



Redbourn Infants & Nursery School Redbourn Junior School



Attendance Policy for Schools

Date of Last Review: 2013

Latest Review Date: April 2016

Reviewed By: Jane Byrne & Nathan Hairon

Frequency of Review: Every three years

Next Review Date: September 2019

File Name: Attendance Policy (joint)

Adapted from: Existing policy

Uploaded to website on: 23 May 2016

Statement of Intent

At Redbourn Infant & Nursery School and Redbourn Junior School, we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

The Schools aim to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

We expect to work closely with our Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) in partnership with our parents to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

We will provide a safe learning environment in which all children and adults are respected. This policy identifies our belief that parents, carers and the school have a responsibility to the children to ensure they have the opportunity to benefit fully from their education.

Section 7 of Education Act 1996 states:

Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

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

(a) to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Targets

Local authorities and schools are no longer required to set targets for persistent absence and overall attendance respectively. The Department for Education however, remains firmly of the view that unnecessary absence is unacceptable and must be prevented and tackled by schools.

The Department therefore, expects all schools and local authorities to continue focusing on reducing overall absence, particularly unauthorised absence and persistent absence. Absence will continue to be monitored closely via the pupil level school census and the Secretary of State's power to require an individual school to set absence targets where a school's absence record is of particular concern is being retained.

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between the schools, parents and pupils.

All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

- The **Schools** will ensure they provide a safe learning environment and work to achieve an atmosphere where the children are happy to attend school. They will ensure records of attendance are kept daily according to Government Legislation and follow up poor attendance or punctuality. The Schools will keep parents informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record and work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern. School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- **Parents** will ensure children attend school regularly, punctually and in a fit condition to learn. They will inform school on the first day of an absence by email or telephone of the reason for the absence and maintain regular communication. Parents will avoid arranging family holidays during term time.
- **Pupils** are expected to attend school regularly and punctually and be ready to learn. Pupils will not leave the school without permission.

Registration and Punctuality

Attendance and punctuality are considered to be important.

At the Infant and Nursery School children are involved in self-registering in the mornings in classes and the register is also called. Class doors open early at 8.45am to allow parents greater flexibility and the doors are shut at 8.55am. The Nursery opens at 8.40am (Morning session) and 12.30pm (Afternoon Session).

At the Junior School doors open at 8.45am. Children must be in class by 8.55am when doors are shut and the register is taken.

Any children who arrive after this time are required to report to the school office and be signed in. Registers close at 9.15am and any child who arrives after this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless there are extenuating circumstances.

If parents are persistently late in bringing their children to school, this is brought to the attention of the Headteacher, who will contact the parents and work with them to bring about an improvement in punctuality. It is the responsibility of the class teacher and school secretary to ensure that the attendance register is correctly maintained and is accurate. Should the attendance of any child be causing concern, the class teacher must alert the Headteacher, who will discuss it with the parent, and /or the School AIO as appropriate.

First day of absence

It is the policy of the Schools that parents telephone or email the school on the first day of absence to inform why the child is not in school. This information is passed to the class teacher. Should the school office not have received an explanation for a child's absence by 9.30am, the school secretary will contact the parents by telephone for an explanation.

Procedure for continuation of absence

The Schools expects parents to maintain reasonable communication with the school during the absence of the child. Initially this would probably be daily but may become less frequent in the case of a long absence. On return to school the parent/ carer must send a letter indicating the reason for the child's absence and any information the school needs in response to this situation.

Should the absence become extended the school would expect that a doctor, hospital or other professional would become involved. For any absence of over two weeks unless the child has been hospitalised, the school will require a letter from the doctor indicating what has been the reason for the absence.

Authorising Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 has now been amended as from 1st September 2013.

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

Absence should be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent for Exceptional Circumstances with permission previously granted by the school (see Appendix below). In authorising such absences the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance should be considered.
- The pupil is ill, attending a medical appointment or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil is taking part in public performances as long as a County licence has been granted.
- It is for an unavoidable medical/ dental appointment (though these should be made, whenever possible, outside school hours.)

If the absence does not comply with these criteria, it will not be authorised and marked as such on the class register.

Absence for Family Holidays

The Schools will not authorise family holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and you may be fined or legal action taken against you. Holidays which need to take place for exceptional reasons may be authorised provided that the form set out in the Appendix is completed and submitted in advance of the absence.

Marking registers

The register is a legal document and must be carefully maintained at all times. As the school uses SIMS.net Attendance to monitor attendance, in the infant and junior school each teacher must ensure their register is checked and accurate data sent to the secretary's office by 9.10 am or 1.10pm (1.25pm in the Junior School). In the nursery class a register is taken although attendance is not statutory. The secretary will then take the responsibility for entering the data onto the computer and contacting any parents where no reason has been offered for an absence.

Monitoring attendance

In order to monitor the general trends of attendance, the secretary runs a half termly report that she passes to the Headteacher with any comment on unexpected data. Should there be any cause for concern the Headteacher will investigate this. In the infant and junior classes all children who have achieved less than 95% attendance receive a personal letter from the Headteacher explaining that if absence continues at this rate it will have a negative impact on the child's educational achievements. Headteachers will report termly to the governors on attendance within their report to governors. Annual attendance data is also recorded on the Ofsted Governor Dashboard.

Responding to attendance issues

The school recognises the importance of early intervention and the need to develop a range of strategies for any pupil or parents who are experiencing difficulties in attending school.

The Infant & Nursery School has a system of reward for good attendance which includes Paddington Bear – a weekly award given to the Class with the best attendance for the week and annual attendance certificates which reward excellent attendance and special achievement.

At the Junior School there are termly awards for 100% attendance and annual attendance certificates are awarded for excellent attendance.

We do also recognise that younger children are liable to catch colds or becoming unwell frequently as they start mixing with other children and seek to support parents allowing their child sufficient time to recover so they are fit to return to effective learning. By ensuring we establish regular contact with parents of children who are absent we endeavour to ensure the child returns to school when they are fit to learn again.

Penalty Notices

We expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. In cases of persistent disregard for the importance of school attendance, the school has the right to invoke the system of penalty notices.

If a pupil has significant irregular attendance or unauthorised absence of at least 21 sessions in a term (including unauthorised holidays) the Headteacher may ask the Local Authority ("LA") to issue a Penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.

The school recognises its legal responsibilities, those of the AIO and of the LA. It will take such legal action as required to safeguard the child's right to attend school and receive their education.

**Redbourn Infants and Nursery School
Redbourn Junior School**

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL ABSENCE DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

As a parent/carer you should fill in this form if you want to take your child out of school during term time.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 has now been amended as from 1st September 2013.

The Headteacher may not grant authorised absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and you may be fined or legal action taken against you.

Parent / carer please complete		For Office use only	
Child Name	Class	% attendance	Comments

Dates Requested: from	to	inclusive
Please explain your reasons for taking your child(ren) out of school during term time below:		
Signature of Parent/Carer _____		Date: _____

Headteacher		Authorised / Declined	Date
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Please return this form to the school office.