

John Ruskin Primary School and Language Classes

Attendance Policy

Coordinator: Donna Brooks
Last review: November 2021
Next review: November 2024



“Be responsible, be fair, stay positive and care”

Aims

John Ruskin School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all our pupils. We believe that all pupils benefit from education and from regular and punctual school attendance and good behaviour. We recognise that good attendance correlates with high levels of achievement. To these ends we will do all we can to ensure that all pupils attend to their fullest and that any problems which impede this are identified and acted on as soon as possible.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly,
- arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the school day,
- tell a member of staff about any problem that is making it hard for them to attend school.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- encourage their children to attend school every day and on time,
- ensure that they contact the school by 9.20am whenever their child is unable to attend school,
- endeavour to contact the school by 9.20am on the first day of their child's absence and everyday thereafter unless it is known how long their child will be off.
- ensure that their children arrive in school fully prepared for the school day and check that they have completed their homework,
- provide the school with up-to-date home, work and emergency contact numbers,
- **not arrange family holidays to take place during the school term,**
- inform the school in confidence about any problem that might affect their child's attendance or behaviour.
- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parents'/carer's legal responsibility (section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents/carers can expect that the school will:

- record their children's attendance regularly, accurately and efficiently,
- make every reasonable effort to contact the parent if their child fails to attend school without good reason,
- deal discretely and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent,
- make all efforts to encourage good attendance and behaviour,
- instigate proper enquiries before removing the child from the school roll,
- provide a good quality education.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

We will encourage good attendance by:

- accurately completing attendance registers at the beginning of each session,
- recording attendance levels on pupils' records and reports to parents,
- publicly rewarding perfect and good attendance for classes every week and individual children termly, [certificates awarded in assemblies],
- sending parents/carers attendance figures every half term or more often, where there are concerns about poor attendance,
- inviting parents to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and/ or the School's Education Welfare Officer where concerns persist about poor attendance,
- recording late arrivals in late books which provides a record of the dates and times children are late,
- sending weekly letters to parents/carers informing them of late marks,
- inviting parents to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and/or the School's Education Welfare Officer where concerns persist about lateness,
- providing parents with a copy of the John Ruskin attendance information for parents once a year at parents evening. This will also be available upon request from the Assistant Headteacher or school office brochure see appendix 2.

Leave during term time

No leave will be granted during term time, except at the Headteacher's discretion in emergency circumstances. Parents will need to complete a form requesting this emergency leave (see appendix 1) and provide documentary evidence.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Southwark Council has introduced Fixed Penalty notices for irregular attendance and unauthorised term time leave. A Fixed Penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution and requires a child's parent(s) to pay a fine for their child's attendance or unauthorised leave.

Southwark Early Help Service will be administering the notices.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When pupils fail to attend school without a satisfactory explanation we will:

- contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence and each day absent thereafter by telephone, letter or email,
- make a second attempt to contact the parent or carer if there has been no response and the unauthorised absence has exceeded 3 school days,
- write to the parent/carer if their child is late in any given week,
- if non-attendance continues beyond 9 days or if the pupil fails to attend for 3 weeks within any 6-week period refer to the EWAS [Education and Welfare Service] or the school's Attendance and Behaviour Panel to resolve any problems that may be preventing the pupil from attending regularly,

- parents will be sent a copy of any referral made to the EWAS and invited to an interview to discuss it.

The total number of lates and absences for each child will be monitored by the Assistant Headteacher at least half termly:

- parents of all children whose attendance falls below 90% will be written to,
- parents of children whose lateness reaches 10% will be written to,
- parents of children whose lateness or attendance continues to be of concern will be invited to an attendance interview if there is no improvement,
- referrals will be made for children whose attendance or punctuality does not improve after an attendance interview with the parent'/carers to the EWAS,
- parents will be sent a copy of any referral made to the EWAS and invited to an interview to discuss it.

The return to school and the reintegration of a pupil who returns to the school after a lengthy absence requires special planning. The Assistant Headteacher will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of the programme. All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process which requires sensitivity and vigilance and that any problems should be notified to the Assistant Headteacher as soon as possible. In collaboration with the parent and the EWO programmes will be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. This may involve the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Coordinator [SENCO] as appropriate. Staff will be notified of the return of a long-term absentee by the Assistant Headteacher.

Children Missing Education Protocol

Taken from Southwark Children's & Adults Services, February 2017

Who are 'children missing education'?

Department for Education statutory guidance (2016) defines children missing education as 'children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school'.

Children may come to miss education for a number of reasons, including the following:

- they may never have started in a school;
- they may cease to attend school, due to exclusion or parents withdrawing them;
- they may have left primary school but not completed transition to secondary school;
- they may have moved into a new area, including from abroad.

Southwark faces particular challenges with a highly mobile population and significant movement in and out of the borough throughout the school year. Children missing education have been identified as a priority by Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board.

Children missing education are plainly at risk of educational under-achievement, with a potential long-term impact on their opportunities. They may also be exposed to other risks: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Dfe, 2016) states that: 'A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being

victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation'. Ofsted (2014) has identified that 'Children who are missing from home, school or care are at greater risk of sexual exploitation'.

School responsibilities

'Keeping children safe in education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges' (DfE, 2016) explains that we should follow the school procedures for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. We put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education.

We must inform the Local Authority when we are about to add or delete a pupil's name from the school admission register for any reason. This applies to all children with the exception of those starting or leaving school at standard transition points, i.e. at the start of the first year and completion of the final year of education normally provided by that school. The legal basis for these duties is set out in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016, with further details in Annexe A of 'Keeping children safe in education' (DfE 2016) and 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' (DfE, 2016).

We will notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register, and must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. Where we notify the local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, we are required to provide:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent with whom the pupil is going to live, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE 2016) states that 'It is essential that schools comply with these duties, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be at risk of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of being harmed, exploited or radicalised'.

DfE School Attendance guidance (2016) also states that 'All schools must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more'.

Notification of potential CME

Southwark's process for identifying and tracking children missing education is led through the Pupil Tracking and Licensing Team in the Education Access division in Southwark Children's and Adults' Services.

Where a child remains on our school roll and there are concerns about them not receiving full time education as a result of poor attendance or other factors, we will notify Southwark Early Help Localities Service.

Southwark expects that we will have undertaken reasonable checks to confirm the destination school and/or address of a child leaving the school, including telephone calls, letters and where appropriate home visits to establish this information.

Organisation

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils the importance of the education being provided. For this reason, it is essential that pupils see that staff arrive to lessons on time and well prepared. In addition, the following staff have specific responsibilities.

Headteacher

- To oversee the whole policy.
- To have particular regard to the equalities aspects of the policy as they pertain to gender and ethnicity.
- To report to governors.

Assistant Headteacher [Attendance Co-ordinator]

- To liaise with teachers.
- To oversee the collation and monitor the analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative/attendance staff.
- To report to the school's Senior Management team and staff on attendance matters and trends.
- To liaise with the link EWAS.
- To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time.
- To reinforce good practice in staff meetings.
- To organise attendance assemblies.
- To organise the reintegration of long-term absentees in collaboration with the SENCO.
- To have particular regard to the equalities aspects of the policy as they pertain to gender and ethnicity.

Admin Staff

- To collate and analyse attendance data.
- To initiate contact with parents in the case of concerns about attendance as detailed above [letters, attendance interviews].
- To record all reasons for absences in the register.

- To follow up immediately any lateness or unexplained non-attendance by telephone call on the day of absence or letter to the parent/carer when they have been unable to speak to the parent/carer on the phone.

Class Teachers

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To inform the Assistant Headteacher of any concerns.
- To display good attendance certificates in the classroom.
- To have particular regard to the equalities aspects of the policy as they pertain to gender and ethnicity.

APPENDIX 1

Application for Leave during Term Time JOHN RUSKIN PRIMARY SCHOOL and LANGUAGE CLASSES

Parents/Carers must ask permission for their child to be absent during term time, and it is at the Headteacher's discretion to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised. The Headteacher may authorise leave during term time for exceptional circumstances only. Evidence will need to be provided to support the reason for the request. If leave is taken without permission, or no application is made, parents/carers risk being issued with a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted upon their return. Parents/Carers wishing to apply for their child to have leave from school should complete this form and return it to school for authorisation at least two weeks before the proposed leave. The application will be discussed with the school's Link Educational Welfare Officer whose advice will guide the outcome.

PARENTS/CARERS SECTION					
Surname of child				First name	
Date of birth		Year		Class	
Full name of parent(s)/carer(s)					
Address of child					
Postcode		Telephone number			
Reason for request					
Departure and return Date					
Parent/Carer signature				Date	

SCHOOL SECTION		
Would the child miss any national tests or examinations?	Yes / No	
Is his/her attendance above 95% over the past 12 months?	Yes / No	
Has (s)he had leave during term-time in the last 12 months? (If so, please give dates, reasons, and number of school days leave)	Yes / No	
Holiday in Term Time	(i) approved _____ school days	(ii) not approved _____ school days
Reasons		
Date parent/carers informed of approval/non-approval		
Headteacher's signature		Date

