



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>Policy owner</b>	RSSKL - Principal
<b>Policy lead</b>	Attendance Officer
<b>Audience</b>	All staff
<b>Legislation and regulation</b>	
<b>Formally endorsed by</b>	SMT and the Board of Trustees
<b>Endorsement date</b>	November 2017
<b>Next review</b>	November 2019

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **ATTENDANCE - Introduction**

Main lesson subjects are taught in blocks which build one upon the other and the rhythm of daily, weekly and seasonal cycles is a crucial part of a Steiner education. Additionally, as lessons are not normally taught directly from textbooks, experiences missed through absence cannot easily be made up at a later time, especially at the beginnings and endings of terms.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The attendance policy aims to ensure that:

- pupils, parents/carers and staff know what is expected and what their responsibilities are in relation to attendance;
- attendance of all pupils is accurately recorded and monitored;
- RSSKL's attendance rate is in line with Government guidelines of 96% or more;
- after registration, the school knows where all pupils are at all times during schools hours;
- parents know where the children are when they should be in school;
- a pupil's education is not interrupted by missing school;
- pupils who are persistently absent or are reluctant to go to school are supported.

### **The responsibility of all STAFF**

Staff are expected to:

- know where pupils are at all times;
- report a suspected missing pupil (non appearance at a lesson or non return from an out of classroom activity/trip) immediately so that suitable action can be taken for the child's safety and welfare.

### **The responsibility of PUPILS**

Pupils are expected to:

- arrive in the classroom on time, suitably equipped for each day and each lesson;
- report to reception if late;
- sign out at reception on leaving if authorised to leave before the end of the school day and back in on return.

### **The responsibility of PARENTS/CARERS**

Parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure that their children attend school. A clear message about the importance of attendance and the disruptive effect on a child's education of missing school is explained in the parents' handbook and at parent evenings.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure that their child arrives on time at school;
- inform the school office, before 9am, if your child is unable to attend school;
- provide a supporting note to be brought on returning to school;
- if possible arrange medical appointments outside of school hours;
- if medical appointments during school hours are unavoidable the pupil is expected to attend school before and after the appointment when possible;
- make sure the school always has their up to date emergency contact details;
- discuss with the class teacher as soon as possible if a child becomes unwilling to attend school.

Parents should NOT arrange holidays in term time. This disrupts the benefits for the child of continuity of integrated learning that is a key feature of the Steiner curriculum. **Holidays in term time will be recorded as unauthorised absence.**

### **The Responsibility of TEACHERS**

The responsibility of teachers is to **record attendance**. It is a legal requirement for the school to maintain an accurate daily register of attendance.

### **The Register**

Pupils not present at registration are marked as authorised absence or unauthorised absence.

<b>Authorised absences include</b>	<b>Unauthorised absences include</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School closed to all pupils</li><li>• Illness (call or letter received from parents/carers)</li><li>• Absence for medical appointments, etc</li><li>• Offsite educational activity including: work experience, interview, student exchange or exam</li><li>• Religious observance</li><li>• Excluded (Advance notice given by school)</li><li>• Bereavement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family holiday</li><li>• Reason for absence unknown at time of registration OR no <u>adequate</u> reason given by parent</li></ul>

Subject teachers are requested to take registers for individual lessons, and to check whether absences are authorised. In the event of a pupil deliberately missing a lesson, a detention will be given in the Upper School.

**The teacher taking the register is responsible for:**

- ensuring completed register is collected by support staff as soon as possible so attendance data can be checked and suitable action can be taken in case of a child's whereabouts being unclear;
- collecting the notes/letters from parents concerning illness and other absence, and making sure the register is up-to-date and properly filled in;
- keeping with the register all 'notes' from parents regarding absence;
- reporting a persistent absence to Class teachers or sponsors.

**The responsibility of the ATTENDANCE OFFICER**

The Attendance Officer is expected to:

- record marks from registers into SIMS;
- ring parents of absent pupils who have not already provided information by 9.30am (this includes using 'emergency only' phone numbers if necessary);
- undertake the same actions for the afternoon register if there is an unexplained absence;
- implement the 'lost child' procedure (see Lost Child Policy) if necessary;
- communicate with Safeguarding Lead and class teachers/sponsors regarding pupil attendance concerns.
- In case of sickness arising during the day, the school will contact parents to arrange the most suitable care possible for the child. This will include the parent collecting the child whenever possible. In this case the afternoon register will be marked as an authorised absence.

**Procedure for follow-up of an absence**

- Attendance is a half-termly standing item on SMT, Upper and Lower school meeting agendas.
- Class Teachers/Sponsors receive a half-termly update from attendance officer on all pupils' attendance. Teachers/Sponsors may inform The Principal of concerns.
- A persistent absence due to illnesses such as measles, chicken pox, flu etc, and long absences due to genuine sickness will be noted in the end of year report, as the education of the child may be affected. If there are persistent health problems the teacher will still call a meeting with the parents to see how to meet/support the child's educational needs in spite of their poor health/disability.
- Class teachers/Sponsors and attendance officer must make every effort to engage in positive and regular communication with the

parent/guardian of any pupil where there are concerns about attendance.

- The pupil's parent(s) will be notified of falling (or insufficient) attendance and asked to attend a meeting with the class teacher/sponsor.
- The parents will be reminded of their legal obligation to ensure that their child attends school and informed that poor attendance means that the school may be unable to meet the pupil's need adequately or to provide an effective education.
- If there is no improvement in attendance after this process, the parents will be informed that further absences will only be authorised if accompanied by a doctor's certificate. Unauthorised absences will then be monitored and, if necessary, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will be consulted.
- If the child is persistently absent as a result of medical problems, the school will offer support to look at how best to help the pupil and minimise the disruptive effect on his/her education. If appropriate, the pupil may be referred to School Doctor, or support of suitable professionals/professional services for the family may be called upon.
- If the parents find that their child is reluctant to attend school, reasons will be investigated and the Class teacher/sponsor (with a colleague) should attempt to meet with the family to discuss possible reasons and solutions and what support can be given to the child to access a suitably effective education. The class teacher/sponsor will continue to monitor attendance, and if there is no improvement a further meeting will be set with the parents with the class Teacher plus a member of SMT
- Where attendance is causing concern the school will write to the parent making it clear that it cannot provide the pupil with effective education under these conditions and that the case may need to be referred to the Education welfare Officer.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

Holidays will always be registered as unauthorised absence during term time.

If the child is absent for any part of the school day without any information from their parent/guardian, this will be registered as an unauthorised absence and the parents/guardian of the child will be contacted as soon as the school becomes aware of this. The school will attempt to work alongside the family to facilitate the pupil's attendance.

### **Truancy**

If the pupil has been absent without the parent's knowledge, the parents/carers will be contacted as soon as this information is known to check that the pupil is safe. Then a meeting will be called between the parent (and pupil as appropriate) and the Class Teachers/Sponsor and one other member of staff to discuss the circumstances of this. The meeting will be convened as soon as possible (within one week of the absence). The Class Teacher/sponsor will meet with the pupil (within one week of the absence).

- The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored in all lessons throughout the day.
- Any further absence will be noted and investigated, and if such absence is found to be an instance of truanting, a further meeting will be convened (as above) and, where appropriate, disciplinary action taken (as in Behaviour Policy)
- The Education Welfare Officer will be consulted.

### **The Education Welfare Service (EWS)**

The EWS exists to support all schools and children with attendance problems. For cases where the child, after help and support has been given, continues with non-attendance at school the school must:-

- Inform the EWS in the area where the child lives
- Ask the family to withdraw the child from the school.

If a family is to be prosecuted for failing to get a pupil to attend regularly enough, the School could expect the following situation/requirement:

- The Principal would appoint a member of staff to oversee the case and do the necessary paperwork
- The EWS would support the Teacher in the above
- The Teacher would have to write a 'witness statement'
- A prosecution can only be set in place on the basis of absences that are **unauthorised**.
- A court officer would support the Teacher through the court process, if required.