Roundwood
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy
(Children)

Reviewed September 2026

To be reviewed annually

The importance of school attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on **Safeguarding, curriculum, behaviour, anti-bullying, special educational needs support/inclusion, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing**, and effective use of resources, including **pupil premium.** This policyalso takes into accountthe Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Expectations of Roundwood School

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their **safeguarding** and **welfare** and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility at Roundwood School.

Our school consistently promotes the benefits of good attendance at school and makes our school a place pupils want to be, set high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, systematically analyse their data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts, and work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance.

To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

The law (Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act) entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

When parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

Pupil Registration

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

- Code / \: **Present at the school** / = morning session \ = afternoon session

- Code I: **Illness (not medical or dental appointment)**
- Code L: **Late arrival before the register is closed**
- Code U: **Arrived in school after registration closed**
- Code V: **Attending an educational visit or trip**
- Code M: **Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment**
- Code C2: **Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable**
- Code C: **Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance**
- Code T: **Parent travelling for occupational purposes**
- Code R: **Religious/Cultural observance**
- Code E: **Suspended or permanently excluded**
- Code G: **Holiday not granted by the school**
- Code N: **Reason for absence not yet established**
- Code O: **Absent in other or unknown circumstance**
- Code #: **Planned whole school closure**

Late Arrival:

Registration begins at 8.45am and will close at 9.15am at the Tingewick site.

Registration begins at 9.00am and will close at 9.30am at the Gawcott site.

Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as unauthorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

Parents need to be aware and realise that even the first 15 minutes of the school day is used for learning and interventions.

Retaining Registers

Registers are legal records and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

Deletion of names from admission register

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. A pupil's name must not be removed for any other reason and doing so could constitute off-rolling.

Granting leaves of absence

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority must do so.

These circumstances are:

- **A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable:** where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.

- **Exceptional circumstances:** All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. At Roundwood School, leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances where the event or situation cannot reasonably be arranged outside of school holidays. Parents and carers must provide detailed information and supporting evidence to enable the school to consider each request. Requests to attend weddings will normally only be considered where the child is attending the wedding of a close family member.

Holiday during term time

The DfE and Roundwood School do not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Categorising absence

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Illness-Parents should advise the school by telephone or email on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return.

Medical/Dental Appointments- Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not

possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents may be asked to show letters/appointment cards for repeated appointments.

5 days of unauthorised absence
Penalty Notice fine may be issued for any term-time absences that are unauthorised (for example, a 5-day term-time holiday)-whether these absences are taken consecutively or cumulatively over a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any 10-week period
Penalty Notice fines will also be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any rolling period of 10 school weeks.

A school day has 2 sessions:
1 morning and 1 afternoon sessions per day

Religious/Cultural Observance

Roundwood Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals and cultural events may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and that this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious or cultural observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival or cultural event and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Absence in excess of this will be categorised as unauthorised.

Parent travelling for occupational purposes (Mobile Children/Travellers)

The aim for the attendance of Traveller (Mobile) children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

There will be occasions when a mobile child/ren and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

At Roundwood School we may ask for proof that the parent is travelling for occupational purposes, this should only happen when there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. If there is doubt over the reason given, the school may ask for proof that the family are required to travel for occupational purposes during the period of absence.

It does not mean that part-time education for Mobile (Traveller) children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Buckinghamshire, if a Mobile (Traveller) family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

Roundwood Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Mobile (Traveller) children can dual register at other schools temporarily whilst away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil's school place at Roundwood Primary School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Regular analysis of attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place

As poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. The key to this is regular data analysis to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them. Therefore, levels of attendance are monitored by Roundwood School and by the Local Authority through the County Attendance Team. These are also reported to the DFE.

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.

To achieve this Roundwood School:

- Monitors and analyses **weekly attendance** patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This attendance data is shared with pupils, parents and staff via Instagram and school assemblies

- This data goes beyond headline attendance percentages and looks at individual pupils, cohorts and year groups (including their punctuality. Therefore, **half-termly** analysis of data is broken down into Pupil Premium, Child Protection and SEND. This data will be shared with Governors. This data analysis also highlights any child with attendance below 95%. This can result in a telephone call or a face-to-face meeting with the parents of the individual children.
- **Termly** data analysis will replicate that of the half-termly data, however, any pupil whose attendance still persists below 95% will receive a formal letter. At this stage, it may need an attendance contract to be drawn up. This will depend on the pupil/family involved.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence

In the majority of cases, pupils will be supported by Roundwood School, but where there are multiple issues requiring other service involvement, Roundwood School, our local authority, and other services should work together to provide more intensive whole family support to address them as soon as it becomes clear they would benefit from it.

Legal intervention

Where all support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority's school Attendance Support Team should liaise with the school to take forward attendance legal intervention.

All local authorities are therefore expected to:

- Set out clearly for pupils, parents, and schools when and how attendance legal intervention will be used where voluntary support is not appropriate, or where absence was not for legitimate reasons and support has not been engaged with and/or been successful.
- Issue Notices to Improve and penalty notices in line with the National Framework where absence was unauthorised and support has been provided but has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

- Take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation.

Penalty notices

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered. Penalty notices can be used by all schools where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended and can only be issued by a headteacher, a local authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Local Codes of Conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each local authority. A penalty notice will be considered for all absences due to unauthorised leave of absences i.e. irregular school attendance.

- Penalty Notice fines are issued **Per Parent, Per Child.**

- Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will be referred to Buckinghamshire Council for prosecution which may result in fines up to £2,500 per parent, per child.

- The payment must be paid directly to the local authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice.

- If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice. Parent(s) can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired, and full payment has not been made.

- There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

Useful documents:

- Working together to improve school attendance- DFE https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a4f9ec6a6586e258d371bd0/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_2026.pdf

- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance-DFE https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/communicating-with-parents-about-school-attendance