Red Hall Primary School

Attendance Policy

This policy is part of the school's policies for safeguarding children.

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Introduction

We believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school or regularly arrive on time.

At Red Hall Primary School, we believe, good habits of regular attendance and punctuality are vital for effective learning to take place and are important disciplines for future life. We recognise the disruption that absence and lateness cause to both to the education of the individual and to the rest of the class. We also accept that in the primary school the main responsibility for ensuring regular, punctual attendance rests with the parents and not the children themselves.

Our policy and procedures are therefore, concerned with clear communication between parents and school and the avoidance of sanctions towards the child.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:
    - "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
        - to age, ability and aptitude, and
        - to any special educational needs, he/she may have
        - Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."
        - Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
        - Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
        - Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
        - Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
        - Rewarding regular attendance.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2018) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing body has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

2.2. The attendance lead is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parents.

2.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Following the Attendance Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

2.4. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.

2.5. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

2.6. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

3. Definitions

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- "Absence" as:
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Not attending school for any reason.

- An "authorised absence" as:
  - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
  - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
  - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
  - An absence due to a family emergency.

- An "unauthorised absence" as:
  - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
  - Truancy before or during the school day.
  - Absences which have never been properly explained.
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
  - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
  - Leaving school for no reason during the day.

- "Persistent absenteeism" as:
  - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

4. Training of staff

4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.

4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupil expectations

5.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day throughout the year.

6. Absence procedures

6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.

6.2. A text message or phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

6.3. Parents are required to provide school with an explanation of why their child is absent.

6.4. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Headteacher.

6.5. The school will inform the LA, on a half termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

6.6. If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Head teacher will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.

6.7. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

7. Contact details

Parents are responsible for;

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with at least two emergency contact numbers.
- Updating the school if their details change.

8. Attendance register

The class teacher will take the attendance register using the electronic Information Management System at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The codes in DfE (Department For Education) releases will be used.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

9. Attendance Leader

9.1. If a child is persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the Head teacher who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent engagement.

9.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Head teacher has the power to pursue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

10. Lateness

10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

10.2. The school offers a flexible door policy, whereby we open the doors to pupils from 8.45am allowing the pupils to compose themselves to be in the right mind set for learning.

10.3. The school day starts at 8:55. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.

10.4. Registers are marked by 9:00. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

10.5. The register closes at 9:25. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

10.6. After lunch, registers are marked by 13:10. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

10.7. The register closes at 13:20. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

10.8. Pupils attending after the close of register will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

11. Term-time leave

11.1. Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

11.2. The head teacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.

11.3. The head teacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the head teacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.

11.4. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

11.5. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods Y6, Y2, Y1 & Reception Class
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- Leave during September, as this is an important time for settling into a new class/school.

11.6. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the head teacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

12. Truancy

12.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

12.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

12.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:55am where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.

12.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

12.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.

12.6. If truancy is suspected, the head teacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

12.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

13. Missing children

13.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the head teacher and are to be collected from an adult.

13.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the head teacher immediately.

- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the head teacher.
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

13.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

13.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

13.5. The head teacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

13.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

13.7. The head teacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.

13.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

13.9. Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with section 6 of this policy.

13.10. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

14. Religious observances

14.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.

14.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

15. Appointments

15.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

15.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.

15.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.

15.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

16. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

16.1. Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).

16.2. Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the LA.

16.3. The organiser is required to allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.

16.4. The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:

- The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
- The conditions of the licence will be observed.

16.5. The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.

16.6. The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

16.7. The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.

16.8. The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.

16.9. The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

16.10. Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.

16.11. Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.

16.12. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.

16.13. The head teacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below national average percent.

16.14. Where a licence has not been obtained, the head teacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

16.15. The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.

16.16. The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.

16.17. The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.

16.18. Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.

16.19. A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.

16.20. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:

- Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
- Where performances or activities are taking place; or
- Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.

16.21. The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.

16.22. If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.

16.23. The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

17. Young carers

17.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.

17.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.

17.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

18. Rewarding good attendance

Termly the school acknowledges high levels of attendance (99%+) in either of the following ways;

- Bowling Experiences
- Cinema trip
- Party entertainment
- Certificates

Weekly good attendance and punctuality is celebrated in the following ways:

- Marvellous me badges and messages
- Rewards raffle
- House points
- Ice lollies for the best class attendance

Children who achieve 100% attendance at the of an academic year will receive a certificate and a prize, presented in front of the whole school.

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Appendix 1 –

Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time

Pupil Details			
Name of Child(ren)		**Year Group(s)**	
Name of Parent/Carer			
Siblings in another school (if yes, which school)			
Request Details			
First Day of Absence			
Last Day of Absence			
Total Number of days requested			
Reason for request (Please give sufficient detail to inform our decision):			
Signature of Parent/Carer			
Date			

For School Use		
Current attendance % (in current academic year)		
Previous holiday leave this academic Year		
Given information above, and reason for request, is the holiday approved?	YES	NO
Comments		
Signed Headteacher		
Date		

Please submit this form to the Head teacher prior to booking any holiday. Your request will be considered and you will receive a response within 5 school days of receipt.

Appendix 1 – Leave of Absence Requests

New regulations for taking holidays in term time

The Department for Education has made amendments to the regulations which previously allowed Head teachers' the discretion to grant holidays taken during term time. The new regulations come into force from 1st September 2013 and we have had to revise our school policy based upon the new government legislation which states, in summary, that:

- The current law does not give parents any entitlement to take their children out of school for a holiday during term time.
- Any application for leave must only be in 'exceptional' circumstances and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are 'exceptional' and warrant the granting of leave.
- In 'exceptional' circumstances, a request for absence must be made in advance, to the Head teacher, who will inform you of the decision prior to booking your holiday.
- If a request for leave is not authorised by the Head Teacher and the pupil goes on holiday, the absence will be recoded as unauthorised, which then stays on the child's permanent record.

We are required by law to report unauthorised absences to the Local Authority, who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, which means a parent may be fined by the Education Welfare Service. The regulations do stipulate that fixed penalty fines will be issued and from 1st September 2013 parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Due to equalities legislation, fixed penalty notices will now be issued to all parents who have parental responsibility and whom can be traced. This means that both the father and mother of a child will receive separate fines, under the new regulations, and that each parent will incur a fine for each child. Please be aware that the proceeds from the fixed penalty fines DO NOT go to the school.
The Government have not yet provided clear guidance about the definition of 'exceptional' circumstances and what is considered to be 'exceptional' for one person may not be seen as such by another. Some examples which we are aware of are:

- The fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time is **unlikely** to be considered as 'exceptional' circumstances
- 'Exceptional' circumstances are more likely to be unique and/or 'one-off' situations. eg: due to a parent's work/employment commitments. NB: Proof may be required from an employer in such circumstances.
- Where there has been a trauma or bereavement in the family or where the opportunity for such a holiday is highly unlikely to arise in the future.

As a result of this legislation, any decision to grant leave will be made by our attendance panel using the following criteria:

- The individual circumstances as to why the holiday is being requested in term time.
- The child's attendance record and percentage of absences.
- The age of the child and the time of year proposed for the holiday.
- The child's attainment and progress.

N.B. Any requests for leave during September will not be authorised as this is an important time for settling into a new class/school. Similarly, leave of absence will not be authorised for year 6 pupils in the term prior to SATS or the weeks leading up to them.
Further information and guidance can be found on the DFE website
www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance.

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Appendix 2 –

(Parent/carer(s) name and address)

Date << >>

Dear «Name»

Request for leave during Term - Time

«Child's Name»

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school from ……. to ……. You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time.

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore, pupils will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

I have considered your application very carefully and I understand the reason for your request. I am able / unable to approve leave of absence in this instance, as I believe the circumstances are / not exceptional. This absence may meet the criteria for a holiday fine referral to be issued by the Local Authority.

I would like to remind you that this absence will have an effect on <<child's name>> attendance figures throughout the rest of the academic year.

Our key priority is to ensure your child(ren) are as successful as possible, are able to reach his/her full potential and gains maximum benefits from his/her educational experience.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks' school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely

Julie Davidson
Head Teacher