



Rockwood Nursery School

Attendance Policy

2023/2024

To be reviewed September 2024

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1 Introduction

As a maintained Nursery School, with children under statutory school age, we cannot legally enforce attendance.

Rockwood Nursery School is successful and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all pupils to achieve their potential and aspire to excellence.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at Nursery, on time, for every session they attend, for every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for the transition to primary, secondary school and, eventually, higher education, training and employment.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. Our attendance target this year is 90%, but all pupils should strive to achieve 100% attendance if they can.

2 Responsibilities and expectations

2.1 Families

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly, if they are of compulsory school age and registered at a school.

Parents should know the times the nursery school day/sessions start and finish and when the register closes (see section 4, below); the processes for requesting leave (see section 3.4, below); and the process for informing school of the reason for unexpected absence (as follows).

If your child is going to be absent, parents must inform school as soon as possible and at the latest by 8.15am/12.00pm on the first day of absence by calling school on 01282 426711 and speaking to someone in the office or use the answerphone option or by emailing the school on info@rockwoodnursery.com.

Parents must also ensure that school has up-to-date contact information for themselves and emergency contacts.

School contact information for other attendance-related matters is given below at the end of section 2.2.

2.2 School Head Teacher

- Lead on giving attendance a high profile.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and protected time allocated to discharge those responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school monitors and aims to improve attendance.
- Provide regular reports to the governing body on school attendance, including persistent absence and vulnerable groups.

Current Procedures:

Attendance lead

- First day response: contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and record this information accordingly. A phone call or email will be made to parents.
- Update attendance registers daily
- Comments used in SIMS to record absence reasons
- Document persistent absences on CPOMS (Absence Concern)
- The HT will regularly monitor every half term and analyse data to identify attendance concerns and to target attendance improvement support for those who need it most, particularly vulnerable groups.
- The HT speaks face to face with parents where there are attendance concerns
- Attendance information is relayed to keyworkers to support planning & assessment files
- Children who are CLA, CP or CIN have their attendance tracked (and targets) on relevant documentation

All school staff

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and a safe learning environment.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Adhere to the procedures in place within school to promote good attendance.
- Promote the link between attendance and educational attainment to pupils and parents.
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the head teacher.
- Review session allocation and activities in light of patterns of attendance
- Discuss attendance concerns at an early stage with children and parents.

Governors

- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually.
- Agree targets for attendance at Rockwood Nursery School.
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, instigate a review of school's attendance procedures.

School attendance contacts

Name: Mrs Faith Stringer,

Position: Headteacher responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.

Name: Mr Paul Holden

Position: School Business Manager – Contact for Parents

Name: Mrs Pamela Flory

Position: Admin officer – Regular monitoring to identify attendance concerns and target attendance improvement support contact for day to day enquiries about attendance.

The staff named above can be contacted on 01282 426711 or info@rockwoodnursery.com

2.3 Lancashire County Council (the local authority)

School Attendance Consultants (SACs)

SACs are schools' first point of contact for attendance advice regarding individual pupils and the whole school.

Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST)

For primary and special schools, Pupil Attendance Support Workers undertake direct work with pupils and parents, support attendance projects, and can provide supplementary evidence for legal interventions initiated by school.

Children Missing Education (CME) Team

The CME team ensures the local authority fulfils its statutory duty to identify children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. For further information see section 7, below, regarding notifications schools must submit.

3 Types of absence

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. As a school, we will always work with parents (and other agencies, as appropriate) to understand the reasons underlying absence.

3.1 Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

3.2 Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school has not been notified of or when trying to contact the parent has been unable to do so. If school has followed its attendance procedures and a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, Rockwood Nursery School may take the decision to issue a warning and if necessary remove the place.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a school, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

3.3 Persistent Absence (PA)

Persistent absence is when a child misses 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised and unauthorised (including illness, holiday, etc). Absence at this level will damage any child's educational prospects and we expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

At Rockwood Nursery School, we monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents will be informed of this promptly.

3.4 Religious absence

School will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, e.g. Eid, and this will be marked as code R in the register. The day authorised will be that set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member.

4 Registration

4.1 Attendance registration

The school day starts at 8.30am & 12.15pm. Pupils are expected to be on the premises at that time and that is when the registration period starts (i.e. when the register is taken and remains open).

Morning registration is between 8.30am and 8.40am.
Afternoon registration is between 12.15pm and 12.25pm.

When the attendance register has been taken it remains open until 8.50am in the morning and 12.35pm in the afternoon.

School finishes at 11.30am & 3.15pm

4.2 Late arrival

Pupils who arrive after 8.40am or 12.25pm will be admitted with their parents by the school office or collected from the gate by a member of their class and the children are taken into provision by the office staff.

Pupils who arrive after the register has been taken at 9.00am or 12.25pm but before it is closed 9.15am or 12.40pm) will be marked as code L. This is classed as late but present for the session (i.e. the morning or afternoon).

Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and without a valid reason for being late (such as attending a dental or medical appointment) will be marked as code O, which is classed as an unauthorised absence but indicates that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session.

4.3 Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the session, they can miss important routines/interactions and do not spend time with their class teacher in group time.

Pupils arriving late also disrupt activities, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

If your child is often late you will be contacted to discuss ways to improve punctuality, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed may result in further action, as outlined below, under section 5.

5 School attendance procedures

5.1 First day of absence

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will telephone you on the first day of absence to find out what the reason is and when your child is expected to return. If we are unable to contact you, we will contact you via email or approach your emergency contacts.

5.2 Attendance concerns

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any attendance problems together; this is nearly always successful. However, if concerns persist, school will use the following procedures and interventions, as required, to support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality:

- The HT or office staff will make contact to discuss concerns about their child's attendance
- Invitation in to nursery to discuss concerns
- The Early Help Assessment (EHA) process and/or referral to other agencies and services can be made for further support

At any stage, we may seek advice from Pupil Access for additional support.

5.3 Pupils with medical needs who have difficulty attending school

Government guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (see appendix) emphasises the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils, whether their condition is short or long term.

School will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be in the form of specific support.

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, the head teacher, the key worker and other support services will work with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

5.4 Pupils refusing to attend school

At Rockwood Nursery School, we believe that every child has a right to a full-time education, and we would not accept "school refusal" as a reason for non-attendance. In

such cases, we will work with parents to identify the reasons why a child may be reluctant to attend school, and ensure the child is further supported with any issues.

6 Notifications school must submit to the local authority

6.1 Admissions

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided (currently Lancashire does not).

6.2 Leavers

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided (Lancashire currently does not).

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the required information (using the off-roll form) as laid out in regulation.

In addition to submitting a notification about removal from roll, some circumstances also require school to make referral to other local authority teams such as the Children Missing Education team. Schools may also contact their School Attendance Consultant for advice on removing children from roll.

6.4 Children missing education (CME)

The nursery would put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as possible) those children who are under a category such as CLA, CP or CIN who are not attending regularly. This would include, contacting lead professionals or designated social worker to support attendance where necessary.

Appendix: School attendance and the law

There are many pieces of legislation and government regulations and guidance that are relevant to school attendance and to children and their parents and carers. The list below relates to this attendance policy but is not exhaustive.

Parents and carers

Legal definition of "parent" in relation to attendance

The law requires that all "parents" are held responsible for their child's attendance. This definition can include any person who has care of the child. [Section 576 of the Education Act 1996](#) states:

Meaning of "parent".

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person –

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
- (b) who has care of him.

Thus, the definition of "parent" means all natural parents, whether they are married or not, and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/or care for a child or young person.

Schools

Attendance and absence registration codes

[Working together to improve school attendance](#), DfE, published May 2022, applies from September 2022 and will become statutory no sooner than September 2023.

Data protection

Schools must ensure that personal data is handled in accordance with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). See Rockwood Nursery School Privacy Notice for information about how personal data will be used.

Duty for schools to include attendance information in reports for parents

[The Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005](#)

Duty for schools to notify the local authority when pupils join or leave school

[Regulation 12 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

Duty for schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

[Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges](#), DfE, regularly updated

Pupils with health needs who cannot attend school

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions: Statutory guidance, DfE, 2015](#)

Pupils with individual needs and specific barriers to attendance

When considering the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance, schools should be mindful of their obligations under [the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#). Schools may wish to refer to the [Technical Guidance for Schools in England](#), published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which outlines the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for schools.

Regulations regarding removal from roll

[Regulation 8 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)