsibility

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent/carer fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis).

Whenever a child is absent from school it is the duty of the parent/carer to notify the school on the day of absence before the start of school and provide a reason for absence. We may ask you to come in and collect work for your child if they are absent for 2 days or more.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc);
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that children attending educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

In considering attendance levels, the register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

Punctuality

Once the doors are closed pupils must enter school via the school office. School staff will operate a daily "late gate". Any pupil who comes into school late, after the registers are closed, will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school late, before the session has closed will receive a late mark and a comment entered. If they don't return before the end of the session the absence will be recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will be advised of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Where a child is persistently late after the above has been exhausted and thresholds for legal action have been met, 'U codes' may be used in the register and a referral may be made for legal action to the Education Welfare Service, who may in turn issue a Penalty Notice:

A Penalty Notice incurs a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days increased to £120 if paid within the 28th day.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality. Transform Trust in conjunction with the Headteacher set attendance targets annually and are kept informed on attendance figures.

Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.

Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave Request' form and any request can only be authorised where School accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Any parent/carer requesting leave of absence with sufficient notice will be asked to make an appointment to see the relevant member of staff to explain the circumstances.

At Robert Shaw Primary School, when considering such requests we may also take into account the following:

- circumstances of the request
- purpose of the leave
- length of the proposed leave
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record going back 12 months
- any attempts made to mitigate the length of absence
- the proximity of SATs
- general welfare of the pupil

If the school is informed or suspect that a family has been on holiday whilst suggesting to the school another reason of absence this will be unauthorised. It will be up to the family to prove that they have not taken a family vacation.

Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation legal action may be taken (see section on Penalty Notices below).

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to School on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation.

Penalty Notices

Where children accrue sufficient unauthorised absences, which reach thresholds set by the local council, school can make a referral to the Education Welfare Service, this may now include holidays/absences which have been attached to a school inset day or bank holiday.

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.

Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued per parent per child at £120. However, if paid within 21 days the cost is £60.

The Education Welfare Service may also consider other options, such as taking further legal action.

If a pupil has 10% unauthorised absence in any 10 week revolving period (which equates to 5 days in any 10 week period) the school can seek legal action. If a pupil is also absent and suspected to be on holiday for 4 days attached to an INSET day or Bank Holiday, or for 5 or more days, legal action may be requested.

Absence for religious reasons

The Local Authority has agreed with Religious Leaders and SACRE that one day for each religious festival (no more than three days in any one academic year), should be counted as authorised absence. This will be marked as 'R' in the register.

Children Missing Education

All schools (including academies) must inform their Local Authority and Transform Trust via the Guardians email of any pupil (including non-statutory school age children) who is going to be deleted from the admission register, where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (Details can be obtained from the local council and their home educated department);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

School should refer any child who they believe should or may be removed from its roll whether the onward school is known or not. The Children Missing Education (CME) Officer within the Education Welfare Service will work closely with the school to try to identify the child's current whereabouts/destination. It is expected that the school /educational provision attempts to locate the pupil before the discussion takes place with the CME Officer and before the referral is submitted. Both parties will then agree an appropriate time and category to remove the child from the school roll. This includes those children and young people who are expected to move swiftly into appropriate provision; this is in line with *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016*.

After 20 school days of absence and efforts by both the school and CME to find the child prove unsuccessful, the CME Officer will consult the school when or whether to remove their name from the school roll. The final decision about removal from a school roll remains with the Head Teacher/Principal of the school following consultation with the Local Authority via CME.

The school should create a 'lost pupil' record on the national Lost Pupil's Database School to School (s2s) to assist future schools and Children Missing From Education Officers to identify and locate children.

It is the duty of both the Education Welfare Service and school to collaborate in finding the pupil before deleting them from the register.

The Local Authority [Education Welfare Service] should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

Attendance incentives

Good attendance is rewarded in a variety of ways at Robert Shaw Primary & Nursery School, using a mixture of individual, class and whole school incentives (see Appendix).

Monitoring Attendance

All pupils' attendance will be monitored regularly and at least half termly (see Appendices 1 and 2). The Trust PA monitoring form will be completed and submitted to Jill Wilkinson by the first Friday following any holiday and the contents discussed with the Headteacher the following week. Actions to improve the attendance of pupils whose attendance is of concern must be planned and recorded. Letters that may be useful to send to parents are available in the Attendance Toolkit.

The principles of this policy will also be applied to all Nursery and Foundation 2 pupils.

Review date: July 2020

APPENDIX LIST

- 1 List of Incentives/Rewards
- 2 Absence Request Form

Appendix 1

ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES AND REWARDS 2019-2020 **at Robert Shaw Primary & Nursery School**

WEEKLY

- In the entrance hall our attendance board will show our weekly attendance percentages for each class, along with weekly winners.
- During Key Stage assemblies, the current attendance will be shared and the weekly winner for the best attendance the previous week celebrated.
- The children in FS will be visited by the Attendance Officer who will talk about the importance of being at school and distribute individual stickers for children that have been at school all week.

HALF-TERMLY

- Each class with attendance percentage of 96% or above will receive a £10 book voucher for the class to spend.
- The class with the highest percentage attendance will receive a £20 book voucher for the class to spend.

TERMLY

- Every child that has a 100% attendance figure for the term (allowing for authorised absences due to religious observance) will receive an attendance medal (1 term = bronze, 2 terms = silver, 3 terms = gold).

ANNUALLY

- Children who have 100% attendance across the school year will receive a special prize.
- The class with the best attendance across the year will receive a prize.

IN ADDITION

- Classes develop their own systems for celebrating and rewarding school attendance.
- At least 3 competitions/prizes will be awarded for specific attendance related targets throughout the year.
- Specific attendance targets may be met through the use of adult friendly incentives and/or individual prizes.

Appendix 2

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM

Pupil's Full Name _____

Class _____

First date of Absence _____

Date of return to school _____ No of Days _____

Please provide the reason for absence _____

Signed (Parent/Carer) _____ Date _____

Please make an appointment to see the School Attendance Officer and bring this form with you.

Note:

Parents do not have an automatic right to take children out of school for the purpose of a holiday. Each request will be judged individually. Approval should ALWAYS be sought.

Holidays will only be authorised in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances.

If permission is NOT granted and the child is taken out of school for the holiday, Legal Action may be taken by the Education Welfare Service on behalf of the school.

Office Use Only:Code _____