

Rowner Infant School

Attendance Policy

Created by	**Governing Body**	**Monitored by**	**Governing Body**
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Signed	**Full Governing Body**	**Signed**	**J Bedson Headteacher**

'Individually we grow, together we bloom'

School Vision

At Rowner Infant School, we are very proud and fortunate to have a very dedicated and supportive school community. At our school, the staff, Governors and parents and carers recognise that the education of our children is framed by our school ethos '*Individually we grow, together we bloom*'. At the centre the relationship between school and home is our shared aim to ensure that your child reaches their full potential.

We do this by:

- Having a welcoming atmosphere that makes children feel safe and valued
- Encourage good relationships between the school and parents
- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and absence followed up quickly
- Being sensitive to the needs of individual families

Department for Education Guidance *School attendance* (2020)
Schools should:
1 Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
2 Ensure every child has access to full-time education
3 Act early to address patterns of absence.
Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to a school attend regularly. All pupils must be punctual to their lessons.

Section 1
Rationale:
Parents and children play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.
It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to children and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer

in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

Days Absent By End of Year.	Equal to Absence Percentage	Overall Attendance Percentage by the End of Year
1	0.5%	99.50%
5	2.5%	97.50%
10	5%	95%
20	10%	90%
30	15%	85%

Did You Know….?



For every day of school missed by a pupil it will reduce their attendance by 0.5%.

Ten whole days of school has been missed if your child has 95% attendance.

Twenty whole days of school has been missed if a pupils attendance is 90%.

By the time a pupil is persistently absent (85% attendance) they have missed 6 weeks or half a term of schooling.

Section 2
Promoting good attendance and punctuality
The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.
In order to achieve good attendance at Rowner Infant, we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular home school newsletter and website
- Report to you how your child is performing in school, with their attendance and punctuality rate.
- Display attendance figures for classes and year groups in school.

Section 3
Roles and responsibilities
The senior leadership team will:

- Oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties
- If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with

parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**

3.1 Responsibilities of Class Teachers

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately at 8.55 am and 1:05 pm daily.
- Children arriving after 8:55am, but before 9.25am will be recorded as being late.
- Children arriving after 9.25am will be recorded as late after registers closed (This will be an unauthorised mark).
- Raise with parents/ carers concerns regarding poor attendance as soon as they become an issue, and liaise with the Senior Leadership team.
- Share concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

3.2 Responsibilities of parents/carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

In order to comply with this, parents will:

- Ensure their child attends every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Ensure children arrive in school before the close of registers (see appendix A).
- Inform the school on the first day of absence giving a reason for the absence. This can be done by telephone or via adminoffice@rowner-inf.hants.sch.uk **Vague messages 4 such as "illness" or "unwell" will not be accepted.**
- Inform the school on the first day of absence and any subsequent days. If we do not hear from you each day your child is absent and, we cannot reach you, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- **If your child is absent for more than 48 hours, we will require medical evidence.**
- Take responsibility for registering at the Reception Desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.
- **Ensuring that if your child arrives after 9.30 you have provided them with a packed lunch.**
- Inform the school of any planned absences well in advance and fill in the appropriate "Application for an Authorised Absence Form", available from the school office
- Support the school with their child aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Avoid taking the child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
  All appointments will require medical evidence shown to school staff.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an **exceptional circumstance**

3.3 Responsibilities of the children:

- Listen to adults
- Follow instructions to be ready for school in time

Collection and arrival at school

To ensure the safety of all children it is not appropriate for Junior age children to have the responsibility to drop off or collect infant children. We ask parents and carers who cannot do this to make other arrangements.

If a parent or carer wishes a secondary age child to have this responsibility, we ask it is put in writing.

Section 4
Recording attendance
Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8.55am, and again for the afternoon session at 1.05pm.

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

All attendance registers are checked daily. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school as stated above, to report an absence. However, if absence is found that cannot be accounted for the school will make every effort to contact the family. This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

4.1 Lateness/punctuality
It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of the school is used to organise the learning for the day. If your child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be distressing for the child.

The school day begins at 8:55am and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time. The school gates are open at 8:30am and close at 8.55am. The classroom doors are open at 8.45 and close at 8.55am. Morning registration is at 9.00am and it closes at 9.20am.

- All pupils are expected to be in school by the close of registration. Arrival after this time and up to 20 minutes after the close of registration will be marked as late (L) Arrival after the close of registration and up to 10 minutes will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded (U) in line with Hampshire County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.

- Repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see section 6 for further detail).

- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary

- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M.

- Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. Parents are required to show proof of appointments, letter,

appointment card or text. Parents can also take the schools medical evidence slip to be completed at the appointment (Appendix C medical evidence slip).

Parents, guardians or carers of children who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has **10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school or Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice, in accordance with Hampshire County Council's *Code of Conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* (See Section 6 of this policy for further detail.)**

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected child to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies.

4.2 What to do if my child is absent?

First day absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

If your child is absent:

- By approx. 9:30am you will be called to request a reason for absence If we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance
- If you do not answer, you will be left a voice mail and sent a text to contact us.
- If the school does not have a response by 10am from the 1st contact then a call will be made to the other contacts on records to find out about the child.
- If no response by **11.30am on the same day** a decision will be made to whether to visit child's home address.
- If the child is not at the home address and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers **after three days** of absence the school is required to start child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family.

Third day absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start ***child missing in education*** procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is ***at risk of missing***. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making

sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or on-going absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as ***persistent absentees****.* Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning.

If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, we will:

- Invite you in for a meeting to address this.
- Work with you and your family to put together a support plan to improve attendance.
- Where the child has a prolonged period of illness we will work with other agencies to minimise the amount of lost learning. This could be by working with local health authorities, sending work packs home for parents to return to school so that appropriate feedback and guidance can be offered.

We may refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panel if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

All our persistent absentee pupils and their parents will be subject to an Attendance Support Plan to improve attendance.**See Appendix D**

Section 5

Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. **The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, or unavoidable,** which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off school in term time to go on holiday and i**n the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.** Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available from the school office in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

At Rowner Infant we consider these **might** be defined as exceptional circumstances:

- Observe specific religious events (in which case it will be recorded as "R" code, religious observation)
- To attend immediate family (parents or siblings) Weddings (this will be recorded as "C" code, holiday authorised)
- To attend a family funeral (this will be recorded as "C" code, authorised compassionate leave).
- To attend specific ceremonial events such as citizenship ceremonies, etc.

However, each of these circumstances must be applied for using a Leave of Absence Request form. It is the Headteacher's responsibility to assess each application and their decision is final in the decision of granting or refusing the request. **There is no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised, and will be recorded as "G" code "family holiday not agreed."**

If term-time leave is taken without prior permissions from the school, the absence will be **unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire County Council's *Code of*

Conduct, parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see Section 6 for detail.)

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Section 6

Understanding types of absence – authorised and unauthorised

Children are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for absence. There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parents' request. This includes:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an authorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child's unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

If we have reason to believe that a family is on holiday when they have given a different reason, we will ask you to quote the code that been posted through your door by us each day.

Section 7

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

Under education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:
1. Non approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. A holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence is for more than 10 sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued.

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow it's guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and families within the authority.

The code states that:

Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absences where the pupil has been:

- Marked as an unauthorised absence for 10 or more half-day sessions (5 school days) during any 100 possible school sessions – **these do not need to be consecutive.**
- Persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions after the registers have closed.
- Persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code O), and where the threshold of 10 session has been met.
- Absent for formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance.
- Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions are already being processed.

If a child has unauthorised absence which meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:
1. 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in any 10 week school period.
2. 1 or more sessions of absence during formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form or by the Headteacher, during meetings prior to application being made for fixed term penalty notices to be issued.

The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine is being issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers for each child. N.B this could mean 4 penalty notices for a family with 2 siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday. i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.**

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £160 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid then Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves and are paid to Hampshire County Council. The Revenue from payment of Penalty Notices is used by Hampshire County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

For further information parents can request a leaflet from the school office and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendanceguidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm

8. My Child is trying to avoid coming to school, what should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problem with regular attendance is best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never best to cover up their absence or give in to pressure from them to allow them to be absent. This gives the child the impression that

attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Ways to get support with encouraging your child are:-

- Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries.
- Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons, check with them:-

1. Are they having difficulty with their school work?
2. Are they having friendship difficulties?
3. Are there big changes at home? (Such as moving house, family break-up, family member unwell, bereavement or loss).

It is really important to try and establish what the reason is for your child's reluctance to attend school and that we work together with you and your child to tackle the problem. In some cases, you might find it helpful to discuss the circumstances with another professional other than the class teacher. Please make an appointment to see the Senior Leadership Team. Appointments can be made through the school office.

8.1 Ways parents/carers can encourage good school attendance

- Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning.
- Make sure that your child leaves home in the correct uniform and with the correct equipment, i.e. book bag, P.E. kit etc.
- Show your child that you value and are interested in their education by talking to them about their learning. Chat to them about the things they have learnt, who they have played with etc.
- For many parents of Year R children this may be the first time that your child has been separated from you during the day, this can seem daunting for both of you at first. However, consistency, a caring and supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

9. My child is going to be leaving to attend another school, how do I arrange this?

If your child is leaving our school to go to another school parents are asked to

- Give the school office comprehensive information about your plans including, the date and time of your move, your new address and telephone numbers (if they are changing), your child's new school and the start date when known. **This should be done in writing as early as possible** so that the office can organise the transfer of your child's details to their new school in order to make the transition as smooth as possible for your child.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a "Child Missing in Education". This requires the school and Hampshire County Council to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided. Children remain registered as being "on Roll" at Rowner Infant until we have confirmation from their new school that they have started to attend.

10. Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or T.V work & modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as "C" and authorised absence.

11. Absence through competing at regional county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national or international events and competitions. It is however, the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Head teacher and are not likely to be approved if it is regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching. If leave is authorised by the Head teacher it will be coded as "P" Approved Sporting Activity.

12 Absence through visiting a parent in prison.

Children who have a parent in. prison will be authorised to visit them in line with the prison's visiting rules and regulations. Barnado's chief executive, Javed Khan, said children with a parent in prison were the innocent victims of someone else's crime, and often struggled with having a parent taken away. "Intensifying that loss by taking away precious visiting hours or making visits unnecessarily uncomfortable will only punish the children," Newtown C of E Primary School upholds this sentiment. We will require copies of visiting orders so that we can authorise the absence.

13. Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman Families

Please note pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12 month period to be able to request leave for work services. Further support and guidance is available from Hampshire County Council's EMTAS Service.

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place and records the absence as authorised through the "T" code. **Distance Learning Packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.**

14. Record Preservation School registers are legal documents.

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. At Rowner Infant School we use a centrally hosted computer system to record all registers. These records are used to provide attendance data. This data is shared with parents/carers and is transferred to children's new schools if they move school. Hampshire County Council and the Local Education Authority are able to access attendance data and share the information with other agencies where appropriate. All records are subject to Data Protection Laws.

15. School attendance of children and young people open to social care

Schools are asked to provide details in the event that a child or young person with a social worker is absent for more than 5 consecutive days other than for illness or permitted absence, or whose emerging pattern of attendance is likely to lead to persistent absenteeism.

Appendix A

Rowner Infant School school day:

1. The school is open to the children:

   8:45 am
   Classroom doors are open from 8.45 – 8.55
   Arrivals at 8.56 am must report to main reception

2. The school day ends at:

   3:15pm

3. An attendance register is called at the beginning of each AM session and again after lunch at 1.05 pm.

Appendix B

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website

Hampshire County Council Guidance is available on Hantsweb at
http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm

Appendix C

MEDICAL EVIDENCE SLIP

Name of Child: ……..……. Date: ...../...../……...

The above child is absent from school today due to an emergency medical appointment.

Evidence seen:

Appendix D

Attendance Support Plan

Less than 95% attendance

- The Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer will write to parents/carers informing them of their child/children's attendance. (if there has been a genuine period of illness this will be discussed. It will be part of good practice to ensure that your child does not have any un-met medical needs.)
- An attendance support plan to improve attendance may be put in place based upon individual needs. This might include a referral to parental support.
- Medical evidence will be requested to verify the reasons for the absence if evidence is not provided the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Less than 90% attendance

- If the attendance support plans implemented have not resulted in the required changes within a 4 week period the Head teacher will meet with the parents.
- A referral to the Attendance Legal Panel will be discussed at monthly attendance review meeting. (this is a supportive measure for families with a pattern of poor attendance. It is designed to investigate specific difficulties being experienced by families that inhibits their ability to attend regularly and on time)
- A Fixed Term Penalty Notice may be issued.

Lateness

- Children who are often late will not be made to feel unwelcome or blamed for their lateness by staff.
- The Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer will have informal conversations with parents and carers at the gate/classroom door to set targets for improvement.
- A more formal meeting may be arranged dependant on needs. If there is not an improvement the Head teacher will meet with parents to offer a support package to target improved punctuality.

10 or more lates in a 6 week period

- This level of lateness will adversely affecting children's learning and their emotional wellbeing.

- The Headteacher will now be aware of the escalating concern regarding punctuality and will meet with parents to discuss how improvements can be made.

- A Fixed Term Penalty Notice may be issued.