Robert Clack School of Science

Attendance Policy
2017 – 2018

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Attendance Policy

Rationale

Robert Clack School recognises that the ethos of the school is the main vehicle by which pupils are encouraged to attend school regularly. We also acknowledge the importance of the curriculum and the need to provide academic and vocational routes for pupils so that everyone in the school has a challenging but accessible pathway to achieve success.

The school is aware of the evidence which demonstrates the correlation between absence from school and under-achievement, as well as potential criminality.

This policy is directed at:

- Reducing the likelihood of absence from school
- The swift detection of non-legitimate absence including a response from the school to the circumstances of absence and continued absence.
- Mentoring of pupils whose level of attendance at school causes concern, in particular of those pupils who fall into the 'persistent absence' category.

Developing an expectation of good attendance

Pupils are motivated and encouraged to maintain high levels of attendance through the use of:

1. Year Group Assemblies to reinforce the benefits of good attendance.
2. Award of weekly attendance shield.
3. Award of achievement certificates where appropriate.
4. Use of Jack Petchey Award System to celebrate exceptional achievement in difficult circumstances.
5. Attendance prizes awarded at the annual Presentation Evening for each year group.
6. Regular, high profile, attendance and register checks.
7. Public celebration of achievement using the media.
8. Regular attendance monitoring by a designated senior member of staff with high profile attendance displays in the main school entry point.

The Home-School Partnership

1. Parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children at school. (Education Act, 1996)
2. The school and parents/carers work together to overcome any problems which may affect a child's attendance.
3. The school encourages and values excellent attendance.
4. The school recognises that external factors may influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parents, the A & A O and other relevant agencies, as appropriate, to improve a child's attendance.
5. The school promotes good attendance by defining its expectations to pupils and parents and provides an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for whole school attendance.
2. The School Governors, along with the Senior Leadership Team, set and monitor school attendance targets. One member of the Governing Body will have special responsibility for attendance.
3. Leaders of the Learning Communities are responsible for monitoring the attendance of their year groups and for developing an expectation of good attendance as outlined above.
4. When concern is expressed about a pupil's level of attendance the Leader of the Learning Community will implement the School's Persistent Absence Policy in an attempt to improve attendance and resolve any issues. He/she will liaise with the Attendance Secretaries, Form Tutors, SENCO (if appropriate) and members of SLT as required. If it becomes necessary, he/she will then refer the matter to the Access and Attendance Officer (A & A O).
5. Form Tutors are responsible for promoting good attendance and punctuality within the form group. They should;
     - Reinforce the importance of good attendance and punctuality in enabling pupils to achieve to their academic potential and in preparation for the world of work.
     - Help to identify any attendance or punctuality problems and to rectify these concerns. Liaise with Leaders of the Learning Community, Attendance Secretaries and members of SLT as required.
     - Ensure that registration is conducted in a formal environment and that the register is completed correctly as stipulated in the Staff Handbook (Page 1.4)
6. The School Attendance Secretaries have an important role in the maintenance of the school's good attendance record. They should;
     - Provide regular attendance data to the LA, SLT, pastoral staff and others as required.
     - Contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence to confirm the absence and the reason for it.
     - Maintain home contact if the pupil does not return to school and/or provide a satisfactory explanation for the absence.
     - Raise any concerns regarding a pupil's level of attendance or poor punctuality with SLT, the SENCO or pastoral team. Request a Parental Interview with the Leader of the Learning Community as necessary.
     - Ensure that school registers are maintained accurately and in accordance with the law and LA guidelines.

7. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and punctually. They should;
   - Ensure that pupils wear the correct school uniform, are fully equipped for school and fit to learn.
   - Inform the school as soon as is possible, and preferably on the first day of absence, to explain the reason for the absence.
   - Provide a written note of explanation when the pupil returns to school.
   - An unauthorised absence will be recorded if a satisfactory explanation for the absence is not provided by the parents/carers.
   - Inform the school when an appointment has been made during term time. Such appointments should be kept to a minimum.
   - Holidays in term-time will not be authorised. When a holiday is taken during term-time the matter will be reported by the school to the LA, who may issue a fixed penalty notice. Absence believed to be holiday taken in term-time will also be reported by the school to the LA, with the possible consequence of a fixed penalty notice.
   - Holidays during term-time are discouraged and permission is granted at the school's discretion
   - A Holiday Request Form must be completed at least six weeks before the holiday and sent to the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance for approval. Permission will not be granted for holidays during school examinations or public examinations. Other appointments are also discouraged during these periods.
8. Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and on time in order to achieve their academic potential and in preparation for adult life. They should;
   - Arrive at school for 8.45am registration every day.
   - Be on time for all lessons.
   - Provide a note from a parent/carer to explain every absence from school.
   - Report to the Late Room when late to school.
   - Obtain permission from the Leader of the Learning Community for any appointment during school time by providing an appointment card or parental letter.
   - Speak to the Form Tutor, Leader of the Learning Community or any member of staff concerning any attendance issues or matters which might impact upon school attendance.
9. The Local Authority through the Access and Attendance Officer (A & A O) supports the school and parents/carers in the fulfilling of their legal duties.

Procedures

Recording attendance

1. The register is taken at 8.45a.m. and 1.15p.m. every day. Each registration period, during which time pupils are marked present, lasts for 10 minutes.
2. Any pupil who arrives too late to attend morning registration reports to the Late Room to be marked present. A late mark is recorded in the pupil planner and a late mark is entered in the register.
3. Following an absence, a note is provided by the parents/carers to explain the absence. The absence note is initialed by the registration teacher and placed in the form folder for removal by the Attendance Secretaries.
4. If an absence is Authorised the appropriate absence code is entered in the register.

5.   If no note or satisfactory explanation is provided for an absence, it is classified as an unauthorised absence and the absence mark is left empty.

6.   Attendance figures, including unauthorised absences, are reported to the LA each month.

7.   Attendance figures, including unauthorised absences and lates, are included in the school report issued to parents annually.

<u>Procedures for dealing with absence from school</u>

1.   Attendance secretaries are based on each site. First day of absence contacts are made by telephone to establish whether a pupil is legitimately absent.

2.   In the case of non-legitimate absence, parents/carers are required to bring the pupil into school the following day to meet with the Leader of the Learning Community or other appointed individuals. In the case of a pupil on the SEN register, the SENCO or her representative will also be required to be present at the meeting.

3.   The A & AO may be informed of non-legitimate absence if school procedures do not result in the pupil returning to school. As a result, the A & AO may visit the pupil's home and a re-integration meeting at the school may be held.

4.   The re-integration programme may include the following:

  • The pupil is placed on attendance report and referred to the school's Learning Mentor(s) for guidance.
  • The pupil is placed into after school classes to catch up on work missed.
  • All necessary school staff are informed of the absence.
  • The individual case is referred to the appropriate school committees (pastoral) with a discrete mention in the staff bulletin.
  • In some cases, a pupil may be referred to the Learning Support Centre for more intensive support.

5.   During the mentoring and re-integration process, parents and carers are kept fully informed of the supportive actions taken by the school. In the appropriate cases, other agencies are co-opted e.g. Befrienders.

6.   Pupils who are repeatedly absent, without a legitimate reason, are rare. However, where problems are serious because of domestic circumstances, other professional groups are alerted, e.g. Social Services.

7.   Pupils who leave the site without permission after registration are treated in a similar fashion. Regular register checks uncover such absences and parents/carers are contacted immediately by telephone.

Persistent Absence Policy

The School will investigate pupils whose attendance is below 90%. The following procedure must be adopted.

1. The Leader of the Learning Community must communicate with the appropriate Attendance Secretary to ascertain the reason(s) for absence.
2. The Leader of the Learning Community will speak to those pupils for whom there are no obvious/acceptable reasons for absence and send home to parents/carers Attendance Concern Letter 1 (AC1).
3. If, after a period of two weeks, there has been no obvious improvement, or if the pupil's attendance deteriorates following an initial improvement, Attendance Concern Letter 2 (AC2) must be sent to parents/carers.
4. If, after a period of two weeks following the meeting with the pupil and his/her parent/carer, there has been no obvious improvement, of if the pupil's attendance deteriorates following an initial improvement, or if the pupil's parent/carer fails to respond to the letter within one week, the case must be referred to the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance.
5. The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will send home to the pupil's parent/carer Attendance Concern Letter 3 (AC3).
6. If, after a period of two weeks following the meeting with the pupil and his/her parent/carer, there has been no obvious improvement, or if the pupil's attendance deteriorates following an initial improvement, of if the pupil's parent/carer fails to respond to the letter within one week, the case must be referred to the School's designated Attendance and Access Officer (A & A O).

The School's designated Access and Attendance Officer will take responsibility for raising the attendance percentage of all pupils who have failed to respond to the School's internal procedures.

In addition to the procedures outlined above, the School will instigate further interventions on a half-termly and termly basis as described below;

1. **Half-termly attendance surgeries** – Leaders of the Learning Community to select pupils causing concern for a meeting with the Leader of the Learning Community, Deputy Headteacher and the Governor with responsibility for attendance or his/her representative, at which poor attendance and targets will be discussed.

2. **Governors' Attendance Panel** – Leaders of the Learning Community to select pupils causing concern for a meeting with the Leader of the Learning Community and Deputy Headteacher, at which poor attendance and targets will be discussed.

ATTENDANCE POLICY PROCEDURES

FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE

> Attendance Secretaries telephone to establish whether a pupil is absent legitimately.
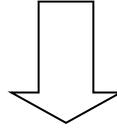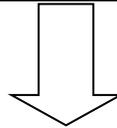
NON-LEGITIMATE ABSENCE

> The parent/carer and pupil are required to meet with the Leader of the Learning Community the following day.

> If the pupil is on the SEN register the SENCO or a representative is required to attend the meeting.
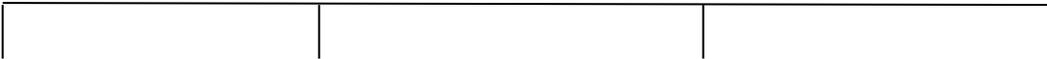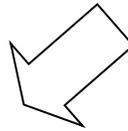
CONTINUED ABSENCE

> The A & AO may be informed if school procedures do not result in a return to school.

> The A & AO may visit the pupil's home and a re-integration meeting at the school may be held.

RE-INTEGRATION PROGRAMME

The Re-integration Programme may include;

Attendance Report & referral to the Learning Mentors.	After school classes to catch up missed work.	Staff informed as necessary. Case is referred to the Pastoral Committee.	Referral to Learning Support Centre.

During the Re-integration programme parents/carers are kept fully informed. Other agencies may be co-opted.