

# Attendance Policy

Approved at FGB committee: September 2016

Updated: September 2016

Review date: September 2017



Reigate  
Parish Church  
Primary School

## Who we are

Reigate Parish Church Primary School: A trusting, respectful and caring place for children to reach their full potential, with the Christian faith and Christian values at our heart.

## Our Aims

- We aim to recognise, nurture and harness the strengths and talents of all children.
- To provide a broad, balanced and creative learning environment through excellence in teaching.
- To promote social, cultural, moral and spiritual development, supporting pupils and staff to become confident and responsible members of society.
- To establish an atmosphere in which each child has a positive self-image and where individual achievements are valued by all.
- To build self-confidence, self-esteem and independence in order to achieve success.
- To value curiosity, encourage a questioning attitude and promote a love of life-long learning.
- To grow from being an outstanding infant school into an outstanding primary school whilst maintaining our caring ethos, culture and atmosphere.
- And, working in partnership with parents, to support their child's learning and development.

## Values

Our guiding principles, which stem from our Christian faith, are: '**Faith, Hope & Love**'

These are underpinned by 10 core values:

1. **Respect:** Valuing myself and other people, and treating them as I would like to be treated.
2. **Friendship:** Being thoughtful and kind, looking after each other through good times and hard times.
3. **Honesty:** Speaking the truth and acting truthfully.
4. **Caring:** Being concerned for and looking after myself, other people and God's world.
5. **Perseverance:** Always doing my best and not giving up.
6. **Confidence:** Knowing that I am special and loved and that I have something to offer to other people.
7. **Responsibility:** Being able to take charge of myself, other people or things. Being able to be trusted to do the right thing.
8. **Forgiveness:** Loving people even when they make mistakes. Always looking for the best in each other.
9. **Trust:** Being relied on to do the right thing and relying on each other to do the right thing.
10. **Being Creative:** Using our imagination, ideas and skills to make the world a better and more beautiful place.

## 1. Principles of the Attendance Policy

Reigate Parish Church Primary School firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we will encourage parents to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

The expectation of this school is that all pupils attend 100% unless there is a genuine reason for absence, approved by the headteacher.

Full, regular and punctual attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. The school will encourage and value high attendance rates. When absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school on time.

Parents and school leaders share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at Reigate Parish Church Primary School are maximised and that rates of unauthorised absenteeism and persistent absenteeism are kept to a minimum. The school will recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parents, the Education Welfare Officer and other relevant services to deal with any issues.

The school will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with pupils and their parents and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

## 2. Parents' Responsibilities

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), article 28 states that "Every child has the right to an education."

Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration (8.55am). Registers are open from 8.55 – 9.20am. The register is taken in class at 8.55am and then the register at 9.00am is taken to the office. If a child arrives after 8.55am his/her parent should report directly, with their child, to the school office in order to sign into school in the late book. Children can come into school from 8.45am.

### **If your Child is Absent**

Parents should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they must contact the school by 9.30am, on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, by email, by letter or in person.

Parents may not authorise their child's absence - only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. (Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.)

### Links between Attendance and Achieving Well at School

- The impact of missing school is considerable.
- If a child only has 90% attendance this equates to half a day a week a year missed or 19 days per academic year.
- When attendance drops to 80% this is the same as missing one day every week.
- If a child is 5 minutes late every day that equates to 3 days lost each year (Surrey statistics 2011).
- It is the government's aim for all children to have at least 95% attendance.
- We aim for all our children to be in school all of the time.

### Requesting Time off from School

The school's term dates and INSET dates are published a year in advance and we therefore do not see any reason for parents/carers to take their child/children out of school during term time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

### The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

### Leave of Absence

The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The number of days absence authorised will be dependent upon the exceptional circumstance, but normally would not be more than five days.

Birthday treats / day trips with family / most family holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.

Parents will need to complete the "leave of absence form" and hand into school three weeks before the expected leave, outlining in detail the exceptional circumstances that necessitate their child being taken out of school. The headteacher will use this and a conversation with parents to arrive at the decision as to whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Where a child is taken out of school for a leave of absence during term time for 10 sessions or more without the authority of the head teacher then the school can issue a penalty notice. In these circumstances **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent and a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if they persist in taking the leave of absence.

## 3. School Responsibilities

### Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Education Welfare monitors the attendance of all school children on a regular basis. The EWO works with school and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to Education Welfare. The EWO will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, and unauthorised absence persists, the EWO can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution or consider an Education Supervision Order. Failure to

ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, in a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

### **Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices**

#### **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This is for **each parent** for **each child**. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 for each parent for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 for each parent for each child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days (from September 2013).

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days then this will result in the parents being prosecuted for the children's non-attendance at school, under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued**

Education Welfare may issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a penalty notice is issued, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice.

Where a child is taken out of school for a leave of absence during term time for 10 sessions or more without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.

Pupils identified by Police and EWO's engaged on Truancy Patrol and who have incurred unauthorised absences will also be subject to a penalty notice.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### **Registers**

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. 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.

### **Registration and Lateness**

It is expected that children will arrive at school on time and for the register to be taken in class at 8.55am. Children are able to come into their class from 8.45am. The school day begins promptly at 8.55am. Please help your child by not arriving late.

If pupils arrive at school after the register has been closed which is at 9.20am then a late mark ("L") will be recorded on the register. If a child arrives after 9.20am then they are marked as "U" which means 'late after the close of register' and this will be counted as an unauthorised absence for that session.

For both situations, because the child has been signed into the late book (name and the time of arrival) we have accurate attendance data in case there was a fire.

In cases of persistent late arrival to school, school will contact the parents and if necessary make a referral to the EWO.

### **Responding To Non-Attendance**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school on the morning the child is absent.

When a pupil does not attend school the school will respond in the following:

- If no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer, the school will endeavour to contact them that day by phone or email.
- If there is no response the school will try to contact the parent/carer on every subsequent day of absence.
- If, by the third day there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss their concerns and the reasons for the absence.
- In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority.
- The school will monitor the attendance levels of all pupils

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

- Holding a meeting between the headteacher and the parent(s).
- Writing a letter to parents stating concerns.
- Involving the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **Pupils Leaving during the School Day and Medical and Dental Appointments.**

- Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book these appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.
- Parents must sign their child out on leaving the school and sign back in on their return.

### **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling each **half** term. Any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The DfE and the Local Authority monitor the levels of PA children and levels of absence in all schools.

Attendance of all pupils is tracked and monitored carefully as absence affects academic attainment.

**The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:**

- the headteacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents on attendance matters;
- parents / carers will be contacted half termly if attendance falls below 92% and/or there are eight or more occasions when the child has been late.
- appropriate personal encouragement or congratulation will be offered to individual children;
- clear attendance information will be entered in the school brochure, school newsletters and on the website;
- the school's expectations will be made clear to new parents;
- information in the home-school agreement;

At Reigate Parish Church Primary School we ask parents and carers to come into school to discuss any circumstances which may impact on their child's attendance.

We commit to supporting families in order that children have maximum opportunity to achieve in the school system.

Children whose attendance falls under 80% are missing on average one day's schooling each week and this seriously damages their life chances.

2016/2017 Academic Year

Dear Parents

### **Request to take your Child out of School for a Leave of Absence**

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

The majority of parents do make arrangements (medical, holiday) so that their child remains in school. In 2015-2016 our attendance was 97.68% which is very good especially as our target was 96.9%. Our target for 2016-2017 remains at 96.9%.

Reigate Parish Church Primary School firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we encourage parents to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance. The expectation of this school is that all pupils attend 100% unless there is a genuine reason for absence, approved by the headteacher.

The impact of missing school is considerable:

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- It is the government's aim for all children to have at least 95% attendance.
- We aim for all our children to be in school all of the time.

Under the new regulations, which came into effect 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 the headteacher cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The number of days that will be authorised depends upon the exceptional circumstance, but normally would not be more than five days.

Birthday treats / day trips with family / most family holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised. May I remind you that we strongly advise parents not to book holidays during school term time. The majority of work children do in school is carefully structured so that new concepts taught in one lesson are developed in the following lessons. Children who are absent at any point in the term **will** miss important concepts and it can be hard for them to catch up.

Any request must be received in writing and not less than three weeks before the intended period of leave. Parents will be informed whether the leave of absence has been authorised before the first day of absence. Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request.

School works closely with our Education Welfare Officer who conducts regular register checks and any absence (authorised and unauthorised) is discussed.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs F Davis, Headteacher

**Application: Requesting to take your Child out of School**

Name of child: ..... Class: .....

I am applying for leave of absence for my children for \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ to : \_\_\_\_\_

Number of school days: \_\_\_\_\_

**The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:**

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

..... do use a separate sheet.

**What is the impact on your child not being in school?**

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

Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? Yes / no

If Yes, please give dates and details : \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: ..... Date: .....

**Seen by Mrs Clark:**  
**Seen by Mrs Davis:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ % attendance to date
- \_\_\_\_\_ % leave of absence to date
- \_\_\_\_\_ % illness to date
- \_\_\_\_\_ % other to date

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