Rowanfield Junior School Attendance Handbook 2025-2026

Linked policies:

GLA Attendance Policy

GLA Safeguarding Policy

GLA SEND Policy

GLA Pupil Premium Policy

School's Safeguarding handbook

School's SEND Information report

The GLA Trust Vison and Values

Purpose: why do we exist and what do we believe in?

Within the GLA we are united in the belief that all children deserve equity of education.
Our consistent focus each day is to develop our people and direct our resources so that all children are safe, happy and can achieve their potential.

Vision: what are our ambitions for current and future pupils?

Our aim is for every child to leave the Trust feeling proud and with a sense of confidence about their next steps.
Proud to have achieved something special with their unique talents and confident to develop those talents further in the next chapter of their education.

Values: what are the agreed, shared behaviours that bring the vision to life?

Equity | Opportunity | Expertise | Evidence | Community

Trust Wide AIM

The GLA Trust expects pupils to attend every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence.

We believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

(GLA Attendance Policy 2024)

Introduction

The Education Act of 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of this Act states:

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence".

At Rowanfield Junior School, our purpose is to provide a secure, challenging and happy learning environment for all pupils. We promote self-esteem so that every child will be motivated to reach his or her full potential. Everyone at our school is committed to providing a full and diverse educational experience for all our pupils.

Our school is a fun, welcoming place and by encouraging children to attend school regularly and punctually, their experience of school life is enriched. We believe that if children are to succeed both in school and in later life, good habits should be instilled at a young age.

The school community consists of parents, pupils, children and all staff; together we aim to form a partnership in taking responsibility for excellent attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and we are aware of the need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems, which can be used whenever there are concerns over a particular pupil.

The Department of Education (DfE) stipulates that children of primary school age should achieve an attendance record of 97% or more. Any attendance that falls below 90% is deemed unsatisfactory and will be monitored by the school office and the Head Teacher. All staff will work with parents, children and

the Education and Inclusion Team to help everyone to meet this target.

Attendance Data
Five Year Overview

	Whole School Attendance Target	Attendance Actually Achieved
2020/21	95.1%	96.62%
2021/22	95.1%	93.05%
2022/23	95.1%	93.37%
2023/24	95.1%	93.74%
2024/25	95.1%	94.3%
2025/26	95.1%	

	Pupil Premium Attendance Target	Attendance Actually Achieved
2020/21	94.5%	92.75%
2021/22	94.5%	91.6%
2022/23	94.5%	93.03%
2023/24	94.5%	92.45%
2024/25	94.5%	92.2%
2025/26	94.5%	

The School Day
Rowanfield Infant School opens at 8.45am and all pupils are expected to be in their classrooms by 8.55am. We provide a breakfast club which opens at 8.30am or Wrap Around Care which starts at 8.15am. The school day ends at 3.05pm.

Registration
All schools are required to keep an admissions' register (the school roll) and an attendance register which must be marked once at the beginning of the morning session and again immediately after lunch. Attendance codes are provided by the DfE (see appendix one). The school register is a legal document and is kept by the school for a minimum of three years. Pupils are recorded on the register as being present, engaged in an in or out of school activity or absent. Attendance data is submitted daily to the Department for Education.

Children who are not in class at the time of registration are recorded as absent; an appropriate code will be added to the register when a reason for the absence has been provided by the parent/guardian.

- Any child arriving at school after 9am is late and is marked in the class register as "L".
- Any child arriving at school after 20 minutes from registration, will be marked in the school register as "U". This is unauthorised lateness.

Punctuality
Any child arriving after the door closes should enter school via the front door and report immediately to the school office. The pupil's name will be recorded in the late book with details of their class and time of arrival. This will then be transferred to Arbor and reason for their lateness where given. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will receive an email and/or a phone call home to discuss this and a letter advising them of the concerns. The School Attendance Champion, Mr Harwood, or class teacher to address the issues and provide support. Lateness affects attendance figures for individual pupils and class groups as well as the whole school and, as such, is closely monitored daily.

Absence from School

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or another unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school of the pupil's absence. We ask that this should be done as soon as possible, before 8.30am on the first day of absence and then on any consecutive days. The telephone message will be recorded on Arbor for the class register for the teacher's reference.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as Absences due to family bereavement (close relatives only), or visa and passport purposes.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks/ 10 school days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via individual academy administration teams. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from the academy (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the academy site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school or academy at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Penalty Notices

The Education Act of 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of this Act states:

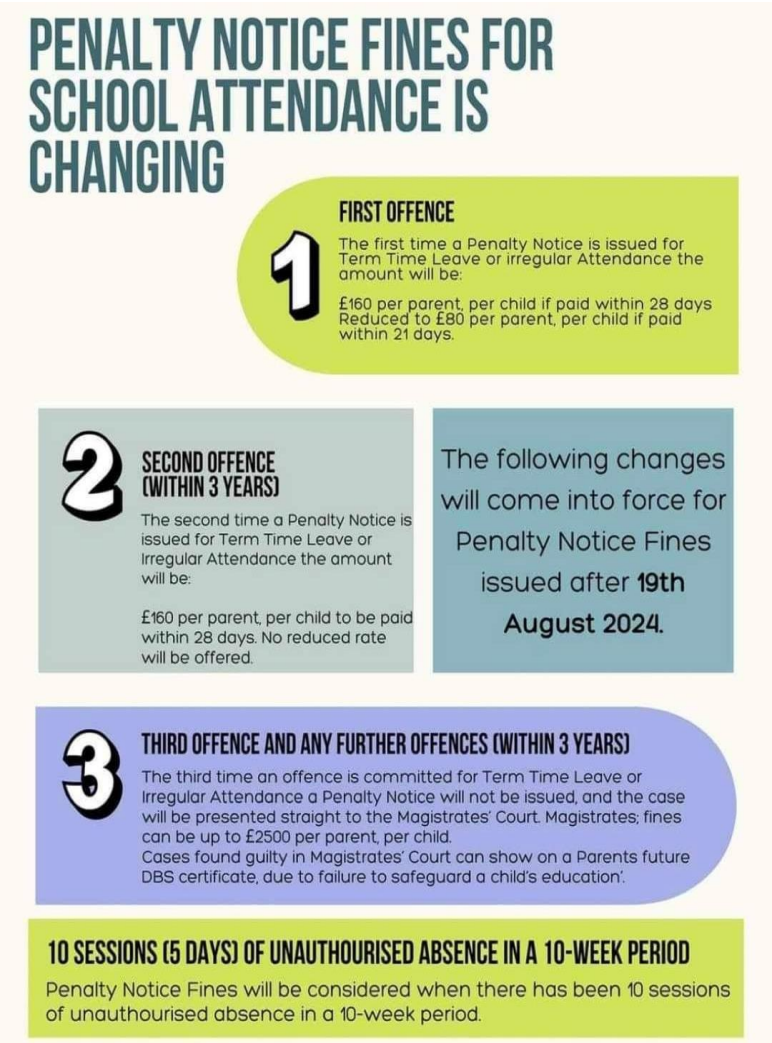
"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence".

The local authority, at the request of the academy, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from education, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice following Gloucestershire's Local Code of Conduct

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate



A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, prosecution will be sought by the Local Authority.

https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/vy3p2vpe/202407-gcc-pn-code-of-conduct.docx

Definition of Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that, in relation to a child or young person, a 'parent' includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility for or care of the child.

For the purposes of education law, the Department for Education (DfE) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, a guardian or other relative
- any person who, although they are not a biological parent and do not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after them, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

(DfE August 2024)

Late Collection Procedures

Children should be collected punctually at the end of the day or, if attending an after-school club or activity, at the allocated finish time. Emergency contact numbers will be used if the school is unable to contact parents/carers. Social Services will be informed if a child is left uncollected one hour after the official collection time. If parents/carers have an emergency that means they are going to be significantly late, school should be informed as soon as possible.

Truancy

There is no culture of truancy at our school. However, if this is suspected, the parents and the Education Inclusion/Investigation Team will be contacted immediately. Strategies will then be developed within the school/parent partnership to ensure that the underlying issues are addressed.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Working with the Trust Lead to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding Trust headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy

Headteacher (Miss Tyler)

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the GLA Attendance Lead
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices.

- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

Senior Attendance Champions (Mr Harwood)

The Senior Attendance Champion (who is also a senior leader) responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Communicating the GLA vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with the local authorities education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The Attendance Officer (Mr Harwood)

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Attendance Champion, and the headteacher
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to relevant staff where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office at the close of register each morning and afternoon.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the academy and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority

- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Attendance Champion within their child's academy

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

The Education and Inclusion Team (GCC)

This team will liaise with the Head Teacher, the School Attendance Officer and, where necessary, parents. The team will aim to encourage attendance, to resolve any underlying problems and to discuss appropriate strategies and incentives with all concerned parties. They will investigate the school's concern on behalf of the local authority and will respond appropriately.

These teams have the right to inspect registers in schools on a regular basis as well as to contact parents of children who have poor attendance. They can also pursue further investigations for children who have poor attendance through frequent or continual illness though this is usually via the school nurse or social services. The school will support the use of enforcement processes should they be deemed necessary.

Appendix One: Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the academy		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a academy at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the academy
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the academy
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during academy hours, approved by the academy
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in academy	Pupil of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in academy due to having a part-time timetable

C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from academy and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend academy because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend academy because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at academy
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because academy is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of academy premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole academy site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the academy is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the academy would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes

Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the academy	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the academy
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the academy isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in academy after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined academy yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-academy closure	Whole-academy closures that are known and planned in advance, including academy holidays