



Student Attendance

(Statutory)

Approved: Summer 2024

Date of Next Review: Summer 2025

Equality Impact Assessment - Policy Review

In reviewing this policy, we have tried to make a positive impact on equality by considering and reducing or removing inequalities and barriers which already existed. We have ensured that this policy does not impact negatively on the dimensions of equality.

The Roseland Multi Academy Trust's mission is to provide outstanding education for our communities, where every child succeeds. This can only be achieved, and students will only benefit fully from their education, if they attend lessons at school regularly and on time. Attendance will be maximised through an effective, positive partnership between students, their parents/carers and their school.

Principles

Our Trust values underpin our approach to attendance; our ambition is 100% attendance for all children and it is everyone's responsibility to achieve this. There is a clear link between poor attendance to lessons at school and lower academic achievement in all measures. Students need to attend school regularly as missing lessons causes children to fall behind their peers. Absent children miss important content and the subsequent gaps disadvantage them academically and socially. Children with poor attendance achieve less in both primary and secondary school. However, we do accept that illness is inevitable on occasions.

Furthermore, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024, we recognise that Children Missing Education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Objectives

- To ensure students and their parents/carers take full advantage of their education by establishing positive attendance routines and expectations in positive partnership with the school.
- To provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance and punctuality and to communicate concerns and positive actions early.
- To recognise any challenges which influence student attendance and work with parents/carers to positively address these.

Responsibilities

The Role of Parents/Carers

- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages about attendance from both school and home.
- To ensure that their child attends school daily and on time.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing their school bag and uniform the evening before.
- To contact the school before 9.00am to explain any absence not pre-agreed by a Leave of Absence form.
- To make medical appointments out of school time as far as possible.
- Not to take students out of school for family holidays during term time for any reason.
- Where Leave of Absence from school is requested in exceptional circumstances, to complete paperwork with at least two school weeks' notice.
- Where Leave of Absence from school is requested for emergency reasons, paperwork must be provided to the school as soon as possible.
- To ask the school for support if the child is experiencing difficulties which may be affecting attendance.
- Not to expect work to be set for children absent from school as this is not a substitute to attending lessons, unless with pre-agreed exceptional circumstances, sanctioned by the Headteacher.

The following links provided via the national strategy to support strong attendance for all children to school:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance>

The Role of the School

- Promote a culture across the school, which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance to lessons.
- Promote attendance in lessons with learning directed by staff as the best outcome for students.
- Develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Recognise good attendance and punctuality.
- Encourage parents/carers to have face to face meetings or telephone conversations and play an active role in positively resolving attendance issues.
- Monitor student attendance and take proactive action to improve attendance where necessary.
- Take a multi-agency approach to supporting individuals with attendance concerns.
- To chase up absence on a daily basis.
- Put the child's welfare central to all decision-making and to engage professional curiosity and challenge where needed.
- To take legal action when necessary, where attendance concerns remain. This may include use of penalty notices, parenting contracts, education supervision orders or prosecutions.

Procedures for Parents/Carers

Your child's form tutor or class teacher is the first point of contact for any concerns about your child's attendance. We encourage you to make contact early if you have any concerns or need support.

Illness/Medical Absences

If a child is too unwell to attend school, the school reception should be contacted via telephone or email before 9:00am on the day of absence, giving the reason. This must be done for **each day** the child is absent. Your child's form tutor or class teacher may make additional contact during the day.

If a child's absence remains unexplained, contact will be made by the school on the morning of each absence. A child's form tutor or class teacher may make additional contact during the day.

If a child needs to come home for any medical reason whilst at school, the primary contact parent/carer will be contacted via the school reception. **Students must not contact home themselves and parents/carers must not contact students directly during the school day.** Where students contact home themselves and parents/carers collect their children without prior discussion with school staff, these absences will not be authorised.

If a child has had any appointment with medical professionals which may impact school attendance, parents/carers are requested to contact school to discuss and plan the circumstances. Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside the school day. Where this is not possible, students are expected to be in school before the appointment and return to school following the appointment time.

Leave of Absence Requests

Education regulations state that Headteachers will not be able to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Any exceptional circumstance must be clearly explained in the leave of absence request form.

All leave of absence requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher in accordance with the school's policy. Requests must be made at least two school weeks prior to the date of the intended absence. Requests for leave of absence cannot be allowed if:

- A request is not deemed as an 'exceptional circumstance', i.e. a family holiday.
- A student has started their GCSE courses; i.e. they are in Year 10 or Year 11.
- A pupil has started their SATS preparation; i.e. they are in Year 6.
- A student has scheduled tests, exams or assessment weeks.

- The school has organised and planned specific activities to enhance the curriculum and learning experience for all, i.e. work experience, activities week.
- The Local Authority has begun legal proceedings.
- A student is seriously behind with their work and not making required progress.

Unauthorised Absence

Where absence is occurring which has not been agreed by the school this will be marked as unauthorised. Definitions of unauthorised absence are:

- Truancy (including internal truancy).
- Parentally condoned absence without good reason.
- Holidays in term time.
- Arrival after the register has closed.

Parents should support the school in actions to prevent unauthorised absences. In the case of a pattern of unauthorised absence developing, a face-to-face meeting will be held with parents/carers to positively address the concerns and inform them of the possible consequences and to engage the family in supporting the student in resolving any difficulties. This may include taking legal action where necessary, including use of penalty notices, parenting contracts, education supervision orders or prosecutions.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

Procedures for the School

Pupils in Alternative Provision(AP)

Some pupils are educated either on a full-time or part-time basis in an alternative setting. The Senior Attendance Lead will liaise with the Alternative Provider to ensure that the pupil is attending, and it is accurately recorded.

The Senior Attendance Lead will retain oversight of the school processes for pupils accessing alternative provision (AP).

The school will visit the AP to review safeguarding processes and procedures prior to the planned start date.

The Roseland Trust staff understand that the safeguarding of pupils/young people accessing an AP remains the responsibility of school where the pupil/young person is on roll.

A senior leader will keep the placement and timetable under review and involve parents in the review. Reviews will be frequent enough to provide assurance that the off-site education and/or modified timetable is achieving its objectives and that the pupil/young person is benefitting from it.

The school will monitor and track children attending alternative provision to ensure that the provision meets the needs of the child and the child is attending.

The school leadership will report to the Local Monitoring Committee, (LMC), of any formal direction of a pupil/young person to alternative provision.

The school will ensure that parents (and the local authority where the pupil/young person has an EHCP) are given clear information about alternative provision placements timetables: why, when, where, and how they will be reviewed.

Pupils requiring a reduced or modified timetable

The school will gain consent from the Trust Lead or School Improvement Lead to put in place a reduced or modified timetable. The school will ensure that parents and the local authority are given clear information about the reduced or modified timetables: why, when, where, and how they will be reviewed.

Reviews will be fortnightly to provide assurance that the off-site education and/or modified timetable is achieving its objectives and that the pupil/young person is benefitting from it.

The school leadership will report to the LMC information regarding the use and effectiveness of the use of modified timetables and this will also be monitored by the LMCs and Trust Improvement Team and recorded in their visits/reports.

The school will share half termly data returns to the Executive Leadership Team, regarding all students/young people, of statutory school age, attending alternative provision and/or on a reduced or modified timetable for review. They will also share details of severely absent young people along with the action plans in place to address this.

Promoting Good Attendance / Punctuality

Should a parent make contact wishing to discuss attendance, a face to face meeting or telephone call with the form tutor or class teacher should be arranged. Information should be shared with the Headteacher (in primary schools) and the Learning Leader or Attendance Officer (secondary schools), Education Welfare Officer and Leadership Team to support a positive strategy.

Registers are taken twice a day, morning and afternoon (8.50am and 12.35pm). Students who arrive after the gates have closed will be marked late.

A variety of rewards and praise are given to students throughout the academic year to celebrate good attendance and are determined by individual schools. A regular cycle of activities will take place to promote good attendance/punctuality e.g. assemblies, one-to-one discussions, mentoring with students and meetings with parents/carers.

Attendance data is monitored at individual, cohort and school level to ensure effective strategies are implemented and good attendance is acknowledged. Key staff, including the Education Welfare Officer, will be provided with regular updates to monitor patterns of attendance. Regular liaison must occur in school to discuss and implement strategies for dealing with poor attendance/punctuality.