



Redesdale Primary School **Attendance Policy**

Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Did you know?

- Being 5 minutes late each day is the same as missing 3 whole days of school.
- Being 15 minutes late each day is the same as missing two whole weeks at school.
- Good attendance means being in school at least 95% of the time.
- Children with below 95% have less chance of success.
- Even missing just 10 days of school across the year = 94.7% attendance.

Great attendance and punctuality are important habits that we want to develop now to help children succeed in the future.

Attendance Register

The governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- The absence can also be unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. (*For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will be an unauthorised absence.*)

If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.

Parents/ Carers are requested to contact school by phone on the first day of absence to inform school of the reason for absence by 9.30am.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment a medical / dentist's letter or appointment card should be shown to the office.

We know that sometimes it is inevitable that a child is absent if they are ill. **If a child is experiencing sickness/diarrhoea, they should not be in school until 48 hours after the vomiting or diarrhea has ceased.** However if a child has a cold or a minor condition such as conjunctivitis, the health authority recommends that they are in school. If a parent/carer is not sure, it is always best to ring the school office for advice and clarification.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. We expect families to arrange for holidays to be taken in the normal school holiday periods. Following the change in legislation from 1st September 2013 parents no longer have the right to withdraw their children from school for up to ten days for an annual holiday and **headteachers will not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Parents can now be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. Following this change in legislation the governing body have reviewed all government guidance and have determined that a child will only be given authorisation for absence deemed to be exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the headteacher. Examples of absence deemed to be exceptional circumstances are:

- Wedding of a parent or sibling;
- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- Short absences for recognition of religious events for those practising the faith.

Trips overseas for minority ethnic families will be carefully considered but leave of absence may not necessarily be granted.

Schools are able to refuse the whole period requested, grant part of the period and refuse the remainder, or grant the whole period requested. We expect parents to complete a request form for leave of absence giving details of the reason.

All requests will be treated on a case-by-case basis but the following will be taken into account when considering a request for leave of absence:

- The amount of time requested
- Age of pupil
- The pupil's general absence / attendance record
- Proximity of SATs and key assessments
- Length of the proposed leave
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Frequency of the activity
- When the request was made

All requests for leave of absence will be made with regard to the government guidance on 'School Attendance' (2016) and Local Authority guidance.

All requests for absence should be made in writing on the school's request form.

If an absence is agreed the school will consider:

- Seeking to establish and make explicit any potential educational value in the visit;
- Explain what work the child will miss in school, how it can be made up on return and how the parents could help the child;
- Whether work can be given for the child to do (with parental support) while s/he is away;
- Preparing a study pack;
- Asking the child to make notes in relation to a class topic;
- Sharing the experience in a positive way with other children and the class teacher on return.

Long-term absence due to illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the Attendance & Placement Service, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be written

to by the school to raise concerns and inform them that if the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Attendance and Placement Service, who will contact the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation. (refer to Children Missing from Education Policy for further information)

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Repeated authorised absences

If a child has repeated absences due to illness the school may well ask parents/carers to attend a meeting with the school and public health nurse to see what can be done to minimise absences. This may be to provide support in contacting doctors, or speaking to doctors on the family's behalf regarding referrals to other medical services.

Rewards for good attendance

All the children who have 98% (very good) attendance or above in any one term will receive a bronze, silver or gold certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special certificates and rewards for any child who has 100% attendance for a whole year. The class with best attendance each week receives a certificate in the weekly Achievement Assembly and the class with the best attendance over a half term receives the Attendance Trophy in an end of half term Celebration Assembly.

Attendance & Absence Rates

The school closely monitors attendance and absence rates each year. The Headteacher and Administration Officer meet every month to discuss attendance, lateness and absence rates. Specific groups of children are tracked, monitored and reviewed monthly to ensure absences are kept to a minimum.

It is essential that parents and carers are made aware of their children's attendance and letters are sent out to parents and carers of children whose attendance rates, absences and lateness are not acceptable.

The school considers carefully the attendance and absence figures for other similar schools and national expectations when reviewing and monitoring attendance.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.