

ROGERSTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL CLUSTER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

School Attendance

There is a proven link between attendance and attainment at school. At Rogerstone Primary, high attendance for pupils is considered a priority and is rigorously monitored, to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Absence and exclusion from school are associated with a higher risk of poor educational achievement and attainment, limited job prospects and criminal activity. The significance of school attendance must not and cannot be underestimated, particularly for those children and young people who show signs of disaffection or unhappiness.

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole School and wider Community. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable such as illness. Schools have a legal duty to publish attendance figures and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty and responsibility to ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis.

Attendance Definitions

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved off site activity, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes (e.g. bereavement of a close family member). Where possible medical appointments should be booked outside of the school day. However, if this is not possible then such absences will be recorded as authorised if proof of the appointment is provided. Parents should be made aware that unless there is a valid medical reason children should return to school following such appointments.

Where the absence is authorised, schools will use the appropriate code to record the absence.

ONLY SCHOOLS CAN AUTHORISE AN ABSENCE AND NOT A PARENT

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the Local Authority do not consider to be reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' has been agreed by the school. These include:

- Holidays during school time
- Parent condoned absence
- Truancy
- Absences which have never been properly explained

Starting the School Day

- Teachers are prepared to receive the children from 8.50 a.m. with a designated task, either Morning Challenge or perhaps focussed work in an intervention group with a Teaching Assistant. If your child is absent from this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are often disruptive to the class and can also be an embarrassment for your child; most importantly children miss crucial learning opportunities.
- Morning registration is at 9.00 a.m. This is the latest time your child should arrive in the classroom.
- Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. must report to the School Office where a late mark will be recorded.
- Patterns of late arrival at school will be closely monitored, and concerns addressed with parents.
- Arrival after 9.30 a.m. will be classified as an unauthorised absence.
- The Educational Welfare Officer monitors school attendance and pupil punctuality both through school logs and sporadic 'late gate' monitoring.

Reporting a Child's Absence

- We request that all parents contact the school at the earliest opportunity should their child be absent through illness. Messages can be left on the schools sickness reporting line. These are picked up by the school administrators promptly each morning, and regularly throughout the day.
- Medical appointments should be made out of school hours or during school breaks. If this unavoidable, the appointment must be reported to the school prior to the appointment day.

School Monitoring of Absence:

- We operate a First Response system from the close of registration whereby all unexplained absences are followed up with a phone call to the parent in order to establish a reason for a child's absence.
- Parents informed by letter if their child's attendance falls below 90%.
- Parents informed by letter if their child has 10 late marks during an academic year, or where there is a concern.
- The Education Welfare Officer will work closely with the school to monitor on-going concerns.

Holiday Absence and Fixed Penalty Notices

The Local Authority has recently adopted a Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices which came into effect on 1st September 2014. The law empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, head teachers, including their nominated deputies to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parents of children who have unauthorised absence from schools.

Fixed Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate from September 1st 2015, as agreed by School Governors, when:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence during the current term. These do not need to be consecutive;
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays; or

- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. “Persistent” means at least 10 sessions of late arrival in any academic year;
- Truancy, where the child has come to the attention of the Police or public during school hours for being absent from school, without an acceptable reason.

In Summary

Parents can do a great deal to support regular and punctual attendance of their children.

- Take an active interest in their child’s school life and work;
- Attend, when possible, parents’ evenings and other school events;
- Ensure that their child completes his / her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- Be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- Ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- Always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning of any absence;
- Avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- Talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to go to school.