

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.

Vision and Ethos

At Roehampton Church Forest School, we believe that **every moment in school matters**. Good attendance is fundamental to pupils' achievement, wellbeing, safeguarding and life chances.

We are committed to:

- creating a calm, safe, inclusive environment where children want to attend;
- building strong, respectful relationships with families;
- working in partnership to remove barriers to attendance;
- ensuring every child receives their entitlement to a full-time education.

We recognise that absence is often an indication of wider need, and our approach is rooted in support, understanding and early intervention.

Aims

- To promote excellent attendance for all pupils (target 96%+)
- To identify and address barriers to attendance at the earliest stage
- To ensure a consistent, whole-school approach to attendance
- To work in partnership with families and external agencies
- To fulfil all statutory duties in line with DfE guidance

Legal Framework

This policy is based on:

- Education Act 1996
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2024)

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. The school also has a duty to support families and, where necessary, take formal action.

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.

Leadership and Responsibilities

Senior Attendance Champion

The Headteacher is the Senior Attendance Champion and holds overall responsibility for attendance.

They are responsible for:

- setting the strategic direction for attendance;
- ensuring systems are effective and consistently applied;
- monitoring data and leading improvement;
- working with governors, the local authority and external partners.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff:

- promote high expectations for attendance;
- build positive relationships with pupils and families;
- identify concerns early and report them;
- contribute to support plans where needed.

Governors

The governing body:

- monitors attendance data;
- holds leaders to account;
- ensures statutory compliance.

Monitoring Attendance

We monitor attendance daily, weekly and termly, analyse data for individuals and groups, identify trends and patterns, evaluate the impact of interventions, and report regularly to EWO and the governors.

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 (EWS) '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 Educational Welfare Officer (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 are fines imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty notices can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. A penalty notice may be issued to each parent of each child liable for the offence or offences

Penalty Notices apply to pupils of statutory school age, may be issued because:

- Your child has persistent unauthorised absences from school
- Your child is persistently late at school after the registers have closed
- Taking unauthorised holidays in term time
- Unauthorised absence from alternative education provision

The local authority is responsible for administering the process. This means the London Borough of Wandsworth issues the notices on behalf of the schools located in the borough boundary.

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered by schools when the threshold of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (together or separate occasions) is met within 10 school week period – this means it can span weeks, school terms and academic years.

Please note: If in an individual case the local authority (or other authorised officer) believes a penalty notice would be appropriate if a non-attendance trend is identified, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

Who will be fined?

The education-related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 apply to all parents who fall within the definition set out in Section 576 of the Education 1996. This defines 'parent' as:

- (i) all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- (ii) any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person;
- (iii) any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

What is the cost?

First Offences:

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Second Offences (within 3 years):

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Any Further Offence (within 3 years):

A Third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. If the threshold is met for a third or subsequent times within 3 years, alternative legal intervention will be taken, this may include cases being presented straight to a Magistrates' Court.

Holiday Leave during Term Time

Holidays

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in term time to go on holiday. Holidays should be taken during the school holiday periods and the School policy is that absence for holidays will not be authorised during term time, except for in extremely exceptional circumstances. If parents take their child on holiday during term time, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority.

If you feel you fit the criteria for exceptional circumstances in relation to your holiday, please contact the school office to request an Exceptional Leave Form or visit the school website to complete the form. It is important that you complete this form at least 2 weeks prior to the date of travel, attach any evidence i.e. tickets. The expected return date must be specified and adhered to. Absence after this date will be unauthorised.

Exceptional Leave

Applications under 'Exceptional circumstances' although considered on a case by case basis will normally be refused. The exceptional circumstance should be of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time. Leave **should not** be taken until the school has confirmed it has been approved.

If you feel you fit the criteria for exceptional circumstances in relation to your holiday, please contact the school office to request an Exceptional Leave Form. It is important that you complete this form at least one month prior to the date of travel. The expected return date must be specified and adhered to. Absence after this date will be unauthorised.

When completing the form, parents must state why they consider it exceptional circumstances for their child to take time off school. Exceptional circumstances do not include:

- availability of cheap holidays;
- desired accommodation or flights;
- overlap with beginning or end of term
- Visiting family in the UK or abroad if it is not an emergency circumstance.

Exceptional Leave in term time may still not be agreed by the Headteacher when:

- A child is just starting school, or at the beginning of the school year. This is very important as children need to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- A child's attendance record already includes periods of unauthorised absence such as an authorised holiday.
- A child's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking exceptional leave.
- A child is in Year 6

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/carers 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.

Useful websites

- [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [School attendance and absence - childlawadvice.org.uk](#)
- [Absence from school | Contact](#)
- [Illness and your child's education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Behaviour and attendance | Parentkind](#)



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245 Roehampton Lane, SW15 4AA

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,

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,

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,

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,

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.

First Offences:

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Second Offences (within 3 years):

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Any Further Offence (within 3 years):

A Third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. If the threshold is met for a third or subsequent times within 3 years, alternative legal intervention will be taken, this may include cases being presented straight to a Magistrates' Court.

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,

Head Teacher

Approved by	Governing Board	Approval date	June 2026
Owner	Headteacher / SENDCo / School Business Manager / Premises Manger	Applies to	All pupils, staff and visitors
Last reviewed	June 2026	Next full review	June 2027