



# Russell Hall Pupil Attendance Policy

Good attendance at school and nursery is important for your child's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

Under current government legislation, unauthorised absence is regarded as truancy and all absence figures have to be reported to Bradford Council and the Department for Education and are recorded on a child's annual report.

It is also important that your child arrives on time for school, as the start of the day establishes the learning activities for the day. Lateness is recorded in the register.

Every family will receive a termly attendance leaflet with their children's attendance figure.

Whilst we recognise that the large proportion of families ensures that their children come to school every day and on time, there are still some whose attendance falls below.

## 1. Extended leave and family holidays in term time:

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the **law was changed** (*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*) which removes the statutory threshold of the discretionary 10 school days absence for the purpose of a family holiday or extended leave in exceptional circumstances.

Consequently **NO FAMILY HOLIDAYS OR EXTENDED LEAVE WILL BE GRANTED**.

Families must note that if they decide to take unauthorised leave eg. go on extended leave in term time, then schools may actively pursue the issuance of a fixed penalty notice by the Local Authority which could lead to a minimum fine of £60 per child per parent.

Eg. If you have 3 children with a mother and father, then **each parent will be fined £60 per child**  $3 \times £60 = £180$  which would be £360 fine for the family.

Additionally unauthorised attendance may result in your child losing their school place and being taken off roll.

Any requests for leave in exceptional circumstances will be referred to a panel made up of members of the Governing Body for a decision.

## 2. Absence from Nursery

Children in our nursery are not of compulsory school age therefore, fining parents for their child not attending cannot be applied. However, if poor attendance occurs parents are at risk of their child losing their place at nursery.

If a nursery child does not use their nursery place for a period of 21 days then the child will lose their place and it will be allocated to another child.

We expect parents to send their child to our nursery everyday on the agreed days and if they are ill we must be contacted on the first day of absence. If we do not hear from you then we will attempt to make contact to find out why your child is absent from nursery. If we are unable to make contact a home visit may be conducted.

If you are unsure as to whether your child should be absent from nursery due to an illness or how long your child should be absent for, then please contact the school office for advice and guidance.

If you wish to take your child out of nursery for a period of time, for example a holiday we should be informed in writing that this is your intention.

### **3. Absence from School**

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school every day but where a child is ill and it is not appropriate for them to attend, then absence will be authorised.

- Staff will ask questions when parents telephone about illness so that they can give the correct advice about how long the child should remain absent etc.

Parents must note that where a child has **ten unauthorised sessions (1 session is half a day so 10 sessions = 5 days) in any 6 week period**, then this could lead to the issuance of a fixed penalty notice which could lead to a minimum fine of £60 per child per parent.

#### **Pupils with attendance below 96%**

Someone from school will call to contact a parent if a child's attendance falls below 96% to discuss the reason for this and see if there is anything that school can do to help.

#### **Pupils with attendance below 90%**

These pupils will receive a letter informing them that their attendance has fallen below 90% and unless their attendance improves they will be classed as a persistent absentee. The child's attendance will be closely monitored and they may be placed on the attendance challenge.

#### **Attendance Challenge**

Any child with attendance below 85% will be placed on the Attendance Challenge for 8 weeks. This is a closely monitored program to encourage attendance to improve. If attendance does not improve during this time then there will be a referral to Education Social Welfare. During this time:

- When children are absent through illness, we ask that they see a doctor and that the appointment card and medication is shown at the school office. If this is not possible a home visit from a senior member of staff may be conducted.
- Illness will not be accepted as a reason for absence where children have regular, minor illness which cannot be substantiated.

## If you value your child's education – Don't Miss A Day

### The Positives – Research shows:

- Children who have 95% attendance or above do better at school and better in later life
- Children who have 95% attendance or above are more confident, happier and find school more enjoyable
- Children who have 95% attendance or above find transition to Secondary School easier

### The Positives – At Russell Hall:

- Children with excellent attendance will contribute to their class winning the attendance cup on a Friday.
- Children with excellent attendance win prizes during Attendance Challenge weeks
- Children who have 100% attendance will be rewarded at the end of the year.



**Russell Hall Primary School's attendance target: 96%**

**National Average: 96%**

**Help us to achieve it!**

**Remember:**

**No Term Time Holidays!**

**No appointments in school time!**

**Be on time all the time!**

**Only keep your child off when they REALLY cannot come to school.**



**Russell Hall Pupil Attendance Policy**  
**Covid-19 Addendum, added July 2020 & amended September 2021**

Prior to the Summer holidays 2020, the Government announced that they would not be penalising families for children's non-attendance at school due to the ongoing risks associated with the Coronavirus pandemic. However, from September 2020, attendance became statutory again and schools must actively pursue families where children are not attending school regularly.

We realise that there is still anxiety connected to the transmission of the virus and for some families this is greater than others and there may be specific reasons connected to this. If you have any concerns about your child attending school and the risks of Covid, please contact school as soon as possible to let us know what your concerns are so that we can work together.

### **Holidays**

We know that many of you will have had a family holiday cancelled or rearranged due to the virus. You may have questions about whether it is ok to take time out of term to take a holiday. We aim to answer many of your questions in this addendum to the Attendance Policy.

### **Quarantine**

If you are taking a holiday at the end of the Summer that was pre-booked before the Summer and you are returning from a country that requires you to isolate, resulting in your child being unable to return to school on time, your child's absence will be authorised. This is providing you can produce evidence of when the holiday was booked and that it is clear that this was done before the quarantine regulations were put into place.

Please do not book a holiday at the end of the Summer holidays that would prevent your child from being able to return to school on time as this will not be authorised and may result in a fine.

### **Rearranged holidays**

If your package holiday has been cancelled by the tour operator due to Covid -19, you are protected by law and you entitled to a full refund of any money paid. You do not have to take an alternative holiday during term time. Please do not take an offer of alternative dates during term time as this will not be authorised.

### **Missed holidays**

You may have had your holiday cancelled and feel that your family would really benefit from getting away, which we can all understand, but please do not be tempted to book during term time. This time has been very strange for our children but school staff are working really hard to make sure that what we have in place will very quickly begin to address any gaps in children's knowledge, assess what their next steps are as well as deal with re-establishing their friendships

**and supporting their wellbeing. It is important that that they don't miss any more time and risk missing this important period of educational recovery.**

#### **Exceptional circumstances**

**There may be some circumstances that don't fit into any of the situations that have been described. If you feel that there are exceptional circumstances as to why you need to take your child/ren out of school in term time, please write to the Governors detailing what the exceptional circumstances are and be prepared to provide any evidence that you think may support your case. Only in exceptional circumstances, where the Governors have reviewed your case and agreed that there are clear reasons why the leave would need to be taken during term time, would holiday be authorised.**