

Attendance Policy

Member of Staff Responsible	Deputy Head Pastoral
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Approved By Governors	n/a
Distribution:	All

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 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 also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (Statutory Instrument 2024/208) the Headmaster is 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.

A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

Definitions:

1. 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 writes a note or 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. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2. 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. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Reasons for Absence:

If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the electronic register, and inform the school office, where the staff will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian. This should coincide with an email to the absence email address absence@rokeby.org.uk regarding reason for absence.

The electronic register should be annotated accordingly with the reason for absence by the form teacher.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

'Good' Attendance

What constitutes good attendance? Attendance percentages are not like examination results: an attendance percentage needs to be in the high nineties before it can be considered good.

Consider the following example:

An attendance record of 90% might seem good but is equal to 1 day missed per fortnight. Our view is that, in order for an attendance record to be deemed good, it must be 96% or above:

100% = excellent attendance
98% = very good attendance
96% = good attendance
Below 96% = cause for some concern

Each year, a number of boys in every year group achieve 100% attendance records, showing that this is an achievable target. In addition, a number of children have achieved this level of attendance in successive years. Therefore, we want every boy at Rokeby to achieve at least good attendance at 96% and to aspire to reach a very good level of attendance at 98% or above.

The parents of any boy whose attendance **falls below 90%** over a one term period will receive written communication noting the school's concern and asking for measures to be taken to improve the boy's attendance.

COVID-19

It is no longer recommended that children and young people are routinely tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional. But if your child has tested positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test. Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.

Illness

Boys suffering with a minor cough or common cold should attend school if they are otherwise well and do not have a high temperature. However, if your son has a fever, he should stay at home until he feels better, and the fever has resolved.

If your son has a fever or is too ill to attend school, please keep him at home and email the school before 8.15am using the absence email address - absence@rokeby.org.uk. Please send an email on each day of his absence giving details of the reason he is unable to attend. If he has been vomiting and/or had diarrhoea, please do not send him to school but keep him at home for 48 hours after it has stopped. Boys with contagious infections, such as conjunctivitis, should seek medical advice as to whether they should be brought in to school. If your son becomes ill whilst at school, you will be contacted and asked to collect him from the First Aid room which is located in the Lower School building. In the event that we cannot reach a boy's parents we will call the emergency contact held on our database. Please be aware that the school does not have a school nurse on-site and we can only offer emergency First Aid. If your son is involved in a significant accident he will be taken directly to A&E, and you will be contacted as soon as possible.

Helpful government guidance can be found here:

<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2024/01/03/a-parents-guide-to-keeping-kids-healthy-this-school-year/>

Off Games

Boys who are well enough to be at school are considered well enough to participate in Sport/Games/PE.

However, there may be medical exceptions with regards to both injury and illness. Therefore, if your son is 'off games' this must be discussed with the Health and Wellbeing Assistant in the first instance (First Aid) on the morning of the associated session, if not before. If this applies to your son, please notify first aid – firstaid@rokeby.org.uk and the Director of Sport - m.schmid@rokeby.org.uk in writing as soon as possible and no later than the morning prior to the Games session. If it is agreed that your son is 'off games' he will not be sent home but will work in the 'off games' room under the supervision of a member of staff instead. Where boys are missing more than two consecutive sessions a note must be received from the family doctor or other suitable medical professional.

Boys in Reception-Year 2 who are unwell and unable to participate in the Wednesday morning Games sessions, should remain at home for the day. Allowances will be made for injuries and alternative provision can be arranged with the Director of Sport.

Request for leave of absence and special permission

We expect all boys to attend school during the whole of each term as this is a legal requirement. If parents wish their sons to miss a day of school for an important family occasion, or any other special event, they are asked to **write in advance to the Headmaster for permission at least two weeks before the event (where possible)** via his PA's email address headpa@rokeby.org.uk

Unless it is to support a special (and unique) event, it is very unlikely that the Headmaster will grant permission for a **holiday** beginning during term time. Parents who request permission for holidays or early departures within the last week of term or half term are especially likely to be disappointed as there may be little opportunity for the Headmaster to consider these requests. Staff arrange the syllabus and activities carefully in order to make the most of the school teaching days. When boys miss school time it often sets them back and can easily have a detrimental effect on others as a team or group activity becomes eroded or may have to be cancelled. This applies as much to the last few days of term and those less formal school activities.

Special Permission

If a boy has become involved in an activity outside of school which might affect his commitment to the school's activities (including weekend sports fixtures) similar permission should be sought. Each request will be considered carefully with the help of the Director of Sport according to an internal protocol. Parents seeking such permission will need to supply as much information as possible in support of the request and will also need to ensure dates and times are supplied for future engagements which might conflict with school activities.

Like all schools, we are obliged to keep an attendance register and unauthorised absence is noted as such. Please do not make a booking before asking for permission. If permission is denied for any reason, you may incur a loss. The Headmaster will be expected to report on a boy's participation in school life to prospective senior schools.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over 5 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 liaise carefully with parents, 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 guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

Boys who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

The school will inform local authorities of the details of boys who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster to monitor overall attendance. 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 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 six years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Deputy Head Pastoral, who will contact the parents or guardian.

Punctuality

We understand that adverse circumstances will very occasionally prevent boys from arriving on time at school but ask that all parents help their children to adhere to the school rules regarding punctuality:

All boys should arrive at school and be on the playground or in their classroom if in Reception to Year 2 ready for the 8.35am bell and should then register with their Form Tutor. Anyone arriving after 8.40am will be marked as 'late' on the register.

Boys arriving later than registration time should sign in at Reception and explain their lateness to their tutor at the next registration.

Lateness is problematic for both boys and staff. Lateness incurs missing important information at registration time or assembly and is often stressful for boys who are put 'on the back foot' from the start of that day.

Boys who are persistently late will be brought to the attention of the Deputy Head/Head of Lower School, as appropriate.

Early Morning Clubs

Boys attending clubs before school and during AM registration will be registered by the club leader via SOCS. Reception staff will update the registration data for these boys.