



**Rusthall St Paul's C. E.**

**Primary School**

**Attendance**

**Policy**

**Reviewed: Autumn 21**

**Next Review: Autumn 2024**

## Statement of Intent

Rusthall St Paul's School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote and expect 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Rusthall St Paul's School.

## Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe. Parents should regularly update the school and inform on when their child is returning.**

- In the Juniors (KS2) all pupils are expected to arrive by 8.45am.
- In the Infants (KS1) all pupils are expected to arrive by 8.50am

All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

## The Role of the School Staff

At Rusthall St Paul's School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the Attendance Officer of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date

- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents informed termly of child's attendance figure

### **School Action for Unsatisfactory Attendance**

The school expects 100% attendance. Every pupil's attendance is monitored weekly by the headteacher.

Any attendance below 100% may be followed up in the following ways

- Phone call with parents to ascertain reasons for absence
- School intervention letters
- Meeting with parents and/or KCC school liaison officer
- Early help intervention
- Monitoring and support from school
- Penalty notice.

### **Children Missing Education**

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area or school but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

### **Lateness**

At Rusthall St Paul's School the register is taken at

- In the Juniors (KS2) at 8.45 am and 1.15 pm
- In the Infants (KS1) at 8.50 am and 1.15 pm
- In Reception at 8.50am and 1pm

Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The morning register will close at 9 am for KS2 and 9.05 am for KS1. The afternoon register will close at 1.20pm Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

**Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness – Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council’s Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:**

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

**Authorising Absence**

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in “exceptional circumstances”. The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child’s Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **MUST** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

**Local Authority Action may include:-**

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

**Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance -Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

**Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Parents may be required to provide evidence to support their request e.g. a letter from a health professional.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family (usually one day will be given).

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Head Teachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested at least six weeks in advance of the proposed absence and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head Teacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday/leave is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.