

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page. It features three blue circles of varying sizes and two thin blue lines. One line starts from the top left and goes diagonally down to the right, passing through the top and middle circles. Another line starts from the top right and goes diagonally down to the left, passing through the middle and bottom circles. The circles are semi-transparent and have a slight gradient.

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Rudyard Kipling Primary School

September 2019

# Together we will help each other to achieve our best

## Rudyard Kipling Primary and Nursery School

### Attendance Policy Updated September 2019

All staff and Governors at Rudyard Kipling Primary and Nursery School agree that regular and punctual school attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. As a school we aim to maintain parent and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance, raise attendance and improve punctuality. We hope this will heighten the level of achievement and help to maximise opportunities both in school and later in life.

As part of our commitment to providing the best education our children deserve we have an Inclusion team that comprises of Helen Nazarko - Inclusion Coordinator and a Child Welfare Officers –Tara Bryant. The team meet every two weeks with the Education Welfare Officer (Maggie Baker) and all pupils' attendance and punctuality is tracked. This is overseen by Joanne Smith, Headteacher.

The role of the Inclusion team is to provide support to all pupils and families and ensure that appropriate support is given to those families who struggle to maintain daily routines or whose child(ren)'s attendance is lower than the satisfactory level (Current guideline is 95%).

#### **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

#### **As a parent you can help us by:**

- Ringing in every morning of all absences before 10.00am with the reason and saying when you expect that your child will return to school.
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours.
- Bringing your child to school before and returning them after a hospital or other medical appointment.
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- Providing medical information or documentation if requested by the school.
- Avoiding booking **any** holidays during term time. (see separate section on holidays in term time)

#### **School shall take various measures in order to safeguard children by:**

- Following up unexplained absences after registration, with a phone call on the first morning.
- Reminding parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters and the Home-School Agreement.
- Including your child's attendance % on her/his annual school report.
- Letting you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance.
- Advising the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters.
- Rewarding children in a termly Attendance class assembly for 100% Attendance, and improved attendance, especially for pupils with medical issues.
- Rewarding children who retain 100% attendance for an entire school year with special prizes and awards.

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## School Procedures

- Electronic registers of all classes are kept and monitored by staff daily.
- A log is kept of children who arrive late.
- A log is kept of phone calls received from parents and reasons given for all absences.
- Attendance/ punctuality is discussed in the weekly staff meeting for each class and individual pupils, so that class teachers can also support good attendance and punctuality.

## School outings /visits /residential trips

Opportunities for children to attend these activities are provided. If they do not go, the children **are expected in school**, where alternative arrangements will be made for them.

## Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example: if a child is ill (confirmed by a doctor if their attendance is under 93%), family bereavement and religious observance.

We realise that there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically and offer support in any way that we are able.

The school maintains an Open – Door Policy and encourages parents to discuss pupil absence with the Head Teacher.

Absences can only be authorised by the Headteacher, not by parents/carers.

## Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Some examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Unexplained absences
- Holidays during term time
- If the child is reported as ill but their attendance is low and parent/carer has been asked in a letter to provide confirmation of illness from a health professional.
- Parents are unwell (call us, we may be able to help to get your child to school)
- Waiting at home for a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night

**Unauthorised absence from school can be cause for concern in relation to child welfare and protection, and can lead to legal action being taken by the Local Authority.**

- Rudyard Kipling Primary School is fully committed to the Brighton & Hove City Council Code of Conduct for the Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance at school for unauthorised holiday during term time or any other unauthorised absence.

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- Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together.
- Please use the support that we can offer, as we are always keen to help any families who might benefit.
- If support is offered and a child's attendance continues to be a concern, the school and the Education Welfare Officer may have no choice but to refer to the Local Authority who may prosecute parents; or consider issuing a fixed penalty notice fine; These fines are currently £60 per resident parent, per child (i.e. £120 for one child with two parents at home). If parents/carers do not pay these fines they risk being taken to court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, where the maximum penalty is £2500 or three months custodial sentence.
- Full details of the Code of Conduct around Fixed Penalty Notices and the law on school attendance can be found on the Brighton & Hove City Council website.

### Punctuality

- The school day starts promptly at **8.45am**, so you need to ensure that your child is on the school premises before that time.
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the Department of Education guidance. Persistent lateness can also incur a fixed penalty fine from the Local Authority (see above).
- **Any children arriving after 8.45am must be accompanied to the school office by the parent /carer, where they will be asked to sign them in.**
- Lateness is monitored regularly. Where children have persistent lateness problems, the Headteacher will inform parents/carers of school concerns by letter, or invite the parents into the school for a meeting.

### Holidays in term time

The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents from taking any holiday in term time. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence and we will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Any application for leave must be made in advance and where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion, however the head teacher will seek further advice and clarification from the EWO and the LA if the request is not straightforward.

### It is our policy:

- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for term-time need to contact the Headteacher **in writing at least 2 weeks before the planned absence**. The Headteacher will consider your request and advise you of her decision and may ask to meet with you to discuss it.
- **No Leave of Absence requests will be granted for children in year 2 and 6 during SAT's week. Notification of the date will be given to parents as early as possible in the academic year.**

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- If the school does not agree and you take your child on holiday, the absence will not be authorised.
- This policy is in line with National and Local guidance and the school will adhere to Brighton & Hove City Council's Code of Conduct which is available on the Council website
- In line with the Council's Code of Conduct, the school will refer these cases to the Local Authority who will issue fines for absences due to unauthorised holiday.

Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom. **We pride ourselves on being an inclusive, supportive school, so please let us know if you are having difficulties as we may be able to help.**

### Legal information

Full details of the law around attendance including the Education Act 1996 and subsequent amendments can be found at; <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>.

Local information can be found at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/schools/school-absence>

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- 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).

### Children in Care or subject to a CP or CiN Plan

- Children subject to a CP/CIN plan will be prioritised when undertaking first day contact with parents.
- If a child subject to a CP/CIN plan attendance falls below 95% in any half term period the social worker will be informed.
- If a child subject to a CP/CIN is absent and no contact is received from the parent/carer as to the reasons why or if we are concerned about the reasons given, the school will inform the social worker.
- In addition, and in line with the LA guidance on reduced timetables, children subject to a CPP or those who are CiN should have their timetable reduced without alternative provision being put in place and in agreement with the relevant social worker.

### Performance Licences

The law enables a head teacher to grant leave of absence for a pupil to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963. Legislation sets out that a local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Where the license specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence. Head teachers should be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a licence, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a child's education.