

Pupils at Ryecroft “*enjoy learning and coming to school, and this is evidenced by their good attendance and punctuality*” Ofsted 2013

Attendance

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Ryecroft C.E. (C) Middle School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child’s ability to develop friendship groups within school.

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 95%
- Maintain levels of attendance by promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

What is expected of the pupils:

- To respect themselves and others
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

As a parent we expect you to:

- Ring on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return.
- If possible, arranging dental and doctor’s appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.
- Keep us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- To work closely with the school and Education Welfare Worker (EWW) to resolve any problems that may impede a child’s attendance.

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

As a School we shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as soon as possible
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school prospectus and the Home-School agreement
- Publish our attendance rate on the school website and in the Headteachers Report to the

governing body.

- Acknowledge and reward good attendance
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report.
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance
- If we continue to have concerns make a referral to the Educational Welfare Worker, who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters.

Procedure Regarding Absence from School



The proper place for your child to be is at school on a school day. If they are not in school then there must be a justifiable reason and you should telephone or email the office between 8.15am and 8.50am on the **first day of absence**. Alternatively, you can leave a message on our answer machine if the school office is closed. In order to safeguard pupils and to encourage good attendance, if no contact has been made by

9.30am on the first day of absence, the Identified Attendance Leader will telephone home to find out why your child is not at school.



Morning registration closes at 9.00am but the registers are left open until 9.30am. A pupil arriving between these times will be marked as late. Any child arriving after this time without a valid reason will be marked as having an unauthorised absence. **The registers are regularly checked by Local Authority Officers who follow up any issues especially persistent absences and lateness.**

Pupils Who Leave School During The Day

Pupils who have to leave school during the school day are identified as a temporary absence on a special list kept in the school office – e.g. visits, fixtures etc. These visits will have been approved by the headteacher and pupils are identified on attendance lists attached to relevant risk assessments.

Parents wishing to remove children from school during the school day should telephone the office or send in a note explaining the reason for the child leaving school (eg dental appointment) and meet their child at the school office.

Pupils who have to leave school during the day due to illness/injury are recorded on a 'temporary absence authorisation' list, which is kept in the school office. Only a member of the Senior Leadership Team can sanction the collection of an unwell/injured child by their parent.

Guidance Notes for Parents Requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the head teacher**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, that they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - the overall attendance pattern of the child
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. Should the school decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 **per parent* per child**. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.
10. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for their child in an exceptional circumstance should complete a form obtainable from the school office. The intended dates and reason for the request, highlighting the exceptional circumstances should be given in detail. Written applications should be made

at least two weeks in advance of the requested date and before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

* Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

Attendance Analysis

The school takes responsibility in dealing with attendance issues and has the safeguarding of pupils at the heart of these decisions. Unauthorised absence and persistent absenteeism is monitored rigorously enabling the school to implement intervention at an early stage. Pupil attendance is analysed monthly to identify individual pupils causing concern. Efforts are then targeted to improve pupil attendance and investigate and address any underlying cause of the problems before making a referral to the Education Welfare Worker.

Children are eager to attend and make significant gains in their learning (89% say they enjoy coming to school - Pupil questionnaire Jan 2012).

Pupil absence records are monitored by the government and we are obliged to provide the following statistics for whole school attendance:

Period: Academic Year 2013/2014

Scope: Whole School

	%
Attendances	96.87
Authorised absences	2.93
Unauthorised absences	0.19
Possible Attendance	
Including	
Approved Educational Activity	2.09
Lates before reg closed	0.10
Lates after reg closed	0.00
Unexplained absences	0.00

Period: Academic Year 2014/2015

Scope: Whole School

	%
Attendances	96.80
Authorised absences	2.89
Unauthorised absences	0.31
Possible Attendance	
Including	
Approved Educational Activity	2.61
Lates before reg closed	0.10
Lates after reg closed	0.00
Unexplained absences	0.00

Please do not hesitate in telephoning the school office on **01889 590394** if you require any further information.