

# Regis Manor Primary School

## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

### 2023/2024

Approval Date	Policy Reviewer	Title	Chair of Governors
July 2023	Mr M Perry	Head of School	Mr S Penney

<b>Frequency of Policy Review</b>	Annually
<b>Name of the Attendance Leader &amp; email</b>	Mrs K Low - <a href="mailto:rmpoffice@swale.at">rmpoffice@swale.at</a>

This policy is ratified by Regis Manor Primary School's Local Governing Body (LGB) as a school-based policy.

#### ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy reflects the vision and aim of the school by:

- ✓ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ✓ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

#### School Times

	Start	End	If late picking up
<b>Nursery</b>	8:30am or 12:15pm	11:35am or 3:15pm	Children will be booked into emergency afterschool club and a charge is added to parents ParentPay account
<b>Reception</b>	8:30am	3:10pm	
<b>KS1</b>	8:30am	3:15pm	
<b>KS2</b>	8:30am	3:15pm	
<b>Reporting your child absence</b>	Contact the school office Weduc, email, telephone : 01795472971 office@swale.at		Contact the school office : 07707505750 rmp_toucans@swale.at

## PRINCIPLES

To encourage staff, parents/carers and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.

Provide clear procedures for involving parents/carers relating to school attendance.

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open; unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any barriers to regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives them the impression that attendance does not matter and may lead to poor attendance habits developing.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why the information about the cause of each absence is always required, in writing or by telephone.

Authorised absences are morning and afternoons away from school for a reason such as a genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which "no leave" has been given. This includes:

- ✓ parents keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- ✓ truancy before or during the school day;
- ✓ absences which have never been properly explained;
- ✓ children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. Schools can ask parents to enter into a parent contract to try and improve attendance before it is forced to go down legal or safeguarding routes. If difficulties cannot be improved in this way, the school may seek involvement from the school liaison officer to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed then the local authority can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or three months imprisonment.

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal parenting contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the pupil and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, the lead practitioner should also discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services and agree an ESO would be a more suitable option than a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan. In all cases, local authorities must fully consider using an ESO before moving forward to prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO. The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time. Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.

## **PROCEDURES**

### Role of the Local Authority

The local authority, statutory safeguarding partners and other local partners therefore have a crucial role in supporting pupils to overcome those barriers and ensuring all children can access the full-time education to which they are entitled. Local authorities are facilitators of wider support needed by individual families and schools to overcome barriers in the short term. They are also strategic leaders that work across a geographical area to remove barriers in the longer term.

As local authorities vary significantly in size, organisational approach and demographics, it is right that the specifics of attendance service delivery and how those roles are discharged should be determined locally to meet local needs of pupils, parents, and schools.

As a minimum, however, all local authorities are expected to:

- Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.

Have a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):

- **Communication and advice:** regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
- **Targeting Support Meetings:** hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
- **Multi-disciplinary support for families:** provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
- **Legal intervention:** take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
- **Monitor and improve** the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

#### Role of Parents and Carers

- Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and work with the staff in resolving any problems together;
- Ensure that the aim is for their children to achieve 100% school attendance;
- Ensure that pupils are on the premises between 8:30 and 8:45am and not before.
- The school front gate opens at 8:30am however pupils remain the responsibility of parents or carers until they enter the school doors;
- Take children who are late (8:45am onwards) to the main entrance to sign in;
- Collect children promptly at the end of the school day, which finishes at 3:10pm for Reception pupils and 3.15 pm for all other year groups. After this time, children are the responsibility of their parents or carers;
- Collect children promptly from after school clubs;
- Ensure that the school has current parent/carers and emergency contact telephone numbers and addresses.

#### i) Absences for Medical Reasons

It is the responsibility of parents or carers:

- to notify the school by telephone on the first and subsequent days of absence, as early as possible and not later than 9:00am.
- to agree a later registration time with the Head of School if the child needs regular medical attention before coming to school. The child must always sign in on arrival.
- to inform and provide the office with evidence of scheduled medical appointments if the child needs to attend a medical appointment during school time. Whenever possible, parents/carers should try to make all appointments out of school hours.
- to liaise with the school about specific family problems which may impact on absences.

ii) Withdrawal from Learning Requests

Responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parent and pupil. It is made clear to parents that any absence from school will disrupt their child's learning. Absence during term time is not authorised, unless the Head of School deems it to be an exceptional circumstance.

Parents must seek permission from the Head of School by making an application in advance in writing.

If the absence requested is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, the absence (if taken) is recorded as unauthorised.

If the absence during term time is 5 days or more within a 100 day period then Kent County Council (KCC) is notified and a Penalty Notice issued. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this will result in further legal intervention.

Kent County Council will also issue penalty notices when parents have taken their children on holiday during term time. The holiday **must** be because of exceptional circumstances.

Role of The School

1. To register all pupils promptly and accurately;
2. To record absence appropriately, including signing in and out during school hours;
3. To record as late, pupils who arrive after 8:45am. and before the close of registers at 9:00am;
4. To record as unauthorised absences, pupils who arrive after the registers close;
5. To record as late, pupils who arrive ten minutes after class afternoon registration time;
6. To check registers daily for first day absence;
7. To telephone those parents who have not contacted the school by the required time on the first day of absence, priority being given to:
  - children on the Protection Register or involved with Social Services such as LAC or those with Child Protection Plans;
  - children in families where there is a particular concern;
  - children, whose parents or carers are normally fastidious in making contact.
8. To send a weduc/text message on the morning of an absence to parents who cannot be contacted, to ask why their child is absent.
9. To keep records of all telephone calls on Bromcom and keep all contact concerning absence;
10. To monitor regularly absence and lateness, to look for patterns and take appropriate action;

11. to involve appropriate external agencies if there are any concerns regarding absence or punctuality;
12. to obtain details of telephone contacts for all pupils and to ensure that records are updated regularly by contacting parents to remind them of their responsibilities, whilst requesting current contact information. An emergency telephone number must be recorded for every pupil;
13. to send reminders regarding absence and punctuality on the school's regular communication to parents/carers;
14. to raise concerns regarding absence at parent consultation meetings, or sooner if appropriate;
15. to discourage the practice of taking children out of school for odd days and holidays;
16. to report all authorised and unauthorised absence on the child's annual report;
17. to publish attendance data to parents (and individual pupil attendance data on annual school reports);
18. to set attendance targets annually for the whole school as well as individual pupils, and monitor.

The school will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, birthdays, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which cannot be arranged out of school time.

School strategy to reduce absence/persistent absence using data

- clear and consistent attendance expectations shared with all stakeholders
- school culture of all staff discussing and challenging absences
- termly review of school data and national data to identify trends and targets
- personalised support (pastoral/formal) for families and pupils as appropriate
- weekly attendance meetings to review termly and individual attendance targets
- incentives to support anxiety based school avoidance and regular attendance
- rewards for weekly, bi-termly, annual attendance
- weekly class reward for punctuality
- expedient parent contact through home visits, telephone calls, meetings

**Wider support services** - a wide range of additional support can be accessed by parents/carers as appropriate with referrals completed by the family liaison officer and KCC school liaison officer.

Lateness:

- Daily: If late (after the register closes at 9:00am), parents/carers where possible will be asked to record the reason upon arrival.
- Late arrivals and lost learning time recorded and reviewed on a weekly basis
- Parents initially receive a letter informing them of the number of late arrivals at school and cumulative lost learning time
- If punctuality does not improve, parents/carers are invited to a meeting to discuss support, identify barriers and agree appropriate support
- If punctuality and lost learning time concerns persist a penalty notice request may be submitted to KCC

For pupils who have regular lates arrivals, incentives are provided e.g. alarm calls, punctuality postcards, stickers, regular check-ins.

See appendix 1 for template letter regarding lates.

### Frequent Absence / Poor Attendance

The School's Attendance Target is 96%.

In the academic year there are 190 school days.

To achieve 96% in an academic year a child must attend 183 days in the year.

The school recognises that absence can occur for a range of reasons and can be spread across the academic year. To ensure attendance issues can be dealt with promptly children's attendance is reviewed regularly on a cumulative basis using the following procedures:

#### Stage 1 - Intervention

A child whose attendance is 95% (181 days) for the academic year is absent for 9 days.

At this stage an initial concern letter is sent to parents/carers informing them of the pupils current attendance and highlighting the importance of good attendance

#### Stage 2 -Intervention

A child whose attendance is 90% for the academic year is absent for 13 days (two & half school weeks). Parents are invited to a meeting to identify barriers for individual children and try to remove them. At this stage a parent contract may be set up or will be reviewed.

#### Stage 3 Intervention

A child whose attendance is below 90% for the academic year is absent for 19 days (almost four school weeks). At this stage, a pre-referral letter is sent home. The letter explains that if their child's attendance remains irregular; a referral to the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action which could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution. If there is no improvement in attendance, a penalty notice warning letter will be sent to parents with a copy of the child's attendance certificate enclosed. Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis and if no further improvement is seen a Fixed Penalty Notice will be submitted.

#### Stage 4 intervention

A child whose attendance is 85% for the academic year is absent for 28 days (five & half school weeks). A referral to the KCC school liaison officer will be submitted and a letter is sent to parents informing them of the referral.

At this stage, the school liaison officer will contact parents to explain that despite the school's intervention and support and attempting to engage with parents/carers several times in order to support with improvements in attendance, there still does not seem to be any significant improvement with their child's attendance.

A meeting between the school liaison officer, attendance lead and parents/carers takes place to review attendance of the pupil. The personal circumstances of the child are discussed and actions and targets agreed.

The Senior Attendance Lead is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), which ensures triangulation of safeguarding/pastoral information. All attendance concerns are recorded onto the school's electronic safeguarding system (Bromcom) to ensure DSL analysis and actions are recorded.

See appendix 2 for letters around poor attendance.

### Holiday Absence

- Responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parent/carer and pupil. It is made clear to parents/carers that any absence from school will disrupt their child's learning.
- Parents/carers must submit a written request for absence in advance to the school office.
- This absence must be reviewed by the Head of School.
- Parents will be informed of the Head of School's decision in writing and a copy of this is filed and the holiday is recorded.
- Once the holiday is taken, and if 5 sessions or more, a holiday penalty notice fine will be requested from KCC. The parents can be fined as a result of taking holiday during term time.
- If the holiday is taken without authorisation being requested in advance, a letter is sent home to parents/carers explaining that the school is aware they went on holiday and cannot be authorised retrospectively. A holiday penalty notice fine will be requested from KCC and parents can be fined as a result of taking holiday during term time.
- A penalty notice is requested for all parents who are liable; this includes a step-parent or other carer and can include an absent parent. If the parents live at separate addresses, a letter stating the absence is unauthorised must be sent to both of them regardless of which parent made the request.

See Appendix 3 for letter templates regarding school holiday absence.

### Rewarding Good Attendance

The majority of pupils at our school have a good attendance record. Pupils are given incentives to attend regularly and punctually.

Examples include:

- ✓ Weekly whole school attendance and punctuality awards
- ✓ Bi-termly 100% attendance party.
- ✓ Annual 100% attendance party.
- ✓ Certificates/rewards given for pupils with outstanding bi-termly attendance.
- ✓ Rewards for outstanding annual attendance include certificates and rewards.
- ✓ Improvement postcards/certificates sent home for effort in improved attendance and/or punctuality.



Those people responsible for attendance matters on a day to day basis in this school are: Mrs J Head, Mrs S Best, Mrs K Low

### Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Attendance Categories:

Category/Colour	Excellent	Good	Poor	Persistent Absence
%:	98% or above	96-97.9%	90.1%-95.9%	90% or less
Days absence per year:	0-3 days	4-8 days	9-18 days	19 days or more

### Recording

Attendance documents issued to parents/carers are saved directly to the pupil record on the Strategic Attendance Document and Bromcom is updated to detail current attendance status of the pupil concerned.

Any verbal/phone/email communication with parents around attendance is recorded on Bromcom under safeguarding categories.

## Appendix 1 – Letter Template Regarding Lateness

Dear name of parent/carer

### **Re: Late arrival of pupil's name**

At Regis Manor we regularly monitor attendance and punctuality and expect all pupils to arrive on time in the mornings prior to the start of lessons. I am writing to inform you that *{pupil's name}* has arrived late at school on a number of occasions. These late arrivals total hours/minutes of lost learning.

Pupils who arrive late to school miss the teacher's introduction to the lesson and may feel anxious or embarrassed to enter the classroom late. They also miss the opportunity to socialise with friends at the beginning of the day which helps to develop confidence and friendships.

Pupils are expected to arrive at school between 8.30am - 8.45am. Please can you ensure that your child arrives at their classroom at the appropriate time.

If you wish to discuss this or any other ways which we can support you, please contact either myself or Mrs Best to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Low

**Deputy Head of School**

## Appendix 2 – Letter Templates Regarding Attendance

Dear name of parents/carers

### **Attendance**

As part of our statutory duties, we regularly review pupil attendance and as you may be aware, the Government expectation is that pupils should attend every day when school is open.

I am writing to inform you that *{pupil's name}* attendance is currently *{X}*% which means they are identified as a persistent absentee and will continue to have their attendance monitored next term.

If you have any questions, please contact either myself or Mrs Best.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Low  
**Deputy Head of School**

Dear name of parent/carer

**Re: pupil's name**

It has been brought to my attention that pupil's name school attendance is unsatisfactory. I am extremely concerned that their current attendance is only {X}% which is having a detrimental impact on their attainment.

The Government expectation is that pupils should attend every day when school is open.

I must remind you that it is very important that {pupil's name} attends school regularly and on time, to ensure that he/she achieves his/her full potential. It is your responsibility to ensure your child's regular attendance at school and I would ask that you provide a satisfactory explanation for any absence that occurs. I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised. If pupils accrue ten unauthorised absences over a 100 day period you may be liable to pay a fine.

Could you please make every effort to ensure that name attends school regularly and punctually, to ensure that his/her overall school attendance improves. If there is no sustained improvement in pupil's name school attendance, the matter may be referred to Kent County Council.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Low  
**Deputy Head of School**

Dear name of parent/carer

**Re: pupil's name**

At Regis Manor we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that {*pupil's name*} has been absent from school for a total of number unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

*'As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.'* A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

*On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.*

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact myself or Mrs Best.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Low

**Deputy Head of School**

## Appendix 3 – Template Letters Regarding Holidays in Term Time

Dear name of parent/carer

### **Request for leave during Term-Time**

I have received your request to take *{pupil's name}* out of school for a family holiday between *{date and date}*, a total of *{number}* school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take *{pupil's name}* out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Perry

**Head of School**

Dear name of parent/carer

**Re : pupil's name**

You failed to apply in advance for permission for {*pupil's name*} to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances. ***(State why you are treating this absence as a family holiday and/or why there are no exceptional circumstances)***

Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school session a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of this Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay this penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Perry

**Head of School**