

# Ruislip Gardens Primary School



## Attendance Policy November 2018

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**Attendance Policy**



## **Introduction**

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school (above 96% attendance) is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

## **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Celebrate good attendance by monitoring class weekly attendance on a bar chart displayed in a public area in the school
- Award the attendance cup to the class with the highest attendance each term
- Award badges, medals and certificates to children with good attendance
- Inform you if your child's attendance or punctuality falls below the acceptable level for our school
- Give parents/carers details about attendance in our regular newsletter
- All parents will be notified in mid and end of year reports about their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Celebration Assemblies for 100% attendance

## **Understanding Types of Absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Filming and performance requests – The Local Authority will issue a Performance Licence based on information provided by the school. A maximum of 5 days filming per academic year will only be authorised providing the pupil's attendance is over 90% and they are making expected levels of



progress. Any request which exceed 5 days will be recorded as unauthorised and the Local Authority will be advised accordingly which may result in the decline of the Performance Licence. When the initial request for filming is received a letter will be issued to parents/carers detailing how many days are authorised and the date and number of days taken for filming or performances will be recorded on the child's attendance record.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority Participation Team using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- absences at the start and end of the school term around school holidays
- absences which present a pattern e.g. absences around weekends
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Social, economic and cultural considerations within the family and community
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, please speak to us rather than report your child as unwell and we will work with you to resolve any issues that may be affecting attendance.

You can support your child by:

Ensuring regular and early bed times

Helping with homework

Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before

Providing a healthy breakfast

Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school

Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

We do ask that we are provided with at least two contact people and numbers for each pupil so that we can make contact in the event of pupil absence. Where the school feel that a particular pupil is either vulnerable or at risk they reserve the right to carry out a home visit to determine pupil whereabouts and wellbeing. This visit will be made by two members of school staff or a representative from the Participation Team. Where appropriate the situation may be reported to the police and/or family services.

The Department for Education have provided revised guidelines on medical absences and now suggest that a child with persistent sickness or diarrhea should remain absent from school for 48 hours from the last period of vomiting and then may return provided they are well enough to attend. If they vomit once due to travel sickness, coughing or running around just after eating the exclusion period may be reduced to 24 hours providing there are no other symptoms,



## **Persistent Absenteeism (PA): Appendices 2-5**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an LSA, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Participation Officer in the monthly return we are required to submit.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence to notify us of the reason for your child's absence before 9:30am.
- Contact the school on days 1, 3, and 5 of your child's absence. The Attendance/Welfare Office may make a call home during the period of absence to seek additional information or clarity if this is required.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Participation Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

### **Telephone Numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. We expect to be provided with at least two points of contacts and telephone numbers for each and every child. This will help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **The Participation Officer:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Participation Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice) or prosecutions in the Magistrates



Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

“If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.”

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858 or [educationwelfareservice@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:educationwelfareservice@hillingdon.gov.uk)

### **Lateness: (Appendices 6-8)**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

#### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8:45am for KS2 and 8:50am for Reception and KS1** and we expect your child to be in class by that time. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. A member of the school staff will be on duty at each of the entry doors to monitor lateness and make a note of pupils that arrive late.

At **9:30 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We monitor late collection from the school premises at the end of the school day. Names of such pupils are recorded in the Cloud Room and a reason for the late collection must be recorded on each occasion. The school will invite you to meet with them to discuss late collection of pupils if it becomes frequent and regular or a pattern emerges and letters will be sent home once a child is collected late from school on three or more occasions.

#### **Exceptional Leave:**

Exceptional leave is the term that the London Borough of Hillingdon uses for absence requests from school, whether it be for a holiday for an exceptional reason, to attend a wedding/funeral, visit a sick relative or seek medical treatment from abroad

There is no entitlement to any days' absence from school per academic year and the right for your child to be granted exceptional leave cannot be earned through good attendance. The 1996 Education Act section 444 states that parents are responsible for ensuring that their child (ren) attends school regularly and punctually. The London Borough of Hillingdon advises Head teachers not to authorise exceptional leave requests in school time.



In an academic year, the terms are usually planned so that there are 190 teaching days in total. This leaves 13 weeks (Monday to Friday) and 52 weekends (Saturday to Sunday) where leave can be taken with no interruption to the teaching and learning for a pupil.

Exceptional leave is only granted in extenuating circumstance at the discretion of the Head teacher. Where a leave request is not authorised the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the register; each day will record two sessions of absence. Schools keep strict records of requests for exceptional leave in term time across all year groups and log the dates and reasons for each request.

Patterns of absence from previous years are carefully scrutinised. Requests for exceptional leave are kept in the pupil's school file and passed from school to school, whether it is primary, secondary school or academy.

If you wish to apply for a period of exceptional leave you must do so in writing to the Head teacher explaining the reasons for your request. Please note that it is the advice and guidance of the London Borough of Hillingdon that although such requests can be authorised at the Head teacher's discretion the rule of thumb is that such requests are refused or recorded as unauthorised absence. A child's prior attendance at school will be a factor in the decision making process.

Where the leave is unauthorised the letter will explain the implications if the leave is taken anyway, such as missed topics for learning by the pupil, fractured social relationships and the possibility of the parent/carer being issued with a Penalty Notice (PN) by the Participation Team. A lack of response from the Head teacher does not imply that leave has been authorised. Exceptional leave cannot be approved retrospectively.

Where leave is authorised the Head teacher will notify you in writing of the decision and will confirm the number of days which have been authorised. Repeat applications for exceptional leave may result in your case being referred to the Participation Officer.

Details of the child and parent/carer who take unauthorised exceptional leave can be notified to the Participation Team who may issue a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120) per child per parent/carer. An attendance panel may also be convened. Penalty Notices will not be issued on more than one occasion. Repeated periods of unauthorised absences will result in summonses to Uxbridge Magistrates Court for prosecution.

As previously, Participation Key Workers will issue Penalty Notices and/or prosecute if a parent causes their child to be absent from school for the purposes of an unauthorised holiday - when a child's attendance is less than 90%, should school and the Local Authority consider that action to be proportionate and in the public interest.

The Government has announced that it is reviewing legislation relating to school attendance but in the meantime our Attendance policy remains unchanged. We continue to be committed to working in partnership with parents and carers in order to attain our annual attendance target of 96% or better and so any holiday taken during term time will be unauthorised. In addition, when a holiday absence has contributed to a child's attendance falling below 90% we will refer the family to the Hillingdon Participation team for further action.

### **School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.



The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Hillingdon.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletters and we ask for your full support.

**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Mrs Thompson, Welfare and Attendance Officer  
Miss S O'Neill, Deputy Headteacher  
Miss N Bulpett, Headteacher

**Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupil to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment and it is also a fundamental part of the Every Child Matters intentions to:

Being Healthy  
Being Safe  
Enjoying & Achieving  
Making a positive contribution  
Achieving economic well-being



## Appendix 1 Attendance above 96%

Dear Parent/Carer of «Forename» «Surname»

**Traffic Light System : Termly Attendance Statement**  
**«Forename» «Surname» : «Reg»**

Each term we are writing to parents letting them know the attendance percentage that their child has attained using the traffic light system.

	Percentage	Comment
Green	96% and above	Congratulations, your child has attained a strong attendance level. Please keep this up.
Amber	90% to 96%	Your child is below our 96% attendance threshold. We understand this may be due to a couple of days of sickness absence. We hope their attendance picks up.
Red	Below 90%	Your child's attendance is well below the 96% threshold. Unless a rapid improvement is made you will be invited to meet with me to discuss attendance and your case may be referred to the Participation Team at the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Your child's current percentage attendance up to and including xx is as follows:

**Congratulations**  
**«Forename»**  
**Your attendance percentage is %**

We hope that every child in the school will work towards an attendance target of 96% and above. Please be aware that we monitor attendance regularly and will make contact with you at any point if we feel that your child's attendance pattern needs to be looked into for any reason.

Yours sincerely

**Head teacher**



## Appendix 2 Attendance 90-96%

Parent/Carer of : «Forename» «Surname»

### Traffic Light System : Termly Attendance Statement

«Forename» «Surname»: «Reg»

Each term we are writing to parents letting them know the attendance percentage that their child has attained using the traffic light system.

	Percentage	Comment
Green	96% and above	Congratulations, your child has attained a strong attendance level. Please keep this up.
Amber	90% to 96%	Your child is below our 96% attendance threshold. We understand this may be due to a couple of days of sickness absence. We hope their attendance picks up.
Red	Below 90%	Your child's attendance is well below the 96% threshold. Unless a rapid improvement is made you will be invited to meet with me to discuss attendance and your case may be referred to the Participation Team at the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Your child's percentage attendance up to and including xx is as follows:

«Forename» «Surname»  
Your attendance percentage %

We hope that every child in the school will work towards an attendance target of 96% and above. Please be aware that we monitor attendance regularly and will make contact with you at any point if we feel that your child's attendance pattern needs to be looked into for any reason.

Yours sincerely

**Head teacher**



## Appendix 3 Absentee below 90%

Dear Parent/Carer of «Forename» «Surname»

**Termly Attendance Statement:  
Below 90% Attendance: «Forename» «Surname»: «Reg»**

Each term we are writing to parents letting them know the attendance percentage that their child has attained using the traffic light system.

	Percentage	Comment
Green	96% and above	Congratulations, your child has attained a strong attendance level. Please keep this up.
Amber	90% to 96%	Your child is below our 96% attendance threshold. We understand this may be due to a couple of days of sickness absence. We hope their attendance picks up.
Red	Below 90%	Your child's attendance is well below the 96% threshold. An improvement must be made. You will be invited to meet with me and your case may be referred to the Participation Team.

Your child's percentage attendance up to and includingxx is as follows:

**«Forename» «Surname»  
Your attendance percentage is  
%**

Despite any extenuating circumstances or agreed absences, your child's attendance level will now be monitored more closely. You should expect to hear from us in the event of further absence during the course of the coming weeks.

In the event that there is little or no improvement in the coming weeks I may have to invite you in to discuss your child's poor attendance. Following that meeting, and in the absence of satisfactory improvement I will be expected to refer this case to the Participation Team at the London Borough of Hillingdon. They investigate referred cases by an 'Attendance Panel System' which has the power to issue Penalty Notices to parents/carers of pupils with poor school attendance; these penalty payments are set at £60 per parent which, if unpaid, may either increase to £120 or see the parent/carers summonsed to appear before Uxbridge Magistrates Court.

Yours sincerely,

**Head teacher**



## Appendix 4 Lateness letter

Dear Parent of «Forename» «Surname»

**Late Arrival at School: «Forename» «Surname» : «Reg»**

I am writing to inform you that «Forename» has been late xx times this half term, during the period up to and including xx.

I do appreciate that slow traffic and other factors can contribute to children being late for school but please be aware it can be distressing and disruptive for children when they are late. It may also impact on their first lesson.

Therefore can I remind you of the importance of punctual attendance at school and request that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time in the future.

**Please note Reception and KS1 should arrive in class for registration by 8:50am KS2 pupils should arrive for registration by 8:45am**

Yours sincerely

**Head teacher**



## Appendix 5 Persistent Lateness

Dear Parent of «Forename» «Surname»

### **Persistent Late Arrival at School: «Forename» «Surname» : «Reg»**

I am writing to inform you that «Forename» has been late xx times to date this academic year, during the period up to and including xx.

I am disappointed to see «Forename»'s punctuality has not improved since I wrote to you last.

I do appreciate that slow traffic and other factors can contribute to children being late for school but please be aware it can be distressing and disruptive for children when they are late. It may also impact on their first lesson.

Therefore can I remind you of the importance of punctual attendance at school and request that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time in the future. If no improvement is made you will be invited to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss ways we can help support you regarding punctuality.

**Please note Reception and KS1 should arrive in class for registration by 8:50am KS2 pupils should arrive for registration by 8:45am**

Yours sincerely

**Head teacher**



## Appendix 6 Persistent Lateness no improvement

Dear

### Participation Team Referral Letter: name: class

I am writing to inform you that in light of his poor attendance (xx%) I would like to meet with you to discuss the reasons for his repeated absence. Please call the school office to arrange a suitable time [ enter ].

Depending upon the outcome of this meeting I may take the decision to refer [ name ] to the Participation Team at the London Borough of Hillingdon as part of the guidelines to which I must adhere as a Head teacher. This team deals with pupils who have either persistently low attendance at school or with those pupils who arrive late for school repeatedly.

The team will investigate referred cases by an 'Attendance Panel System' which has the power to issue Penalty Notices to parents/carers of pupils with poor school attendance; these penalty payments are set at £60 per parent which, if unpaid, may either increase to £120 or see the parent/carers summonsed to appear before Uxbridge Magistrates Court.

I do hope to see an improvement in your child's attendance at school.

**Please note Reception and KS1 should arrive in class for registration by 8:50am KS2 pupils should arrive for registration by 8:45am**

Yours sincerely

Head teacher



## Appendix 7

### End of day late collection

Dear Parent / Carer of

#### Late Collection

I am writing to inform you that I am concerned that xx has been collected after 3:15pm on the following occasions this term:

XXXX

XXXX

May I remind you that the school day ends at 3:15pm for pupils, please ensure you have the appropriate arrangements in place as I expect your child to be collected on time from now on.

If this continues we will have to look into charging you for the staff member's time after 3:15pm.

Yours sincerely

**Head teacher**