



Rawmarsh and Arnold Maintained Nursery School

Attendance and Absence Policy

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Statement of intent

Rawmarsh and Arnold Maintained Nursey School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Children cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some families find it harder than others in getting children to school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as developing strong and trusting relationships with children and their families.

We take a whole-federation approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts have in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as Early Years pupil premium – can have on improving children's attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our children.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify children that require more support.

The federation's attendance officer is Katrina Scales and can be contacted via email at either rawmarsh@ransf.school or arnold@ransf.school. Staff and parents will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Children Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Children with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Delegating the role of attendance officer to a member of the SLT /Admin when required.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every child has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring families do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual children to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with parents and carers with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any children being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for children's' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and carers.

Parents and carers will be expected to ensure that children attend school punctually every day that they are required to be at school, for the full session eligibility. Any parent that has an exceptional circumstance that is preventing their child from arriving on time or completing a full session will need to complete a amendment to session time request. This will need to be authorised by the Executive Head teacher.

The school does not offer places which have breaks in weekly attendance. For example, if a child is taking up a morning place the school dictates they attend all 5 sessions. Amendments to attendance patterns will no be granted.

Families will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a child is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a child is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the head of school.

If a child's attendance drops below 85 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the children's parent.

Where a child has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the children from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the children after making reasonable enquiries.

6. Attendance register

The school uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school session. This register will record whether children are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved event
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave

- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time children
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Children not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant children who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the children and the impact on the children's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a child a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to complete the nursery absence request form at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the children's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the children can be away from school.

Requests for leave will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- When a children's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a children's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the children's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a children's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for children from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND - and health-related absences

The school recognises that children with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support children who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled children to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a children's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All children will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a child is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Maintain regular communication with the family either electronically or face to face.
- Provide a home learning pack based on relevant curriculum planning.
- Provide information about classroom activities and learning objectives via e-mail or class Facebook page.
- Inform the LA if a child is likely to be removed from role due to non-attendance.
- Provide the LA with information about the children's needs, capabilities and programme of work.

The school will incorporate an action plan/ILP to help any children with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the children is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of children with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a child to have a reduced timetable.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Leave during lunch times

Parents whose children access a 30hrs place may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether this will be permitted.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Parents will be required to collect their child at the school reception when taking them off the premises and the child will be signed out from the register. Children will be signed back in on the afternoon register on their return.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

10. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Arranging face to face meetings
 - Providing information about benefits of good attendance.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams in notifying them of families with poor attendance history.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the children whom the intervention is designed to target.

11. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with children and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with children and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services and Early Help.

The school will ensure that there is a minimum of two sets of emergency contact details for each child wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a child where a child is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with families to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the children from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for children absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the children's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or Early Help, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

12. Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of children who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Children who are eligible for PP
- Children with EAL
- Children with SEND
- Children who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support children at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Meeting with parent's and carers to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having in relation to getting their child to school.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether a referral to Early Help may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on children who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these children are facing.

Where a child at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the children in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

13. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual children.
- Demographic groups, e.g. children from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of children, e.g. children with SEND, LAC and children eligible for PP.
- Children at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of children and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

14. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk children as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for children who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting children to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2026