

ROSEMEAD PREPARATORY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed: January 2010

Ratified by the Governors: January 2010

To be reviewed: January 2011

Rosemead Preparatory School

Aims

Our aims for this policy are to ensure good attendance, discourage lateness and to ensure that a full record is kept of all absences and for the school to be aware of all persons present on the school site at any one point in time. The policy will also ensure that registers are correctly kept and available for inspection by any appropriate body at any given time.

Background and regulations

The parent of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. (Parents who are convicted of this offence may be fined up to £2,500 and/or sentenced to up to three months in prison. Alternatively, parents may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.) When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. (See the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.) Should the absence be authorised by the school, the parent can not be convicted.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be away or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory explanation for absence.

Parents may not authorise absence; only schools can do this. Should school staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine, the absence should be treated as unauthorised.

Children are not allowed, without permission from the Headteacher, to leave early or to be absent for any cause other than illness or emergency.

Parents/carers are required to telephone or email the school office prior to 10am on the first morning of a child's absence. Parents are then asked to notify the cause of absence by letter to the class teacher when the child returns to school. In the case of a extended period of absence through illness, parents/carers are asked to update the school of the child's progress.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical or dental appointments;
- Days of religious observance;
- Study leave;
- Exclusion;
- Traveller child travelling;
- Family bereavement;
- A child caring for a sick or disable family member (authorisation should, in such

- instances, be of limited duration);
- Involvement in a public performance;
 - Family holidays (when the school has given approval in advance and for no more than 10 days. Please note comment regarding attachment to half-term/ holiday periods.);
 - Special 'occasions' - the nature of such special occasions will be determined by schools on an individual basis;
 - Lateness (when the child arrives after the register has closed and offers a satisfactory explanation).

Excessive amounts of authorised absence may often be as damaging to continuity of learning as unauthorised absence. Schools should therefore only authorise absence sparingly and only after careful consideration, particularly, where children have a history of irregular attendance. Inappropriate authorisation of absence may seriously undermine effective intervention by the local education authority and compromise any potential legal action.

When leave of absence is required for some special reason, a form (available from either school office) **must be completed and sent to Mrs Brown at least two weeks in advance of the day for which absence is requested.**

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (shopping, minding the house);
- Family holidays (which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess on any time agreed with the school);
- Lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed and fails to offer a satisfactory explanation;
- Special 'occasions' (when the school does not agree that these should be given).

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 20% or more. An individual child is considered to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 80%, regardless of whether or not the absence has been authorised.

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are registered off-site or dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as authorised absence, provided that such activities are:

- of an educational nature,
- approved by the school,
- supervised.

These children may be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes, for particular activities, such as field trips, educational visits and approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded in the class register by use of the appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Lateness

Repeated lateness at the beginning of a school session can amount to a failure to attend regularly for the purpose of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

(The above information regarding Absence and Lateness has been written with reference to the 'Office of Children and Young People's Services', Cambridge County Council.)