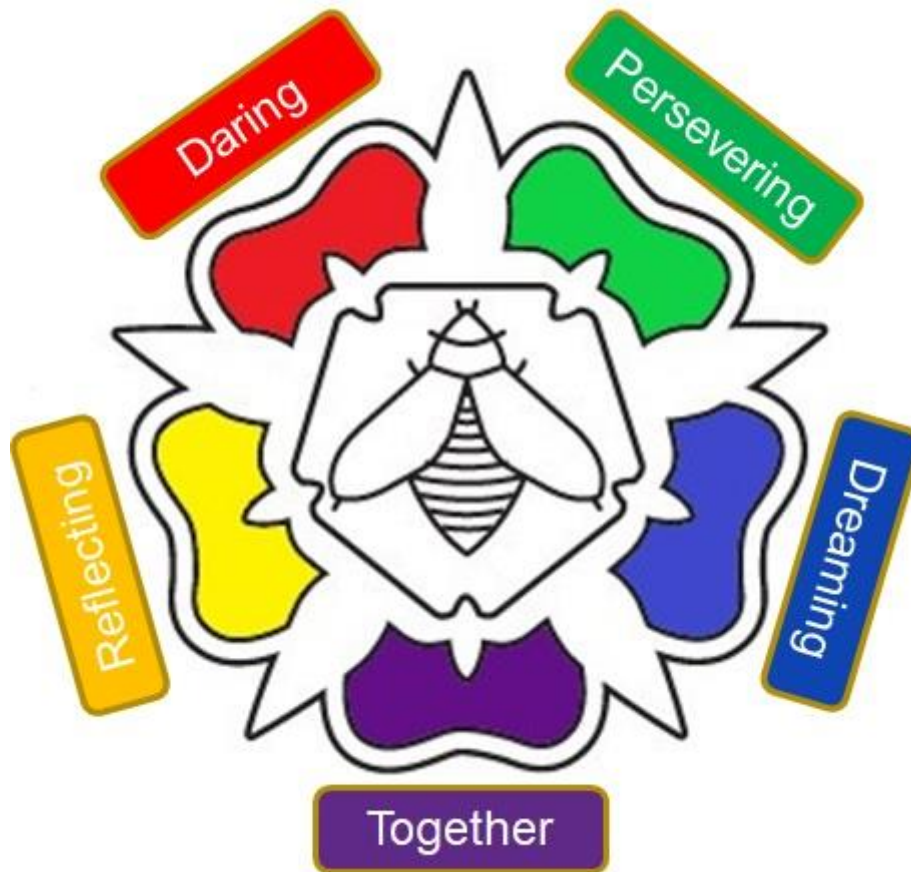


# Round Hill Primary School

Dream, Believe, Achieve Together



## Attendance Policy

Policy Updated by Adrian Nash  
**Policy dated: November 2022**  
Next review due November 2024

## **School Attendance Policy**

At Round Hill Primary School, we believe that:

- pupils need to attend school regularly so they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available
- Poor attendance rates and persistent lateness undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.

### **Aims**

Therefore, we aim:

- to promote good rates of attendance
- to seek ways to improve attendance
- to monitor attendance records
- to promote good punctuality
- to monitor punctuality
- to reduce the incidence of unauthorised absences
- to be consistent in the application of the school's registration and attendance procedures

### **Legal Framework**

It is recognised that parents, schools and Local Authorities have statutory responsibilities with regards to school attendance.

### **Parental Responsibility**

- Parents are required to ensure that their children receive efficient, full time education and are therefore primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school.
- Thus, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children:
  - Attend school regularly.
  - Arrive at school on time, in uniform and in a condition to learn.
  - Are absent only for reasons that can be authorised.
- Parents are required to inform the school of the reason for any absence and the likely return date, as soon as possible and by no later than 9.30 a.m. – if a notification is not received parents will be sent a text message requesting they get in touch with school urgently. This will then be followed by a telephone call which will be logged as a safeguarding concern.

### **Registration**

The school keeps an electronic attendance register for each class in which pupils are marked present or absent at the beginning of each school session.

The teachers take a register twice a day directly on ScholarPack (the computerised system used to record attendance). Procedures for completing ScholarPack are included in the Staff Handbook.

### **Reporting Absence**

- Parents are asked to make contact on the first day of absence, by using the electronic FORM where possible, by telephone if not, (a message may be left on the answering machine), note, personal contact, or e-mail - informing the school of the reason for the absence and/or nature of any illness. They are also asked to inform the school if there is a likely return date. Telephone messages/verbal messages and notes are recorded on Scholar Pack.
- Personal contacts should be avoided but any made with class teachers should subsequently be passed to the school office for recording – parents are encouraged to pass the message directly to the office.

- Any absence that has no reason, even after attempting to contact parents, will be considered Unauthorised Absence. Any queries as to whether to authorise an absence or not should be referred to the Head Teacher.
- Parents are contacted via text if they have not sent a message by 9:30 a.m. If parents cannot be contacted other contacts on the system may then be attempted. If a child's whereabouts cannot be determined then the Office will notify the Attendance Office (Headteacher) and the matter will be escalated as required. (i.e. A visit to the house, or police notified if there are significant child protection concerns).

### Authorising Absence

- The law states Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and Amendments 2013) that only the school can approve absence, not parents. If doubts remain about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence must be treated as unauthorised.
- Absence will be authorised immediately or retrospectively if:
  - The pupil was absent due to illness.
  - The pupil had leave of absence granted by the Head Teacher.
  - The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
  - The absence was due to a medical or dental appointment.
- In addition, the school *will consider authorising* absence in the following exceptional circumstances:
  - Close family bereavement.
  - Work related to the armed forces.
- The school *will not authorise* absence in the following cases:
  - Holidays other than in exceptional circumstances
  - First week of the school year
  - KS2 SATs week
  - Shopping during school hours.
  - Children looking after brothers and sisters
  - Children minding the house during school hours.
  - Children trying to avoid certain aspects of the curriculum (games, swimming, visits, etc) whether condoned by parents or not.
  - Birthdays
- All leave of absence in term time is at the discretion of the Head Teacher. **Holidays taken during term time may no longer be authorised by Head Teachers.** Leave of absence will only be considered provided that:
  - Prior notice is given by the completion of an 'Application by Parent/Carer for Child's Leave of Absence from School during Term Time' form (available on the website).

Under the revised regulations, Head Teachers no longer have the discretion to agree up to 10 days leave for a family holiday during term time. Instead Head Teachers can only agree a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. The NAHT have produced some guidance for Head Teachers on what might constitute an exceptional circumstance.

As a general principle, schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as:

- The nature of the event for which leave is sought;
- The frequency of the request;
- Whether the parent gave advance notice;
- The pupil's attainment, attendance and the possible impact on learning and examinations;

- The student's ability to catch up on missed schooling.

## Lateness

- We recognise that persistent lateness is:
  - Detrimental to the child's education.
  - Administratively disruptive.
  - A poor preparation for future schooling and adult life.
- Morning registration starts at 9.00 a.m. The registers are closed at 9.20 a.m. pupils arriving during this period receive a late mark **L**.
- Pupils arriving after 9.20 a.m. sign in late at the office and receive a mark which denotes 'Late after the register is closed' **U** which counts as **unacceptably late**.
- Afternoon registration starts at 1.00 p.m. and the registers are closed at 1.20 p.m., pupils arriving during this period receive a late mark **L**.
- Pupils arriving after 1.20 p.m. sign in late at the office and receive a mark which denotes 'Late after the register is closed' **U** which counts as **unacceptably late**.

There are three stages:

1. If a child is persistently late the Attendance Co-ordinator will ring the parents to see if we can help in any way to improve the lateness.
2. If lateness continues a meeting with the Co-ordinator/Head Teacher
3. Extreme cases may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer (or equivalent) who will issue warning letters.

NB: Should parents choose to take holidays in term time they could be issued with a penalty notice which could lead to a fine of between £60 - £120.

## Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures

- It is recognised that children may arrive or depart mid-session for a variety of reasons which may be authorised:
  - Illness or accidents in school resulting in a child going home.
  - Medical and dental appointments.
  - Unavoidable delays or reasons for leaving early.
- Pupils present for registration that leave early, or for part of a session, should be noted on ScholarPack by the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. *The register itself is not altered.*
- Pupils not present for registration that return later from an appointment should be noted on ScholarPack by the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. The register is subsequently amended to authorise the absence or record an unauthorised absence.

## Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

An analysis of attendance data will be examined at the end of each half-term to look for:

- Patterns of unexplained absences.
- Any persistent lateness.
- Any prolonged absence (note made on child's CPOMS record).
- Any unexplained patterns of authorised absence.

Where requested, Summaries of Attendance Rates can be prepared annually for all children in years 1 - 6 showing:

- Total number of pupils on roll at any time during the period.

- The total number of possible pupil sessions.
- The number of authorised absences and the number of children affected.
- The number of unauthorised absences and the number of children affected.
- The percentage of pupil sessions lost by authorised and unauthorised absences.

Attendance is analysed regularly by governors outlining the attendance and punctuality rates for each academic year together with comparisons within Broxtowe, the LA and nationally.

## ISSUING OF PENALTY NOTICES

The information in this section must be read in conjunction with the “Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices issued in respect of Truancy and Excluded Pupils.”

### Explanation of the Nottinghamshire Code of Conduct

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 (introduced by section 23 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003) introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under section 444. Parents may discharge potential liability for conviction for an offence under section 444(1) by paying a penalty.

Nottinghamshire Local Authority Area has a Code of Conduct to enable Penalty Notices to be issued by authorised persons for truancy or where a pupil is found to be in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.

The purpose of the local Code of Conduct is to ensure that the power to issue penalty notices is applied consistently and fairly across the local authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the scheme.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances where the parent is judged capable of securing their child’s regular attendance or whereabouts but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.

The law states that authorised LA staff, Head Teachers and school staff authorised by them (deputy/assistant heads), the Police, Community Support Officers and accredited persons may issue Penalty Notices, although there is no requirement for them to do so.

Head teachers can request that the Local Authority through its Family Service issue Penalty Notices on their behalf. In Nottinghamshire head teachers (or school staff authorised by them) can issue penalty notices. Should a school issue penalty notices it is necessary to inform the local authority in order for the payment to be monitored. The Local Authority will only prosecute cases where the Penalty Notice has not been paid if the Code of Conduct has been followed by the school issuing a penalty.

The penalty is set at £120 and should be paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 21 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60. In line with the national requirements the notice is always payable to the Local Authority.

Where the local authority is requested to issue a penalty notice it will be necessary for the LA to receive details of the pupil’s absence and the evidence to be presented to the magistrates’ court should the penalty be unpaid. The standard of evidence required is the same as that required for court cases brought under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Where a penalty is unpaid, the Local Authority will take legal action under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence. In this case it is necessary for the person who requested the issue of a penalty notice to provide evidence for the court case by way of a Section 9 Statement (a witness statement admissible in court under the Criminal Justice Act and the Magistrates’ Courts Act and Rules).

There is no flexibility in the deadline for payment of fines.

Notices can only be withdrawn by the local authority to which the fine is to be paid and in all instances will only be withdrawn where:

- It ought not to have been issued; or
- It ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient; or
- It appears to the authority that the notice contains material errors,
- It interferes with existing intervention strategies or legal proceedings

## **Appendix 1**

### **Twice Yearly Bulletin Items:**

Here are examples of the type of communications that are sent out to parents regularly to improve attendance.

#### **Applications for Leave of Absence**

This has been in the news again recently and you may be aware that the Government made amendments to the Education Regulations 2006 in September 2013, promoting good attendance and reducing absences, including persistent absences (a child with attendance below 90%). It states that head teachers are not allowed to grant any leave of absence for holidays during term time unless there are “exceptional circumstances”.

Please read the following information on the school website first before considering taking your child out of school. [Click here](#).

If you have any questions about the above information then please call into school, we will be happy to speak to parents to discuss individual circumstances.

#### **Attendance**

Attendance at Round Hill is definitely one of our strengths and we are in the top percentile nationally for our attendance figures, however we have noticed that we do have a small number of children who are persistently absent.

In order for your children to take advantage of all the opportunities that Round Hill has to offer both academically and otherwise, it is important that your child attends as regularly as possible.

Please help us to achieve this by only keeping your child at home if they really are too ill to attend and not booking holidays during term time which will be recorded as unauthorised.

You need to be aware that we may have to consider further measures such as a referral to targeted support or fines may have to be issued to families who take their children out of school where attendance has already fallen below a certain level.

**Policy dated: December 2022**