THE ROCHE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Policy is publicly available on the school website 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. All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school.

We have a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is the golden thread that runs throughout every aspect of the school. All our school policies support our approach to safeguarding (child protection). Our fundamental priority is our children and their wellbeing; this is first and foremost.

All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school.

Applies to:

- The whole school, all staff (teaching and support staff), proprietors and volunteers working in the School

Related documents:

- Single Equalities Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Admissions Policy and Procedure Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Lost Children, Late Collection and Missing Children Policy
- Children Missing Education, Policy

Monitoring and Review: This policy is subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Advisory Board, Louise Gilmartin(DSL) and Jonny Gilbert (Headteacher). The Proprietor will undertake a full annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. This discussion will be formally documented in writing. The Proprietor recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the update/reviewed policy and it is made available to them in either a hard copy or electronically.

Date reviewed: October 2026
Date of next review: October 2027

Signed:

Louise Gilmartin
DSL and Attendance Champion

Mr Jonny Gilbert
Head Teacher

Summary of changes – September 2024: This policy has been revised to reflect changes in national guidance and legislation that come into force on 19th August 2024.

Introduction: At The Roche School, we recognise that positive behaviour and good school attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education. The law 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. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. 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.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Registers and Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance including the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school. This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity;
- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Our policy outlines the school's commitment to attendance. Our policy aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents & carers, pupils and governors/trustees about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance. Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued;
- raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

Promoting Regular Attendance: At The Roche School we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Champion	**Louise Gilmartin**	**roche.l.gilmartin@therocheschool.com**
Attendance Officer	**Lizzie Aldridge**	**roche.e.aldridge@therocheschool.com**
Named Advisor for Attendance	**Keith Parr**	**minister@earlsfieldbaptist.co.uk**

Improving school attendance is everyone's business. It is a shared responsibility by the Proprietor and Senior Management Team, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Give parents/carers information about attendance in our newsletters.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance.

- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.

The Senior Management Team (including senior attendance champion) at The Roche School will:

- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents;
- form positive relationships with pupils and parents;
- ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues;
- ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with;
- ensure that there is a named senior attendance champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource;
- return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time;
- report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Advisory Board and Managing Director;
- ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented;
- ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence;
- interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions;
- develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families;
- document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated;
- set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff at The Roche School will:

- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents;
- form positive relationships with pupils and parents;
- contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation;
- implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site;
- ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner;
- contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions;
- work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Senior Attendance Champion, Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENDCO, and other relevant staff members.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of an attendance contract.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents.
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

The Roche School requests that parents:

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- To sign a parent contract.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

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; e.g. 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
- Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Medical Appointments and Absence Due to Illness: Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be signed out of school. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will speak to parents/carers regarding our concerns and look at what support can be put in place to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend a school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this

support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.[1]

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support and will not be penalised from any rewards system. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

Pupil Absence for the Purposes of Religious Observance: The Roche School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

Unauthorised absence:

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from 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
- A note may be sent to the school 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. The 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 special event
- We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance but normally this request will be granted;
- The school cannot authorize parents to take holiday during term time unless there are other exceptional circumstances e.g religious observance. Holiday during term time will be unauthorized.

Requests for time to attend appointments outside of school:

- Parents should, as far as possible, inform the school of any appointment their child may need to attend during the school day, in advance of the appointment
- When returning a child to school after an appointment, the child must be returned to the School Reception where the child needs to be 'signed in', adding the child's name, the date and time to the Signing In book (This may be completed by the parent / carer on the child's behalf)
- Once the child has been signed into school, their absence will be reassigned at the following register point as a Code U (arrived in school after registration closed).

Late arrival at school:

- When arriving late at school, after the first morning registration, the child must be taken to the school reception, where the child needs to be 'signed in', adding the child's name, the date and time to the Signing In book (this may be completed by the parent / carer on the child's behalf).

Measures to promote attendance: We have introduced and will continue to implement measures aimed at reducing absences, including:

- Hand gel located at locations around school
- Infection control guidelines issued to parents via the parental portal

[1] This is in accordance with the NSCP Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited

- Parents told to keep their child away from school if they may have a contagious illness to reduce spread to other children and staff as well as reinfection
- Cleaners use anti-bacterial/virus products daily within the school
- After any bout of vomiting or diarrhoea, the pupil or staff member should remain off school for 48 hours from the last episode
- Continuous updated Risk Assessment for measures to provide safety at school regarding any pandemic.

We are also keen to eliminate any unauthorised absences through working closely with parents and promoting children's enjoyment of their time in school.

Long-term Absence:

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up with their school work.

Repeated Unauthorised Absences:

- The School will contact the parent of any child who has an unauthorised absence, and if relevant, the Local Authority.
- If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If a child has 10 days of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period the school has a duty to report the absence to the Local Authority.

Persistent and Severe Absence: A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee' (PA)** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent' (SA)**. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Responsibilities of Parents:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly, at the school at which they are registered.
- Pupils must attend every day that the school is open (unless they are ill or permission has been granted in advance).
- Parents must ensure their child is in school prior to the morning register being closed by 9am, after which they will be marked as late.
- If a child is unwell, parents/guardians should email or telephone the school office and child's class teacher by 8.30am on the first day of absence and every day thereafter. Pupilabsence@therocheschool.com

Register Keeping and Recording: The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Register Timings

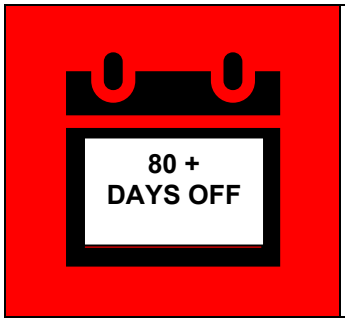
The start and close of the school day 8.35am-4.15pm
Morning register opening time 8:35am
Morning register closing time 9am
Children arriving after 9am will be classified as late
Afternoon check in times Reception and Year 1- 12.50pm Year 2,3 and 4- 1.20pm
Afternoon register opening time 1.50pm. Afternoon register closing time 2pm.

Processes for reporting and requesting absence

Email absences@therocheschool or call. Inform class teacher. Any requests sent to class teacher or absences@ and authorised by SLT

Attendance Rewards & Interventions:

DAYS ABSENT	Percentage of attendance	*Responsible member of staff*	*This column lists the support, rewards and interventions that will take place at this stage so that everyone understands what will happen*
	99 – 100%	Louise Gilmartin	• *Weekly classes celebrated in assembly for 100% attendance or highest attendance.* • *Individuals celebrated for 100% attendance termly* • *Request notes for unauthorised and update MIS* • *Yearly 'Attendance Prize' awarded at Prizegiving*
	96 – 98%		
	92 – 95%	Louise Gilmartin Jonny Gilbert	• *Headteacher, DSL & Attendance Champion review attendance statistics on a weekly basis* • *All children are discussed and reasons are monitored to detect trends*
	Under 90%	Louise Gilmartin Jonny Gilbert	• *Headteacher, DSL & Attendance Champion review attendance statistics on a weekly basis* • *Class Teacher to follow-up with parent to ascertain how the family can be supported in improving attendance* • *If no improvement seen – Attendance Champion will reach out to families for a minuted meeting to discuss how the family can be supported* • *Three weeks monitoring of established plan including planned interventions to help catch up with missed learning* • *If improvement seen (e.g. marked reduction in absence) - child is monitored in weekly meetings to ensure no reoccurrence of absence. An incentivizing reward will be offered to the child also.* • *If no improvement seen (e.g. attendance remains static or worsens) – In-person, minuted meeting with DSL & Headteacher.*

	Under 50%	Louise Gilmartin Jonny Gilbert	• *Formal support such as attendance contracts will be in place* • *Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement* • *No engagement from parent can result in use of legal intervention*

Part-time timetables: All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a pupil's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full-time education and it would not be in their best interest to do so. We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a part-time timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil where it is safe to do so; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

Deletions from the Register: At The Roche School we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. We will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information. We follow the Local Authority Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities. If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and the Local Authority Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

Statutory Framework: This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE (August 2024)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015)
- Children missing education, DfE (September 2016)
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (September 2024)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (December 2023)

Links

- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners
- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

Monitoring and Review:

- It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor overall attendance
- The Headteacher also has the responsibility for this Policy and for seeing that it is carried out
- The Headteacher will therefore examine closely the information provided and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be
- The School keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of six years
- Class teachers will be 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 discussed regularly with relevant staff and followed up as quickly as possible
- If there is concern about a child's absence, staff will contact the School Office immediately, if there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher and DSL who will contact the parents and if relevant, the Local Authority.
- The School will work with parents to encourage attendance by providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where pupils want to be and are keen to learn. We recognize that children missing education can act as a warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.