

**CITY OF ROCHESTER SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE 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 publically 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 Education guidance

Applies to: The whole school, all staff (teaching and support staff), the Proprietor, volunteers and pupils on placement in the school.

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: July 2019
Date of Next Review: July 2020
Version No. 1
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 day 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 the News page of our website. Parents are notified of school emergency closures for such things as extreme weather by text.

The Role of the Parents: Parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) 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);
- at least one telephone number at which the parent 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 once during the afternoon session. Each pupil must be marked on the register in one of the following categories:

- 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)
- 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)
- 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 appropriate Divisional Head for Lower and Middle school pupils and to the Head of Upper School pupil Life for Upper School pupils, 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.

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. The school is required to inform the LEA if a pupil fails to attend regularly. Independent schools have a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to their local authority: 3.5 days within a 6-week block (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 (Appendix 1). 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 class teacher will record the absence in the register and will inform the school office. When the child returns to school, a note from a parent or guardian should explain the absence. Notes are placed in the back of the register. 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. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. City of Rochester School will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

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 to attend e.g. a visit to sixth form, Graduation ceremony etc. 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 asking for such an absence should be downloaded from the website or could be collected from the school office and returned to the form teacher 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 so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

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 the problem.

Pupils showing patterns of non-attendance will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer if the attendance has not improved after a meeting with parents.

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 100% 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.

Appendix 1 Grounds for notification to Local Authority for Additions/Deletions from City of Rochester School Admission Register (Annex A: taken from Children Missing From Education 2016):

- Where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order, or the order is revoked by the local authority, on the ground that arrangements have been made for the pupil to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
- Except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that they have been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that they have ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which they are registered has given consent to the deletion.
- In a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that they have ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
- In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
- That the pupil is certified by their GP as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- That the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2); (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is
- That the pupil is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.
- That the pupil has died.
- That the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and— (i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school.
- In the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the college.

- That he has been permanently excluded from the school.
- Where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that they have not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.

Appendix 2 - Absence Codes (as published by DfE), Authorised Codes:

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.

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 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 Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

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.

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.