



Gerrans School

Part of The Roseland Multi-Academy Trust



Pupil Attendance Policy

Approved: Summer 2017

Next Review: Summer 2019

Equality Impact Assessment - Policy Review

In reviewing this policy, we have tried to make a positive impact on equality by considering and reducing or removing inequalities and barriers which already existed. We have ensured that this policy does not impact negatively on the dimensions of equality.

It is The Roseland Multi-Academy Trust's aim to always expect regular attendance. Regular and punctual attendance is vitally important in raising achievement and in developing the potential of all students.

Introduction

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is, under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, a legal requirement. Parents are responsible for ensuring that any child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have (the term parent throughout this policy also refers to carer or legal guardian). It is also essential for pupils to attend school regularly in order to maximise the opportunities available to them.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We consistently will work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. However, we do accept that illness is inevitable on some occasions. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The Trust's attendance targets are for all children to achieve above 96% with attendance over 97% seen as excellent attendance. A level of attendance under 95% is not considered to be regular attendance. Any pupil with an attendance under 90% is classified as

“persistent absence”. If a pupil falls into the persistent absence category, attendance actions are triggered, for example, contact home by a member of staff, involvement of the Education Welfare Officer. These actions are put in place to help and support the student and their family to improve attendance at school.

The Role of Parents

Parents have a legal duty to make sure their child attends school by both arriving and being collected on time. We expect all students to be in school from 8.55am in readiness for registration at 9.00am (see times of the school day below). It is a parent’s responsibility to ring and inform the school by 9.30am why a student is absent and to provide any further information that the school needs. If no message has been received by 9.30am the school will phone the pupil’s parent for confirmation of absence and reason.

Registration: 9.00 – 9.10am

In class learning: 9.10 – 10.45am

Playtime: 10.45 – 11.00am

In class learning: 11.00am-12.10pm

Lunchtime: 12.10-1.15pm

In class learning: 1.15-3.20pm KS1 3.25pmKS2

Absence due to medical reasons

When a pupil is absent from school due to ill health; a letter, telephone call, or a personal visit to the school reception is required. Medical appointments during school time are discouraged. Where this is not possible, parents are requested to opt for appointment times at the start (before 10am) or end of the day (after 2.15pm) so that pupils do not miss a whole day of school. Evidence of a medical appointment should be provided whenever possible. Parents are asked to collect children from school for such appointments as pupils are not permitted to leave the premises during the day unaccompanied.

It is important to note that any persistently absent pupil (under 90% attendance) may be required by the school (in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service) to provide medical evidence for any appointments or absences due to medical reasons.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the nature of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

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 avoidable causes or exceptional circumstance.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This type of absence can lead to Cornwall Council using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers 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.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term times which have not been authorised.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents(s)/carer(s) and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never advisable to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Any student identified as having **attendance below 93%** will have all further absences **unauthorised** on school registers unless parent(s)/carer (s) provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary. In which case the absence for the evidenced period will be authorised.

Lateness

A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his/her continuity of learning but also that of others. If a pupil arrives late for registration (registration begins at 9am) their teacher will record the lateness.

In the event of arriving late, parents are requested to accompany their child into the front entrance, where they should sign the late book.

Lateness after 9.30am will be coded in the register as an unauthorised absence.

Registers

The register is an accurate reflection of a pupil's attendance and a legal document which may be used as evidence in court. The decision on whether or not to authorise a particular absence rests with the Headteacher. The class teacher will record attendance of a child at morning registration and at the start of the afternoon. If a child fails to attend regularly or their attendance level falls to around 90%, the actions detailed under 'Introduction' will be followed.

Leave of Absence

Amendments to the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force on 1 September 2013 stating that Headteachers may not grant any absence for holidays during term time. These amendments remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. Headteachers will not be able to grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'. It is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

All leave of absence requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher in accordance with the school's policy (by completing appendix A attached). Wherever possible, a request must be made at least 2 weeks prior to the leave of absence. Requests for leave of absence will be denied when:

- a. A pupil's attendance is currently under 90% or where by granting the leave request this will result in their attendance being below 90%.
- b. A pupil is in year 2 or year 6, years of statutory testing.
- c. A request is not deemed as an "exceptional circumstance", ie a family holiday.
- d. A pupil has scheduled tests or assessment weeks.
- e. The school has organised and planned specific activities to enhance the curriculum and learning experience for all.
- f. The Local Authority has begun legal proceedings.
- g. A pupil is seriously behind with their work and not making required progress.

Each separate application from parents for an 'exceptional circumstance' leave of absence during term time will be considered on its own merit, outside of the stated conditions above. Parents should be made aware that any leave of absence which has not been agreed in advance will lead to the student being marked with an unauthorised absence and that this may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action. A letter confirming that the request has been authorised/denied will be sent to the parent.

Any child who has 10 sessions (5 days) or more unauthorised absences in one school year will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who could initiate court proceedings against the parent. If a student is taken out of school after their leave of absence has been refused, the parent may be reported to the Education Welfare Officer and a penalty notice may be issued.

Appendix A: Leave Request Form

FORM TO BE RETURNED TO SCHOOL WITH A MINIMUM OF TWO WEEKS' NOTICE

Amendments to the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 1 September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any absence for holidays during term time. Absence may be granted where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated. In these cases, it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Please ensure you detail below the **exceptional** reasons for requesting to take your child out of school and attach supporting documents where appropriate.

At The Roseland Multi Academy Trust we work hard to support all pupils, and their families, to achieve their best within their studies and wider achievements. An important aspect of this work is ensuring that each and every student has excellent attendance. This is because students with poor attendance are vulnerable to falling behind and tend to achieve less. Absence has a serious effect on our ability to work together with you to ensure that your child reaches or exceeds their educational potential.

Requests for leave of absence will be denied when:

- A pupil's attendance is currently under 90% or where by granting the leave request this will result in their attendance being below 90%.
- A pupil is in year 2 or year 6, years of statutory testing.
- A request is not deemed as an "exceptional circumstance", i.e. a family holiday.
- A pupil has scheduled tests or assessment weeks.
- The school has organised and planned specific activities to enhance the curriculum and learning experience for all.
- The Local Authority has begun legal proceedings.
- A pupil is seriously behind with their work and not making required progress.

Please complete a separate form for each child you are requesting leave for.

Name of Pupil	Date of Birth..... Class.....
Leave requested from date to date.....	
Number of school days that your child will be absent from school:	
Do you have a sibling request in another school? If so, please state which school:	
Reason for term time leave request. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.	
Name of Parent /Carer:	
Signature:	Date:

Absences taken which have not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised; these may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

For School Use:

UPN..... Attendance%...
Previous Leave this Academic Year - Yes/No No. of days: Authorised: Yes/No Unauthorised: Yes/No
Arrange to meet with Parent - Yes/No Meeting/Telephone Call with/by:
Headteacher's signature Authorised / Unauthorised Coding B H O P C G

Appendix B

Date

Address

Dear

Leave of Absence – Pupil Class

Thank you for your recent leave request form.

I am able to confirm that your child's leave of absence has been authorised from *time* on *date to date*, for the purpose of *reason*.

Requests for leave are never taken lightly and are only granted in exceptional circumstances. In taking this decision I have considered *name's* overall level of attendance and the impact the leave may have on statutory examinations and tests.

Yours sincerely

Julie Elvy
Headteacher

Appendix C

Date

Address

Dear

Leave of Absence – Pupil's Name Class

I am writing regarding your request to take *student* out of school on *date* until *date*.

The law states that a planned absence from school should only be authorised for students in 'exceptional circumstances'. Here at The Roseland Multi Academy Trust, we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence. We therefore consider each request on its own merit, taking into account purpose, attendance history and study commitment. We are seldom able to authorise a request for pupils in Years 2 and 6 due to Statutory Testing.

Under the circumstances, we regret that on this occasion we are unable to authorise your request for absence. If *pupil* does not attend school on the dates concerned, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If you decide to still take your child out of school, without permission, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may refer the matter to Cornwall Council who may decide to take legal action against you. A penalty notice can be issued under Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996. This carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice will result in Court action. Persistent absences not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates Court, leading to fines up to £2,500 and / or custodial sentences.

The Roseland Multi Academy Trust is committed to maximising the education of all its students and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Gerrans School.

Yours sincerely

Julie Elvy
Headteacher