

# Attendance Policy

**'Nurturing Individuality, Growing Together,  
Embracing Community'**



***'How good and pleasant it is when God's people  
live together in unity'.***

***Psalm 133:1***

**This policy has been written to underpin our core values of being  
Responsible, Caring, Fearless and Secure, with particular reference to our Christian values.**

## **Aims**

- To achieve an attendance target of 96% or above.
- To work closely with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor the attendance of children and respond to concerns about levels of absence promptly.
- To encourage parents not to take their children out of school during term time.

## **Purpose**

Roehampton Church Forest School (RCFS) wants each and every child to have the best possible attendance at school to enable them to reach their full potential. There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results for children. Children who frequently miss school may fall behind in their work which may affect their future prospects. Absence may also have an effect on friendships. Young people who are frequently absent from school are more likely to become involved in, or be a victim of crime and anti-social behaviour. At RCFS, we work closely with families to support them to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children.

## **Promoting Good Attendance**

Roehampton Church Forest School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- Every half term we will hold an attendance ceremony. Children that have achieved 100% attendance receive a certificate, attendance badge and a small prize. Children who have the most improved attendance also receive a certificate.
- Every Monday the class with the best attendance for the week is given an extra 5 minutes play at playtime.
- Every day that the whole class are on in and on time, the class receives a letter. Once the class has spelt 'Roehampton Church Forest School', then that class receives a non-uniform day.
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics.
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

At the end of the year, any child achieving 100% attendance will receive an extra prize. If a child achieves two years' attendance at 100%, they are rewarded with a £10 voucher at the end of year service. This prize will be increased each year that the child achieves 100%. If the child gains a 100% attendance for the whole 8 years at RCFS, then they will receive a prize of their choice, e.g. lunch, cinema or theatre trip. (letter to parents – Appendix 1)

Additionally, every child who has made significant improvement in their attendance and punctuality over the year, also receives a certificate and small prize.

## **Monitoring Attendance**

### **The Three Letter System**

#### **Introduction:**

The three-letter system is intended to enable schools and colleges continuously and consistently to monitor and address poor school attendance. The system offers schools the opportunity to target non-attendance methodically and progressively up to and including the point at which a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be necessary. The system is based on three model letters which schools can send to parents when there are concerns about any emerging patterns of absenteeism.

It is intended to apply essentially to absence which is unauthorised, but with some modification (and appropriate rewording of the letters) it might in certain circumstances be used to target patterns of absence which are authorised but which are beginning to cause concern. Schools should, however, decline to continue to authorise such absences once doubts arise as to their legitimacy.)

### **Key Features and Potential Benefits:**

- Headteacher/SENCo can focus on the attendance of all pupils at least once a half term. Headteacher/SENCo can quickly and easily identify those pupils whose attendance is becoming a cause of concern.
- In most cases Letter 1 (Appendix 2) brings about a rapid improvement in attendance and no further action is required.
- The system provides a clear record of the school's own efforts to improve attendance should it subsequently be necessary to involve the Education Welfare Service.
- As the Education Welfare Service 'School Attendance' leaflet is sent with Letter 2 (Appendix 3), parents are made aware of the existence and role of the Education Welfare Service prior to any subsequent involvement should this prove necessary.
- The school can readily identify emerging attendance problems and therefore target support accordingly.
- The school builds up a consistent record of their own attendance interventions and is able to ensure that when they do need to involve the Education Welfare Service they do this only when their own efforts have proved unsuccessful.
- The school produces a record of attendance every week for all pupils whose attendance has fallen beneath 96%.
- These pupils are discussed half termly by the Headteacher & Schools' Attendance Officer (SAO), who then discuss any issues with the EWO, looking for emerging trends and patterns. Families are then targeted by the Headteacher / SENCo for support.

### **Letter 1**

- For those pupils who have been identified for the first time, a copy of Letter 1 (Appendix 2) is sent to the parents.
- Should the pupil's attendance improve but the improvement fail to be sustained, a further copy of Letter 1 may be sent again at a later date.
- This is recorded by saving a copy of the letter in the attendance folder.

### **Letter 2**

- Following the sending of Letter 1, should the pupil's attendance fail to improve or should it fall to a lower level, over the term, a copy of Letter 2 (Appendix 3), together with a copy of the Education Welfare Service 'School Attendance' leaflet is sent to the parent.
- This is recorded by saving a copy of the letter in the attendance folder. The parent / carer will be invited for a discussion with the Headteacher, School Attendance Officer, Deputy Headteacher or SENCo.

### **Letter 3 - School Attendance Panel (SAP) Meeting**

- Should the pupil's attendance still fail to improve or should it fall to a lower level, then a copy of a SAP letter (Appendix 4) is sent to the parents (and copied to the Education Welfare Officer). A record of each letter sent is kept in the attendance folder for each class. The case is formally referred to the Education Welfare Officer and the parent / carer will be invited for a SAP meeting.
- Should the pupil have been absent for two continuous weeks without a satisfactory explanation having been received, or should there be child protection or other immediate welfare concerns then the school may of course make an earlier referral to the Education Welfare Officer, Parent Support or Social Services. Should the child be currently involved with Social Services, the child's social worker will be notified immediately.

### **Responding to Non-Attendance**

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

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carers by 10am the school will endeavour to contact them that day. If the family are not on the telephone, an email will be sent.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carers. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers or invite them into school to discuss their concerns. The school will tell parents/carers that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) who may contact Social Services. The school may also conduct a home visit as a welfare check to see if they can assist.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS can result in further or legal action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution as stipulated by the Department for Education.

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices will only be issued in accordance with the terms within the Code of Conduct set out for Wandsworth. They will only be issued in relation to absence from school, which is unauthorised. At Roehampton Church Forest School, Penalty Notices may be issued to parents / carers when their child's attendance falls below 90% over the previous half term period or after all other procedures have been followed and no improvement in attendance has occurred.

Before issuing a Penalty Notice, the school will deploy other strategies to help the family improve attendance rates. Such strategies might include:

- writing to the child's parents / carers to remind them of their legal responsibilities
- meeting with the child's parents / carers;
- first day absence phone calls;
- setting targets for improvement;
- referral to the Education Welfare Officer;
- involvement of other services/agencies e.g. family worker.

In the first instance, Roehampton Church Forest School will send a warning letter via the EWO (Appendix 5). If a family continue to take leave of absence without authorisation by the Headteacher, then a Penalty Notice Letter will be issued.

## **Holiday Leave during Term Time**

### **Introduction**

Whilst we, as a school, understand that it is very expensive to take holidays during non-term time, as a school, there are certain criteria, set out by the Government, that we must follow. Absence during term-time as a result of term-time holidays interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in schools. RCFS therefore aims to discourage parents from arranging family holidays during term time and all holidays will be marked as unauthorised.

Whilst it is acknowledged that for some parents the issue of choosing when to arrange annual family holidays may be problematic due to particular working patterns and restrictions on when leave can be taken in some occupations, RCFS, nevertheless believes that the vast and overwhelming majority of parents should be able to arrange for their annual family holiday to take place within the published dates for school holidays.

It is recognised that some parents may persist in taking their children out of school for the purposes of a family holiday regardless of the view and response of their child's school. RCFS intends to make a clear statement regarding the issue of term-time holidays, to positively and proactively ensure that the amount of teaching and learning time lost to term-time holidays is, as a result, minimised.

### **Guidance for Parents**

A child does not have a 'right' or 'entitlement' to term-time leave for the purposes of an annual family holiday and that term-time leave, like all leave, can only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Parents should understand that any request for leave of absence in term-time leave will be treated on an individual basis. Decisions to authorise absence will be based on individual family circumstances, the requirements of the child and the child's overall attendance and punctuality.

The school will not, as a rule, agree to leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In all cases, absence will not be authorised unless the authorisation form has been completed (Appendix 5) a child's prior attendance has been 100% and the Headteacher deems the circumstance to be exceptional. Exceptional circumstances will not include financial restraints and making use of holiday discounts.

Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of previous unauthorised term time leave taken in the last 3 years and evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice.

Roehampton Church Forest School will communicate the details of leave of absence taken in term time through:

- the school's overall attendance policy;
- the school brochure;
- school newsletters;
- translations into community languages as necessary;
- parent tours / parents' evenings.

Roehampton Church Forest School will use an 'Application for Leave of Absence' form (Appendix 5). Occasionally parents take their children on holiday without requesting a leave of absence. If the school suspect that this has happened a suspected holiday letter (Appendix 6) will be sent.

### **School Response**

Roehampton Church Forest School will make clear to parents the likely educational impact upon their children if extended leave is taken during term-time. The importance of being at school near and during SATs will also be stressed.

Should absence be agreed we will consider: -

- seeking to establish, and make explicit, if appropriate, the potential educational value of the visit;
- explaining what work the child will miss in school, how it can be made up on return if necessary, and how the parents can help the child;
- asking the pupil to make notes/observations in relation to a class topic or to keep a diary;
- sharing the experience, on return, in a positive way with other children;

Should the school feel unable to comply with the request for leave the reasons for this will be explained to the parents. This explanation should show an understanding of the parents' perspective.

### **Persistent Lateness**

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. The school gates open at 8:40am and the registers close at 9:00am. If a child arrives at school after 9:00am this will affect their attendance rate as they will be marked absent at registration. This applies in all cases for being late, including travel delays. If a parent / carer is running late, then a quick phone call to the school office to let the school know is important, so that a child can be marked in for lunch.

The Headteacher will meet with parents of those children who are regularly late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance. If there is no improvement in punctuality, then a late letter (Appendix 4) will be sent.

### **Changing Schools**

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school they inform the Headteacher at Roehampton Church Forest School as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- The new home address, if it is known.
- The reasons for the transfer.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as requested. If a parent/carer appears to have removed their child from school or the child has completely stopped attending without providing the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and will be reported as a child missing in education.

### **School Organisation**

In order for the School's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff will make attendance and punctuality a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers are requested to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving a consistent message about the value of education.

In addition to this, the school has the following responsibilities:

- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided.
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with the EWO and appropriate access to attendance data.
- Consult and liaise closely with the EWS on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay.
- Work in close collaboration with the EWS during their termly/half termly register analysis.
- Institute an attendance / punctuality aware scheme with assemblies, certificates and rewards.
- Ensure that attendance / punctuality percentages/graphs are displayed around the school and to set whole school attendance targets.
- Monitor and evaluate attendance / punctuality with the EWO.
- Hold School Attendance Panel (SAP) meetings where appropriate in liaison, with the school EWO.



## Roehampton Church Forest School

Responsible, Caring, Fearless, Secure

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245 Roehampton Lane, SW15 4AA

Headteacher: Miss Lynn Anderson

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Ruth Azurdia

### Appendix 1 - Good attendance letter

Address

Date

Dear <<Name of Parent / Carer>>

Re: Attendance Information for «First Name»

We would like to congratulate «First\_Name» for the amazing 100% attendance and punctuality. We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly. As you are aware, it is important for your child's friendships, well-being and academic progress.

The school target for attendance is 96%. We are pleased to inform you that «First\_Name» achieved «Percentage»% attendance for the ??? half of the 2025-2026 academic year.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both you and your child for «Meet /Exceed» the school target.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Miss Anderson  
Headteacher



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**Appendix 2 - Below 96% attendance letter**

Address

Date

Dear <<Name of Parent / Carer>>

Re: Attendance Information for «First Name»

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly. As you are aware, it is important for your child's friendships, well-being and academic progress. The school target for attendance is 96%.

For the ??? half of the 2025-2026 Academic year «First Name» attendance is ??% we understand that their absence maybe for a range of reasons including illness but as their attendance is below the school and government target, we feel it is important to share it with you. If the absence is due to medical reasons, please ensure we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

If you are having difficulties in getting «First Name» to school, please do not hesitate to contact the office and make an appointment to see either, their class teacher, Miss Govier, Mrs Azurdia, Miss Greene or myself. We are very happy to help.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Miss Anderson

Headteacher



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### Appendix 3 - Below 90% attendance letter

Address

Date

Dear <<Name of Parent / Carer>>

The Education Welfare Officer, \*\*\*\*\*, reviewed our attendance records for the current academic term. She noted that «First\_Name» attendance is currently only X%. Please find attached a copy of «First\_Name» attendance record for your information.

I am sure you are aware that it is important that «First\_Name» maintains regular attendance, as any absence may interrupt HIS/HER academic progress and may have an effect on friendships and well-being. You should also be aware that regular attendance is a legal requirement.

Please note that the Education Welfare Officer comes into school on a regular basis to look at our attendance. She will challenge the school to improve the attendance of any pupil who falls below 96%.

If there are any particular circumstances that we may not be aware of which are having an influence on «First\_Name» attending school regularly, or if you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to speak to either, their class teacher, Miss Govier, Mrs Azurdia, Miss Greene or myself. We are very happy to help.

We will continue to monitor «First\_Name» attendance and we look forward to seeing an improvement. Please find attached our leaflet to explain the importance of school attendance. If you require any further information, please look at the Attendance Policy on the school website.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Miss Anderson  
Headteacher



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### Appendix 4 - School Attendance Panel (SAP) meeting request letter

Address

Date

Dear <<Name of Parent / Carer>>

I am writing to inform you that «First\_Name» attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting «First\_Name» progress and we would like to meet with you.

Should «First\_Name» attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under Section 444 Education Act 1996, and a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

The Education Welfare Officer, \*\*\*\*\*, has requested that you attend a meeting to discuss «First\_Name» attendance. She will be visiting Roehampton Church Forest School on DATE and wishes to meet with you at TIME.

During the meeting, we will discuss any concerns you may have, so we can continue to support «First\_Name» in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve HIS/HER attendance. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please find attached our leaflet to explain the importance of school attendance. If you require any further information, please look at the Attendance Policy on the school website.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Miss Anderson  
Head Teacher



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**Appendix 5 - Application for Leave of Absence from School during Term Time**

Please read the following information very carefully

You are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have any right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Following government guidelines, we can only grant leave for exceptional circumstances. Please note that unauthorised leave of absence could result in legal action and a Penalty Notice being issued.

A Penalty Notice involves a fine of £60, per parent/carer, per child if paid with 21 days, rising to £120, per child, per parent/carer if paid within 28 days. Parents/carers who fail to pay the fine will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates Court where upon conviction, a fine of up to £2,500 or three month sentence may be served.

Please note that all unauthorised absences are monitored by the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Persistent unauthorised absence will result in the involvement of the EWO and possible legal proceedings.

Applications to the Head Teacher for term time holiday will be considered individually using criteria as detailed in our Attendance policy and will only be considered if the child's prior attendance is 100%. Requests for leave of absence in term time will be returned to you by the Head Teacher and if your request is not authorised you shall be informed of the reasons why.

I hereby request that (name of pupil) ..... be granted leave of absence from school.

From ..... (date) to ..... (date) inclusive.

For the purpose of:

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

Signed .....

Please state relationship to child .....

Address .....



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**Appendix 6 - Suspected holiday during term time**

Date

Address

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing with regards to «First\_Name» absence from school from <date> to <date>. From information received from other sources, we believe that the absence was due to a family holiday. This means that you have not followed the correct procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time.

Please note that we understand that for a range of reasons, families are compelled to book a holiday in term time. However, Government guidelines indicate that leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. We urge that families are truthful regarding their intentions.

We would be grateful if you could confirm the reason for the absence within 7 days of the date of this letter so this period can be recorded appropriately on the attendance register. However, if the absence was not due to a family holiday and it was due to illness, please provide medical evidence to support this.

If we do not hear from you within the next 7 days, <pupil's name> absence will be recorded as an unauthorised family holiday.

If unauthorised absences are recorded a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carers in respect of each child who is absent from school. However, if a Penalty Notice is not issued, your child's attendance will be monitored and this, along with any further unauthorised absences, would be discussed with you which may lead to legal action being taken under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 if their attendance fails to improve.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Miss Anderson  
Head Teacher