

Attendance Policy

Ropery Walk Primary School



Academic Year

2025/26

Attendance Key Contact List

Name	Role	Contact details
Mrs Chloe Black	Head Teacher, DSL and responsible for attendance	p2000.admin@durhamlearning.net 0191 581 3959 Ropery Walk Primary School Ropery Walk Seaham SR7 7JZ
Mrs Sheryl Storey	Deputy Safeguarding Lead	
Miss Stacey Grainger	Office Manager	
Mrs Katie Young	Attendance Officer	

Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Mrs Chloe Black	Head Teacher- lead for attendance	p2000.admin@durhamlearning.net 0191 581 3959 Ropery Walk Primary School Ropery Walk Seaham SR7 7JZ
Mrs Katie Young	Attendance officer – monitoring attendance and offering support for families	
Mrs Sue Larter	Place 2 Be - counselling support	

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors:

- Set and monitor progress to annual attendance targets
- Evaluate effectiveness of the Attendance Policy

Head Teacher

- Ensure effective systems are put in place to accurately reflect individual pupil, group, and whole school attendance patterns
- Monitor individual pupils, group and whole school attendance and punctuality
- Work in partnership with key agencies if attendance or punctuality is an issue
- Provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of the Policy and Practice
- Write to parents/carers regarding concerns when necessary
- Arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets when necessary

Class Teacher

- Provide an accurate record of attendance for each child in their class

Attendance Officer

- Monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary
- Regularly meet with Head Teacher to discuss attendance and look at data analysis
- Establish patterns for persistent absence and identify any children at risk of becoming persistent absentees, putting strategies in place to improve attendance
- Ensure satisfactory reasons for every absence is established for each child on a weekly basis
- Make judgment alongside the Head Teacher to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised

Pupils

- Be responsible to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and make the most of the education opportunities available

Parents

- Follow their duty under the law to ensure their children attend school daily

Administration

- Use SIMS to store and monitor the legal responsibilities to attendance
- Ensure registers are completed by the closure of the registration period

Introduction

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance at school is maximised and that unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism is kept to a minimum.

High levels of attendance at school significantly impact upon academic and developmental outcomes.

The law relating to school attendance states in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 that the parent of every child of compulsory age shall cause him/her to receive full-time education suitable:

- a. to age, ability and aptitude; and
- b. to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show the links between attendance and achievement are strong. Pupils on target at 96% are 3 times more likely to achieve or exceed targets;

and regular attenders:

- make better progress both socially and academically;
- find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- find learning more satisfying;
- are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.

At Ropery Walk, we continuously strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. As the Department for Education notes, 'Improving attendance is everyone's business', and it is important that we, as your child's school, work together in partnership with you, your family, your child, and the wider community. The new Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance emphasises a 'Support First' ethos, and recognises that 'the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families... [It] is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.' However, the school will also challenge those learners and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Any concerns about attendance can be raised to Mrs Black, headteacher, at p2000.admin@durhamlearning.net.

Punctuality

All children must be in school ready for registration at **8.50am**.

At 8.50am, the gates will be closed, and children will need to enter school via the main reception.

After **8:50am**, children will be registered as late, and will need to sign in via the late book. There must be a reason entered for the late arrival, in accordance with the Department for Education statutory guidance. This will then be recorded electronically via ARBOR, and recorded as “L” on the register.

If a child arrives in school **after 9.20am**, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, and will be recorded as a “U” on the register, unless a satisfactory reason is given.

- Regular reviews of punctuality take place. Any irregular pattern will result in intervention to address the matter via a letter informing parent of the problem, such as; a meeting in school, a home visit by Senior Leaders and/or regular reviews thereafter;
- If lateness persists a referral can be made to the Local Authority Attendance Service and a Notice to Improve or Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued.

It is important for a child to be on time to settle in and be ready for learning, and to prevent disruption to the rest of the settled class by coming in late.

System for Punctuality

4 instances of lateness “L” code in the register, late before register closes	“Lateness Concerns” letter sent to parents to remind of the importance of punctuality, and school timings.
3 more instances of lateness “L” code in the register, late before register closes	“Attendance Meeting” letter sent, stating that parents must come in to school for a meeting with the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer to address concerns.
3 or more instances of lateness “U” code in the register, later after the register closes	“Attendance Meeting” letter sent, stating parents must come in to school for a meeting with the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer to address concerns.
If punctuality does not improve	Further legal intervention may be sought, including referral to the Local Authority to issue a Notice to Improve, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Absence

Parents must inform school of any absence via the absence line on 0191 581 3959, by **8:50am**.

Each subsequent day of absence must also be communicated with school, unless otherwise agreed. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide an explanation for any absence.

In the event that contact has not been made, or there is no response from parents when we attempt to get in contact with them, then the school may make an unplanned home visit.

If a child is kept off from school due to illness for 4 or more days, and medical advice has not been sought (which will need to be provided to school), then we would not be able to authorise following days absences. There may also be a need to contact the Department of Health for advice on some illnesses.

Medical or Dental Appointments

We strongly encourage parents and carers to make all medical appointments outside of school hours.

When a child has a medical appointment that cannot feasibly be arranged for outside of school hours, evidence of the appointment must be given to the main office. This can be via an appointment card, text message, email or letter. If you have electronic evidence, this can be screenshot and sent to p2000.admin@durhamlearning.net. If we do not receive any evidence of the appointment, we are not obliged to authorise the absence.

If your child's attendance becomes a concern, you will be invited to a meeting with the Head Teacher and the Attendance Officer, where you may be asked to provide medical evidence for each illness or appointment related absence, which could continue through the subsequent years at the school.

In the event of 10 unauthorised sessions recorded with no medical evidence for any absences taken, a referral may be made to Durham County Council Attendance Improvement Team.

Requests for Holidays in Term Time

All holidays that are intended to be taken within school term time must be applied for in advance via a leave of absence form (available from the school office), by a parent the pupil normally lives with. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively.

Ropery Walk Primary School is maintained by the local authority, and in this respect, must not grant a leave of absence unless there are specific exceptional circumstances.

Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not be an exceptional circumstance.

A pupil's absence during term time can significantly disrupt learning and continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days that they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons on their return.

A holiday for 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) or more will be referred to the local authority for a fixed penalty notice to be issued.

Penalty notices are issues to each parent of each child.

First offence – The first penalty notice will be charged at £80, if paid within 21 days. If it is not paid within this time, you will have a further 7 days to pay at £160.

Second offence - A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Third and subsequent offences – A third penalty notice will not be issued in regards of the same child, to the same parent. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will include considering prosecution or other legal intervention.

Attendance Structure and Expectations

96% or higher	
100%	Termly Attendance Certificate
96-99%	
First Day of Absence	Parents to call office
Stage 1: If attendance drops below 96%	
93-95%	Letter home highlighting concerns around attendance and notification of next stage
Stage 1b: Attendance remains between 93-95%	
93-95%	Attendance dropped but remains within 93-95% - repeat trigger letter Attendance remains the same or increases, remaining with 93-95% - no letter
Stage 2: Attendance drops below 93%	
91-93%	Formal letter sent home to parents regarding severity of poor attendance and next steps in the process Attendance meeting with Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer Attendance Plan put in place to improve Medical evidence may be requested to authorise absence through ill health or appointments
Stage 3: Attendance continues to fall and is below 90%	
90% and below	Referral made to the local authority to implement Notice to Improve Further meetings held with Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer
Fixed Penalty Notices	Issued after 10 sessions (5 days) of consecutive absence due to holiday Irregular attendance

Terminology

Attendance Plan

A formal agreement between the school and a child's parents, agreeing what steps will be taken to improve attendance and what will be put in place to support with this.

Leave of Absence

Permission given by the school for a child to be absent for a specified period of time. You should write to the head teacher and ask for a leave of absence in advance of the time that your child needs to be absent.

Notice to Improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve may be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support.

A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate, but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

The Local Authority will issue the notice to improve after support (where appropriate) has been implemented and prior to a penalty notice being issued (where appropriate). The Notice to Improve should be issued with an identified improvement period of 6 weeks (60 sessions) in order to achieve sustained change. However, if unauthorised absence continues, the Local Authority will consider issuing a penalty notice after 3 weeks (30 sessions).

Parental Responsibility

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on best practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority.

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday:

If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.