

# Redhill Primary School: Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2017/18



*This policy is compliant with SCC policy and based on the guidance issued by the DFE on school attendance.*

## Principles

The Governors of Redhill Primary School recognise that children must attend school regularly if they are to make the best of the opportunities they have to learn and make best progress.

Prolonged and consistent absence, in any year group, results in limited progress and low levels of achievement. Children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never full catch up with gaps in their skills and knowledge.

In addition repeated and consistent lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school. Children will miss out on important learning opportunities at the start of the day.

As a school we follow the **Department for Education** guidelines and expect children to maintain an attendance figure above **95%** throughout the academic year.

## Our Expectations

### We expect that all pupils will:

- ✓ Attend school regularly and punctually.
- ✓ Arrive at school by 8.55am for the daily morning session and 12.45pm - Reception, Year 1, 2, 3 & 4; 1.00 pm Year 5 & 6 for the daily afternoon session.
- ✓ Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

### We expect that parents/carers will:

- ✓ Ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually and ready to learn. **Regular attendance is a legal requirement.**
- ✓ Notify the school of a pupil absence by 9.00am.
- ✓ Not take their children out of school during term time for the purpose of family holidays.
- ✓ Provide the school with up to date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility.

- ✓ Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep a child away from school.

#### **We expect that teachers will:**

- ✓ Keep an accurate attendance register.
- ✓ Praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance.
- ✓ Monitor pupil absence and inform the Headteacher when absence is impacting upon achievement.

#### **We expect that Senior Leaders will:**

- ✓ Inform parents/carers of school policy and procedures with regards to attendance.
- ✓ Monitor attendance as a priority and to develop policies and procedures to ensure the expectation of 96% attendance is met.
- ✓ Intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern.
- ✓ Develop a multi-agency response to attendance.
- ✓ Utilise the support of available specialists in relation to the attendance.
- ✓ Report termly to the Governing Body.

#### **Procedures**

We expect children to arrive at school between **8.45am and 8.55am**.

Breakfast club is open from 8.00 am.

The school uses the registration module in SIMS to take an electronic register. Each class teacher or their nominated representative is responsible for taking the register at morning and afternoon registration. The registers must be completed promptly to avoid discrepancies between classes.

**Morning Registration** is between 8.45am and 8.55am - Children arriving via the main office/late gate between 8.55am and 9.00am are late.

**Afternoon Registration** is between 12.45 and 12.50pm for Reception, Year 1, 2, 3 & 4 and between 1.00 and 1.05pm for Years 5 & 6.

#### **Penalty Notices**

A Penalty Notice is a fine to a parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents/carers must pay up to £60 if they pay within 21 days; or up to £120 if they pay within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

## Arriving Late

Each morning pupil entrances will remain open until 8.55am. Any pupil arriving after the pupil entrance has closed will receive a later mark (L) on the register.

When a pupil arrives after the pupil entrances close they will need to be signed in at the main school office/late gate and a reason for the lateness must be given.

The school office is responsible for maintaining the signing in/out book. This contains details of name, class, time admitted/time released and reason for lateness/early departure.

In accordance with current guidance, the attendance registers are closed at 9.15am. This means that any pupil who arrives after the registration period of 8.55am but before the registers are closed at 9.15am will be given a late mark (L) in the register and the number of minutes late will be recorded. **This code is classed as a present mark, but displays that the pupil arrived late for school.**

Any pupil who arrives after the registers have closed (9.15am) but before the end of the morning session will be given a 'late after registers closed' mark (U) in the register. **This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session.**

Any child who goes home during the lunch hour must be collected from the school office at the end of the morning session. They must return to school by 12.40 pm (Reception, Year 1, 2, 3 & 4), and 12.55 pm (Year 5 & 6) in order to be in their classroom in time for the afternoon registration period. Any children arriving after the afternoon registration period will be marked as late (L).

Minutes late per day during a school year	Equals days worth of teaching lost a year in KS1	Equals days worth of teaching lost in a year in KS2
5	3.7 days	3.4 days
10	7.4 days	6.9 days
15	11 days	10.3 days
20	14.7 days	13.8 days
30	22 days	20.7 days

Ways to avoid being late at Redhill:

- Extended hours clubs - Reading & Maths from 8.30am
- Breakfast Club opens from 8.00am.
- Walking Bus

**If a child is regularly late:**

1. The headteacher/pastoral lead will write to parents/carers to inform them of the number of times the child has been late and to remind them of the school policy and expectations.
2. If lateness persists the headteacher/pastoral lead will invite parents/carers to a meeting to discuss ways in which the school can support the family in getting the child to school on time.

## **Persistent Late**

Persistent late arrival at school ie. after the register has closed. Persistent means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive. **10 unauthorised late marks** would result in the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer. They investigate why the child has been late on the dates given. **This investigation could result in parents/carers receiving a penalty notice.**

## **Attendance and Illness**

If a child is ill the parent/carer's first action is to call the school on **01543 227140**, where possible, before 9.00am and notify the school office of the absence and the reason for the absence. An answerphone service is available or email [office@redhill.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@redhill.staffs.sch.uk)

This needs to be done every day of absence (unless the child is admitted to hospital, or has a long term illness-related absence for a period of time - in this instance parents/carers do not need to ring every day).

If a child is not in school and we have not had a phone call by mid-morning one of our pastoral team will call parents/carers to find out why a child is not in school. If no contact is made a text message will be sent and a home visit may be carried out.

Safe and well checks will be conducted by the pastoral team if a child has not been seen in school for a minimum of three days.

**It is expected that routine medical and dental appointments should be made out of school hours. The school will not authorise routine appointments eg. dental check, eye test.**

**Parents permitting absence from school without a good reason is considered an offence.**

## **Persistent Absence**

### **When attendance becomes a concern**

If a child is absent on a regular basis without adequate explanation, or is absent regularly on specific days, eg. Monday or children are absent for prolonged periods of time, the school will contact parents/carers to discuss the problems and seek a solution.

**When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 94%** in any term, school will not be able to authorise any further absence for illness without medical evidence to confirm the illness. In order to authorise continued illness related non-attendance parents/carers will need to provide the school with, for example:

- a) **A doctor's note or medical certificate**
- b) **A copy of the dated prescription**
- c) **Copy of labels from medicine bottles**

#### d) Evidence of medical appointment

Otherwise the absences will be recorded as unauthorised (U). *Please note we are only able to administer medicines prescribed for 4 times per day - please ask office staff for details.*

**If the child's attendance does not improve the Education Welfare Officer may become involved and this may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.**

A Penalty Notice may be issued in cases of persistent absence where at least 20 sessions (10 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence over 12 school weeks. These absences do not need to be consecutive. A warning letter will be sent and a 20 day period of improvement will commence, if there is an unauthorised absence in this 20 day period the penalty notice may be issued.

#### **Leave of Absence**

The headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

**Holidays are not generally considered as 'exceptional circumstances'. It is expected that families will take holiday in the school holiday periods.**

Any request for leave of absence must be made in writing to the headteacher on the 'Request for Leave' proforma available from the school office (**Appendix 1**). **The headteacher is the only person able to authorise leave of absence.**

The headteacher may grant compassionate leave as authorised absence.

**From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018** any period of unauthorised leave (a period could be as little as one day) may result in parents/carers receiving a penalty notice fine. The headteacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will only apply in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the headteacher to the local authority.

#### **People responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

The headteacher, **Mrs. Banks**, has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate and efficient systems in place to promote and support the school attendance policy, that these are adhered to and training is given where appropriate.

First Day Contact: Pastoral team - **Mrs. Cocker** or **Mrs. Hepples** will record the reason for absence or ring home/visit if no reason for the absence has been received.

Request for leave of absence can only be authorised by the headteacher, **Mrs. Banks**.

## **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good attendance.

Parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

Staff and Governors at Redhill Primary School, are committed to working with parents/carers to ensure that children attend school regularly.

Agreed by Governors:

Review Date:

**Request for leave during term time (TEMPLATE LETTER)**

Dear Headteacher,

Date.....

I request consideration for a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

My child full name.....

Date of birth:.....

Address:.....

For the period from (date):..... to (date):.....

Total number of days:.....

Name(s) of parent/carers who will be with the child(ren) when the leave is taken:

Full name..... Full name.....

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are: -

**(Please detail below the reason for your request for absence in term time and where relevant, include any supporting information. Please read the attached guidance notes for parents.)**

.....  
.....  
.....

Are there any siblings of compulsory school age Yes/No

If so, please complete full names below

Child(ren)'s full name ..... School(s) attended.....

.....

.....

**Declaration:**

*I have read the guidance notes for parents overleaf and understand I/we may receive a penalty notice if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. **Please note the school day is divided into 2 registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence equals 10 sessions.***

Signature of 1<sup>st</sup> parent/carer(s) ..... Print Full Name.....

Signature of 2<sup>nd</sup> parent/carer(s) ..... Print Full Name.....

**Please return completed form to the school office.**

**The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.**

**For Office Use Only**

Current Attendance.....%

Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time .....(this academic year)

**Agreed/Not Agreed**

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Rationale to decline request : .....

Signed .....Head teacher . Date .....

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carer.....



**School Letter Leave Agreed (TEMPLATE LETTER)**

(Parent/carer(s) name and address)

Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school from ..... to .....

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having looked at your application, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance. **Therefore, the absence to include the dates requested will be authorised.**

Our key priority is to ensure that your child(ren) are as successful as possible and are able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would therefore ask that you support your child in catching up on the time they will miss in school.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

**Head teacher**

**School Letter Leave Not Agreed (TEMPLATE LETTER)**

(Parent/carer(s) name and address)

Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school from ..... to .....

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

I have considered your application very carefully. Although I understand the reason for your request, I am unable to approve leave of absence in this instance, as I believe the circumstances are not exceptional. **Therefore, if your child is away from school during this period it will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence.**

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct.

The Penalty Notice fine would be :-

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996.

I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Our key priority is to ensure your child(ren) are as successful as possible, are able to reach his/her full potential and gains maximum benefits from his/her educational experience.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

**Head teacher**