



Whole School Attendance Policy for Rush Common School

Introduction

Rush Common School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. Achievement of 100% attendance for all children, is encouraged. The importance of regular and punctual attendance will be conveyed to pupils and their parents/carers.

School attendance is subject to a variety of legislation relating to Education Law. The Whole School Attendance Policy is written to reflect relevant legislation together with the guidance produced by the Department for Education (the "DfE").

Each year, the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets reflecting both national and local attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance annually to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

The Policy includes procedures the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).
2. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

3. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.40a.m. The registers will remain open for **30 minutes until 9.10a.m.** Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation as to the reason why.

Where the absence at registration was, for example, to attend an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

4. Afternoon registration will be at **1.00p.m.** The registers will close at **1.30p.m.**
5. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.
6. Parents/carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day and provide an explanation for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks of the first day of absence, the absence will become unauthorised.
7. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort should be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours. The school acknowledges that this is not always possible.

Absence from School

8. First Day Absence

8.1 Parents/carers must contact the school office before 8.40am if their child is unable to attend school. School will contact parents/carers via telephone or InTouch if they have not received any communication explaining the absence.

8.2 It is the responsibility of the School Office Manager to ensure this happens.

8.3 Information concerning absence will be recorded in accordance with school systems.

9. Day 1-3 of Absence

Parents/carers will be contacted on a daily basis until communication has been achieved.

First Call Procedure

First day calling is for children absent without explanation. The School office will call everyone on the absent pupil's contact list until the school receives an answer. School will leave messages if there is a voicemail option. Alternatively or in addition, school will use InTouch and/or email to contact a parent.

The Headteacher (or Deputy HT/AHT/SENCO) will be informed and a Senior Leader will make a prompt home visit.

If school cannot get an answer following this visit or there are immediate concerns around the safety of an absent pupil, then a prompt referral to children's services / MASH / Police will be made. This may include a request for a welfare call from the police.

10. Continuing Absence

Should communication with parents/carers not be possible by the third day of absence, the school will be obliged to contact Oxfordshire County Council Attendance Team.

11. Absence of ten days or more

In accordance with relevant legislation, any pupil who has been absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days, will be referred to the Attendance Team. Such referral would include details of any school action taken.

Absence Notes

12. Letters and/or emails received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. Should there be any concerns regarding absence that may require further investigation, letters and/or emails may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

13. It is the responsibility of the Head of Pupil Support and Welfare to monitor and to highlight any concerns regarding attendance.
14. Where a pattern of absences emerges, the school will endeavour to resolve any concerns with parents/carers. The Head of Pupil Support and Welfare will liaise with the Attendance Team to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.
15. Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing of the school's concern. In the event of continuing absence, the school will request a meeting with the parents/carers to discuss the absences.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

16. Relevant Legislation

16.1 The Education Act 1996 (the "ACT") 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 who have parental responsibility and/or those who 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.

16.2 In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the Attendance Team to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

- 16.3 Should Rush Common School not agree to grant leave and parents/carers take their child on holiday regardless, then this will be counted as an unauthorised absence (truancy). The school and our County Attendance Officer may consider issuing a Penalty Fine of £60 for this period of unauthorised absence.
- 16.4 Parents/carers could be issued with a Penalty Notice if they:
- fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly;
 - allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
 - fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
 - their child persistently arrives late for school after registration.
- 16.5 A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **regardless of the reason**. Absence at this level can cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects. Full support and cooperation is required from parents/carers in order to tackle this problem.
- 16.6 The school monitors absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark will be given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.
- 16.7 PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases may be referred to the Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence, parents/carers could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

17. It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

Promoting Attendance

18. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The Home/School agreement will be used in this way.

Leave of Absence

19. The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "***exceptional circumstances***" including, for example: significant illness of parents; close family bereavement; immediate family weddings. Request for leave will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Parents/carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

20. Should leave be granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school. When considering granting leave for holiday during the term, the school will consider:

- Child's attendance record during the current academic year;
- The impact the absence will have on the child's education;
- Family circumstances;
- Duration of the proposed trip;
- Whether the trip/event is rare.

¹ usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period.

21. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or, do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing attainment of the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

22. Our schools targets are:

- in accordance with legislation, to retain attendance registers for at least 3 years;
- to ensure electronic back-ups are made and preserved for at least 3 years;
- to ensure all registers are stored electronically.

Register and Admission Roll keeping

23. The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Categorisation of Absence

24. Absence of any pupil on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration, must be categorised as one of the following:

- [1] unauthorised;
- [2] authorised;
- [3] approved educational activity.

a. Unauthorised Absence

This is for pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

b. Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed, in accordance with the Education Act 1996, as valid.

c. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off-site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- i. field trips and educational visits;
- ii. sporting activities;
- iii. link courses or approved education off-site;
- iv. most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

Review of this policy

The Board of Governors of LAB, review the policy every three years. It may however review the policy earlier than this if the Government produces new regulations, or if it receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Approved by the the Board of Governors of LAB on 20th September 2023

Signed: *Kristen Fawcett* (Headteacher)

Signed: *Surja Datta* (Chair of Board of Directors)

Date for Review: September 2026