

**CITY OF ROCHESTER SCHOOL**  
**ATTENDANCE AND CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION POLICY**

*This policy, which applies to the whole school, and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office. This policy is also publicly available on the school website*

In City of Rochester School, the term 'staff' is inclusive of all staff and it also applies to students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers, the Trustees and Board of Trustees.

**Legal Status:**

- Complies with Part 3, paragraph 17. Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations currently in force
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations, Part 3, paragraph 15 currently in force
- Children Missing in Education guidance

**Applies to:** The whole school, all staff (teaching and support staff), the Proprietor, volunteers and pupils on placement in the school. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy

**Availability:** This policy is made available to parents, staff and pupils in the following ways: via the School website when it is established, and on request a copy may be obtained from the School Office.

**Monitoring and Review:** This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher. The Headteacher and the Chair of Trustees undertakes a review of this policy and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later from the date shown below, or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:

Date Reviewed: March 2021

Date of Next Review: March 2022

Version No. 3

Policy No. 7:002



Alicja Emmett  
Headteacher



Claire Cooper  
Chair of Trustees and Safeguarding Trustee

**Introduction:** We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. The Headteacher is responsible for making sure the school keeps Admission and Attendance registers in accordance with the regulatory requirements. For all pupils of compulsory school age our attendance register records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher also ensures that a compliant admissions register is kept. The school calendar and dates when the school is open can be accessed from our website. Parents are notified of school emergency closures for such things as extreme weather by telephone.

**The Role of the Parents:** Parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (5 to 18) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

**The Role of the School:** The school is required to maintain two registers: An Admission Register (known as the School Roll) and an Attendance Register.

**Admission Register:** This gives particular information about pupils who are currently registered as attending City of Rochester School. For the purposes of day-to-day management of the school the admission register may be contained within the school database. The register will comprise information that is compliant with regulations set out in the education (pupil registration) (England) regulations currently in force. For each pupil, the admission register will contain:

- name in full;
- gender;
- name and address of every person known to the school to be a parent or guardian of the pupil (and an indication of the parent with whom the pupil normally resides);
- Two emergency telephone numbers are held so parents/carers can be contacted in an emergency.
- day, month and year of birth;
- day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school;
- name and address of the school last attended, if any and
- leaving date and ongoing placement.

**Attendance Register:** The School is required to ensure that the attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session. Each pupil must be marked on the register in one of the following categories (in line with DfE School Attendance Guidance August 2020 and the Addendum re COVID 2020-2021 academic year):

- Present
- Engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site (approved by the head teacher and supervised by a person approved by the head teacher, including sporting activities, educational visits or residential trips) etc
- Absent
- Unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (unavoidable closure of the school site or part of it)
- Taking authorised absence (granted leave of absence by the head teacher or a person acting on their behalf, unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause, observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs etc
- Taking unauthorised absence (if no reason is established when the register is taken, the entry may be corrected later when the reason is established).

If a pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school (parents cannot authorise absence – it is the school that decides how to classify absences). Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification of absence (e.g. illness). All other absences are treated as unauthorised. Authorised absences include: medical or dental appointments, days of religious observance, visits to future schools, exclusion, family bereavement and special occasions (e.g. weddings). All requests for absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher giving the school plenty of time to consider the request. If a pupil is absent without explanation when the register is called, school staff will normally contact the parents the same day whenever possible. The absence will be treated as unauthorised unless an explanation is offered as satisfactory justification for absence.

The school day operates from 08:45 (breakfast club) with lesson starting at 09:00 until 15:15. The school register remains open until 09:30 (30 minutes after lessons officially start), after which point an absence will be recorded in line with the absence codes outlined in this document. However, there are exceptions to this rule where the school has received prior notification that a pupil cannot be in school before the deadline of 09:30 due to family circumstances or that there has been an issue with the LA transport. The same 30 minute window will apply in the afternoon when the register will close at 13:20. Allowances will be made if the pupil is:

- A carer
- If attendance is identified on their EHCP
- There is a medical reason identified on their EHCP – for example the taking of medication and issues related to sleeping patterns
- In these instances, allowances will be made

**Failure to Attend School:** If a pupil fails to regularly attend school, we will work closely with the parents, pupil and school to resolve issues and develop strategies to improve attendance. Pupils showing patterns of non-attendance will be placed onto an Attendance Improvement Plan and could eventually be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer if the attendance has not improved after a meeting with parents and after a series of interventions have taken place. Where a pupil has been absent,

sick or missing for 3 consecutive days, a member of the welfare team will do an unannounced visit to the home so we are able to physically see and talk directly to the child. Visits will continue weekly thereafter until the pupil is back in school.

The school is required to inform the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly. Independent schools have a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to their local authority: These includes 10 days of unauthorised absence other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence, failure to attend regularly, additions to the attendance register within 5 days and deletion from the school register under the 15 grounds identified by Children Missing From Education September 2016 Annex A. In this last case, independent schools are required to report the circumstances as soon as possible to the local authority (LA) in which the pupil lives.

**Definitions Authorised absence:** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.

**Unauthorised absence:** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from our school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

**If a child is absent:** When a child is absent unexpectedly, the registrar will record the absence in the register and will inform the welfare team. A telephone call is made to the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence on the morning of the absence. A note, email or telephone call should be sent/made to the school office prior to the day of absence e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

**Requests for leave of absence:** We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance but normally this request will be granted. Pupils at City of Rochester School enjoy 15 weeks holiday from school. We therefore naturally prefer parents to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods. The school will, under exceptional circumstances, grant the leave of absence in term time. A holiday request form (Appendix 2) asking for such an absence should be collected from the school office and returned to the School Registrar in the first instance, who will complete the pupil's attendance so far that year. It is then passed on to the Headteacher.

**Long-term Absence:** When children have an illness that means they will be away from our school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home and provide access to online learning and/or provide an outreach teacher so that they can keep up with their schoolwork. The child will still be marked as absent if they are not on the premises.

**Repeated Unauthorised Absences:** The school will contact the parent of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents will be asked to visit the school and discuss how we can support each other in moving forward.

Pupils showing patterns of non-attendance will be placed onto an Attendance Improvement Plan and could eventually be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer if the attendance has not improved after a meeting with parents and after a series of interventions have taken place.

### **Monitoring of Attendance**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor overall attendance and seek to ensure that the attendance figures are as they should be. The school keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of five years. The school Registrar together with the Pupil Wellbeing Coordinators are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. Any ongoing absences, 'Lates' or Unauthorised Absences for holidays is followed up as quickly as possible. If there is concern about a child's absence, the teacher will contact the school office who in turn will attempt to contact the parents. City of Rochester School values attendance at school and pupils with 97%+ attendance in the academic school year are presented with a certificate and receive a reward. Termly attendance certificates are awarded at end of term assemblies. Awards are also given to pupils for whom attendance is identified as a barrier on their EHCP and where progress is made.

## **Grounds for notification to Local Authority for Additions/Deletions from City of Rochester School Admission Register (Annex A: taken from Children Missing Form Education 2016):**

Our staff will follow the School's safeguarding policy for dealing with children who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions. They should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. The school will put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. Staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. More information can be found in 'Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care' and KCSIE (DfE: September 2020).

### **Children being withdrawn from school:**

If a child is withdrawn from the school, all efforts will be made to identify the school to which the child is being admitted; their confidential educational and child protection records will be sent separately. If the parent/guardian/carer fails to provide information regarding the new school, an urgent referral will be made to Children's Services. Educational records sent to our school concerning a child who is not registered by the parent will be returned and the school advised to refer to their Local Authority Education Welfare Service. A child's name will only be removed from the School's Admission Register in accordance with the Child Registration Regulations. Further information is contained in our Admissions Policy.

We also understand our duty to provide information to the local authority for standard transitions if requested.

We also appreciate that there is an overlap with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE 2020) which recognises children missing education as a safeguarding issue particularly when a child leaves with no known destination. We inform the local authority where the child is normally resident. We also retain the right to cease the placement and/or call an early annual review to give notice of placement. In this circumstance it would be after discussion with parents, the school and the local authority.

We recognise that from September 2019 (due to the absence of illness or unavoidable cause) that we have the right to delete a pupil for non-return within 10 school days after authorised leave of 10 school days or more, or after 20 school days unauthorised absence but this does not arise until City of Rochester School and the local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts and failed. As such, City of Rochester School recognises that it is a criminal offence not to report, as required.

### **Appendix 1 - Absence Codes (as published by DfE), Authorised Codes and FAQ's:**

**Code B: Off-site educational activity:** This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using Code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work.

**Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the School:** Only exceptional circumstances warrant leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. In updated guidance 2020-2021, any parent opting to keep their child at home due to COVID should use this code (only until 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020).

**Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made:** If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Where alternative provision is made, they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

**Code F: Extended family holiday authorised by the School:** Head teachers may in exceptional circumstances agree more than 10 school days leave of absence in a school year. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

**Code H: Family holiday authorised by the School:** Currently head teachers may in special circumstances grant leave of absence of up to ten days for the purpose of family holidays during term time. The application must be made in advance and the head

teacher must be satisfied that there are special circumstances which warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

**Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments):** Schools should advise parents to notify the School as soon as possible when a child is ill. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the seriousness of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical certificates unnecessarily (particularly retrospective certificates), especially if the illness was not treated by a doctor at the time. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

**Code L:** Late am and pm after the closure of the register

**Code M: Medical or dental appointments:** Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

**Code R: Religious observance:** Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

**Code S: Study leave:** Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only for year 11 pupils during mock and public examinations.

**Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence :** A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travelers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling and have agreed this with the School but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

#### **Unauthorised Absences**

**Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the School or in excess of agreed period:** If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided:** Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended.

**Code O: Absent from school without authorisation:** If the School is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed:** Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

**Administrative Codes:** The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

**Code X: Not required to be in school:** This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend. In updated guidance 2020-2021 COVID related absences were registered using this code.

**Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.** This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- a. The School site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- b. The transport provided by the School or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- c. A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

**Code Z: Pupil not on admission register:** This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the School to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the School has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the School.

**Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure:** This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to 5 non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

**Different Term Dates for Different Pupils:** Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g. for ‘staggered starts’ or ‘induction days’. Code # can be used to record the year group (s) that is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the School ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education offer over the School year.



Confidence. Resilience. Success.

**ABSENCE REQUEST FORM  
(INCLUDING HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME)**

**NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS**

The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term-time. However, in exceptional circumstances the school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave of no more than ten days in total in any year.

If the request is for a holiday in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance and must be for the purpose of a family holiday. If you do not have Parental Responsibility and/or normally live with the child, you must seek the consent of the parent who does, and that person should complete this form. Schools will only consider requests from that parent.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will consider: -

- The time and duration of the leave
- Your child's record of attendance
- Learning that will be missed

**WARNING:** If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence.**

I wish to apply for  
NAME[S] OF CHILD[REN] \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

to be authorised as being absent from school from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ inclusive

**REASON FOR REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME:**

**IF HOLIDAY REQUEST, EXPLAIN THE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MEAN THAT THE HOLIDAY CANNOT BE TAKEN DURING A SCHOOL HOLIDAY:**

Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**AUTHORISED** The School agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.

**Absence dates** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**UNAUTHORISED** The School does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason:

SIGNED..... Head Teacher Date .....

## HOLIDAYS IN TERM-TIME

**IMPORTANT:** Please read carefully the information below.

**As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by, whenever possible, taking your holidays during school holidays.**

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child. We would also stress that pupils at City of Rochester School enjoy 15 weeks holiday from school (maintained schools receive 13 weeks). We would ask parents to carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the course work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term-time leave such as: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closeness to exams or tests.</li> <li>• During the first year at a new school.</li> <li>• At the beginning of a new school term.</li> </ul> <p>If the school refuses a request for term-time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b>.</p>	<p>The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term-time.</p> <p>However, in exceptional circumstances the school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave of no more than ten days in total in any year. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides and must be for the purpose of a family holiday.</p> <p>If a child, then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p> <p>Advice from the Department for Children, Schools and Families in March 2010 states that schools can only approve absence for family holidays if they consider there are special circumstances. Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not special reasons.</p>

**Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:**

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations

Please contact the Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to take holidays during term time.

**Appendix 3**

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

<b>PUPIL NAME:</b>	<b>YEAR GROUP:</b>	<b>PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME:</b>
<b>CURRENT OVERALL ATTENDANCE:</b>	<b>BREAKDOWN OF OVERALL AUTHORISED/ UNAUTHORISED:</b>	<b>GOAL:</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>LIST ATTENDEES TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MEETING:</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP TO PUPIL:</b>

<b>STRENGTHS OF PUPIL AND FAMILY MEMBERS:</b>			<b>RELEVANCE TO THE PLAN:</b>
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING FAMILY:</b>			
<b>ASSESSMENT OF NEED:</b>			

ACTIONS:	BY WHO:	BY WHEN:
<b>BENEFITS TO PUPIL FOR IMPROVED ATTENDANCE:</b>		
It		
<b>POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-IMPROVED/DECLINE IN ATTENDANCE:</b>		

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

WELFARE TEAM

SIGNED : \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER