Russell Street School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed on:	October 2021
Reviewed:	Annually
Staff Responsibility:	Safeguarding Leads/ Attendance Officer/ Headteacher

RSS children are **STARS** – Safe, Together, Achieve, Resilient, Special.

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All children are expected to attend school every day the school is open.

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Regular absence will seriously affect a child's learning. Absence disrupts routines, so may therefore affect the learning of other children in the same class.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 3 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day (Years R/1/2) 9am (Nursery).

The register for the first session will be taken by 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:15am.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – before 9:00am.

Parents should call 01908 563148 and press 1 to leave an absence message.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

A child's attendance is reported to parents annually in the written end-of-year report, or via a termly written report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.2 Legal sanctions

Parents will be fined for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

When issued with a penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 per child within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Stage One (Day One and Two of absence)

Office staff will monitor attendance on a daily basis and will expect a daily phone call from parents before 9:00am. If this information has not been received by 9:00am, office staff will call all contacts on the contact list held in school to find out why the child is not in school.

Stage Two (Day Three of absence)

On day three of absence, the schools attendance officer will call parents to ascertain why the child is still absent from school and any support that can be put in place.

In exceptional circumstances a home visit may be required.

Stage Three (Week two of absence or absence falling close to 96.5%)

In week two of absence or attendance is seen to fall close to 96.5%, parents will be asked to attend an 'Attendance Meeting' at school. (See Appendix 1).

In this attendance meeting, parents and school will agree measures that can be put in place to ensure good attendance at school.

Stage Four (More than 10 days of absence or absence falling below 95%)

If a child is absent for more than 10 days or attendance falls below 95%, and attendance contract meeting will take place in school. (See Appendix 2).

As part of this attendance contract meeting, parents and school will agree measures, signed by both parties, that must be put in place.

If the contract fails to improve attendance, education welfare officers will be contacted and legal sanctions will take place – see section 4.2.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance data is used to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to class teachers, Pupil Premium Lead, SENDCos and headteacher /DSL and DDSLs.
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office Staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They report concerns about attendance to the class teachers, Pupil Premium Lead, SENDCos and headteacher /DSL and DDSLs.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Meeting

Your child's attendance at Russell Street School is currently _____% which is below the target for all students of 96.5%.

We know that your child's attendance is very important to you.

This meeting is to discuss strategies that can be put in place to support you in improving your child's attendance.

Strategies Discussed……

If attendance does not improve using the above strategies, then an Attendance Contract will be put in place.

Signed …… (Parent) …….. (Date)

Signed …… (School) …….. (Date)

Appendix 2: Attendance Contract

Your child's attendance at Russell Street School is currently _____%.

We know that your child's attendance is very important to you.

This contract meeting is to agree strategies that will be put in place to improve your child's attendance.

Parents' Will……..
School Will……

If attendance does not improve using the above strategies, then legal action will take place.

Signed …… (Parent) …….. (Date)

Signed …… (School) …….. (Date)

Appendix 3: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school Code X: is also now used for not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) **(This code is not counted as an absence in the school census** The following sub codes will be used:	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with: • guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care12 or • any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) See Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2"><table>
<tr><th>Subcode</th><th>Description</th><th>Attendance session code</th></tr>
<tr><td>I01</td><td>Illness</td><td>I</td></tr>
<tr><td>I02</td><td>Illness Confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)</td><td>I</td></tr>
<tr><td>X01</td><td>Non compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school</td><td>X</td></tr>
<tr><td>X02</td><td>Pupil self-isolating with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms</td><td>X</td></tr>
<tr><td>X03</td><td>Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) INSIDE the school setting</td><td>X</td></tr>
<tr><td>X04</td><td>Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) OUTSIDE the school setting</td><td>X</td></tr>
<tr><td>X05</td><td>Pupils required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory)</td><td>X</td></tr>
<tr><td>X06</td><td>Pupil not in school because they have been advised specifically by their Doctor or public health authority that they are clinically extremely vulnerable and should not attend</td><td>X</td></tr>
<tr><td>X07</td><td>Pupil advised specifically not to attend school as part of restrictions to education set out in Government advice</td><td>X</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Y</td><td>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances</td><td>School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody</td></tr>
<tr><td>Z</td><td>Pupil not on admission register</td><td>Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school</td></tr>
<tr><td>#</td><td>Planned school closure</td><td>Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day</td></tr>
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