Rawdah Montessori Primary School
Attendance Policy

Version: 2.0
Reviewed: October 2025
Next Review Due: October 2026

1. Mission Statement

Rawdah Montessori School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. This policy applies to children who are of compulsory school age; however, its principles guide our view on attendance for children aged 2–4 years.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed, and where we are committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working are crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection, and well-being of all children and young people.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will therefore consistently work towards a goal of **100% attendance** for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Parent Code of Conduct**
- **Home-School Agreement**
- **Behaviour Policy**

2. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

Legislation / Guidance	Relevance
Education Act 1996	Places a duty on parents to ensure their child receives suitable full-time education.
Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)	Sets out the legal requirements for school registers and attendance coding .
Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, August 2024)	The key statutory guidance for schools, setting out the expectations for attendance management, including the requirement for a named Attendance Officer and a published attendance policy .

Legislation / Guidance	Relevance
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)	Emphasises that poor attendance can be a safeguarding indicator and must be considered in a safeguarding context .
Children Act 1989	Places a duty on schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote the importance of regular and punctual attendance to pupils, parents, and carers.
- Ensure that all staff, pupils, and families understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Establish clear procedures for recording, monitoring, and following up on absence.
- Identify patterns of absence early and provide appropriate support.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, and external agencies to improve attendance where necessary.
- Comply with all statutory requirements and DfE guidance.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Governing Body	Monitor the implementation of this policy; ensure the school meets its statutory duties; review attendance data termly.
Headteacher	Overall responsibility for attendance; ensure staff are trained; oversee the work of the Attendance Officer; make final decisions on leave of absence requests.
Attendance Officer	*[Name]* – Day-to-day management of attendance; monitor registers; follow up on absence; liaise with parents and external agencies; maintain attendance records; report to the Headteacher.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Monitor attendance as a potential safeguarding indicator; work with the Attendance Officer on cases involving vulnerable pupils.
Class Teachers	Take the register accurately and on time; note any concerns about individual pupils' attendance or punctuality; report concerns to the Attendance Officer.
Administrative Staff	Support the Attendance Officer with data entry, first-day calling, and record keeping.

Role	Responsibilities
Parents and Carers	Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time; notify the school of any absence by 8:30 am on the first day of absence; provide medical evidence where requested; avoid taking holidays in term time.
Pupils	Attend school regularly and punctually; arrive ready to learn.

5. Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers, and pupils. We will promote good attendance by:

- Celebrating good attendance through rewards and recognition (e.g., certificates, praise).
- Communicating the importance of attendance through newsletters, parents' evenings, and the school website.
- Providing clear information to parents about reporting absence and requesting leave.
- Intervening early when attendance concerns emerge.

6. Recording Attendance

6.1 Registration Times

Morning registration will take place at:

Class / Age Group	Registration Time	Register Closes
Toddler Community	8:30 am	9:00 am
Children's House	8:45 am	9:15 am
Elementary	9:00 am	9:30 am

Afternoon registration will take place at the start of the afternoon session.

6.2 Attendance Codes

All absences will be recorded using the national attendance codes set out in the DfE guidance :

Code	Meaning	Category
/	Present (morning)	Present
\	Present (afternoon)	Present
L	Late (before register closes)	Present
PL	Present late (after register closes)	Unauthorised absence (unless acceptable explanation provided)
I	Illness	Authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence (if advance notice given)
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence (for religious festivals)
C	Leave of absence authorised by school	Authorised absence (exceptional circumstances only)
G	Leave of absence not authorised	Unauthorised absence (including term-time holidays)
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence (to be followed up)
U	Late after register closes (without good reason)	Unauthorised absence
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in attendance statistics

7. Reporting Absence

7.1 First Day of Absence

Parents must notify the school of any absence by **8:30 am** on the first day of absence. Notification should be made by:

- **Telephone:** [Insert School Number]
- **Email:** [Insert Attendance Officer Email]
- **Parent App:** [Insert App Name, if applicable]

The message should include:

- The child's name and class.
- The reason for absence.
- The expected duration of absence (if known).

7.2 First Day Calling

If no notification has been received by 9:30 am, the Attendance Officer or administrative staff will contact parents to ascertain the reason for absence. This is part of our **safeguarding duty** to ensure children are safe .

7.3 Medical Evidence

For absences of more than **7 consecutive days**, a medical certificate (Fit Note) may be required. For persistent absences due to illness, the school may request medical evidence (e.g., appointment cards, prescription labels) to authorise further absences.

8. Lateness

- Pupils arriving after the start of registration but before the register closes will be marked as **present late (L)** . This counts as present for attendance purposes.
- Pupils arriving **after the register has closed** (i.e., more than 30 minutes after start time) will be marked as **unauthorised absence (U)** , unless there is an acceptable explanation (e.g., medical appointment with proof) .
- Persistent lateness will be addressed by the Attendance Officer, who may meet with parents to discuss support and expectations.

9. Leave of Absence and Term-Time Holidays

9.1 Legal Position

In line with DfE guidance, **parents do not have an automatic right to take their child on holiday during term time** . The Headteacher may only grant a leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances** .

9.2 What Does "Exceptional" Mean?

The DfE is clear that "exceptional" does not include:

- Family holidays.
- Cheaper off-peak travel.
- Availability of accommodation.
- Family occasions (weddings, birthdays) unless there are truly exceptional circumstances.

Examples of what may be considered exceptional include:

- A close family member's funeral.
- A once-in-a-lifetime family event (e.g., pilgrimage, significant religious ceremony) that cannot take place outside term time.
- A parent's return from active military service.

9.3 Requesting Leave

Parents must apply for leave of absence **in writing, in advance**, using the school's **Request for Leave of Absence Form**. Permission can only be granted by the **Headteacher** (or the Deputy Head in their absence). Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

9.4 Penalty Notices

If a child is taken on holiday during term time without authorisation, or if a parent fails to return the child to school as agreed, the school may request that the local authority issue a **penalty notice** . The current penalty notice amount is **£80 per parent, per child** (if paid within 21 days), rising to £160 thereafter .

10. Persistent Absence and Support

10.1 Definition

The DfE defines **persistent absence** as attendance below **90%** . A child is classified as a **persistent absentee (PA)** if their attendance falls below this threshold over a rolling 12-month period .

10.2 Thresholds for Intervention

Attendance Level	Category	Action
100% – 97%	Excellent	Celebrate and encourage.
96% – 93%	Good	Monitor; no action unless a pattern emerges.
92% – 90%	Cause for concern	Attendance Officer contacts parents for informal discussion; offer support.
89% – 80%	Persistent absence (PA)	Formal attendance meeting with parents; develop an Attendance Support Plan; consider referral to Education Welfare Service (EWS).
Below 80%	Severe persistent absence	Referral to EWS or local authority; possible legal intervention (e.g., penalty notice, prosecution).

10.3 Attendance Support Plan

Where attendance falls below 90%, the Attendance Officer will work with parents to develop an **Attendance Support Plan**. This plan will:

- Identify barriers to attendance.
- Set clear targets for improvement.
- Outline support to be provided by the school.
- Include a review date.

11. Attendance and Safeguarding

Poor attendance can be an indicator that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering harm. The school will:

- Consider attendance concerns in the context of safeguarding .
- Share attendance information with the DSL where there are concerns.
- Refer cases to the local authority or other agencies where necessary.

If a child is missing education (i.e., not on roll at any school and not receiving suitable education elsewhere), this will be reported to the local authority in line with statutory guidance .

12. Children with Medical Conditions or SEND

The school recognises that some children may face additional barriers to attendance due to medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We will:

- Work with parents and healthcare professionals to support the child's attendance.
- Consider reasonable adjustments to support the child's needs.
- Develop an individual support plan where necessary, in line with the **SEND Policy** and **Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy**.

13. Monitoring and Reporting

- Attendance data will be analysed on a **weekly basis** by the Attendance Officer.
- A termly attendance report will be presented to the **Governing Body**.
- The school will report attendance data to the DfE as required via the school census.
- Parents will receive their child's attendance information as part of regular school reports and parents' evenings.

14. Retention of Records

- Registers (electronic or paper) will be retained for at least **3 years** in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations .
- Attendance records relating to safeguarding concerns will be retained for longer in line with the school's **Data Retention Schedule**.
- All records will be stored securely and in compliance with the **Data Protection Policy**.

15. Attendance Targets

Each year, the Headteacher and Governing Body will set attendance targets for the school. These targets will:

- Be ambitious but achievable.
- Be informed by previous years' data and national benchmarks.
- Be monitored termly.

- Be published in the school's improvement plan.

16. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Home-School Agreement
- Parent Code of Conduct

17. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Headteacher and Governing Body, or sooner following:

- Changes to DfE guidance or legislation.
- A significant safeguarding incident related to attendance.
- A recommendation from an external audit or inspection.

Appendix A – Request for Leave of Absence Form

Child's Name:

Class:

Date of Request:

Proposed Leave Dates: From: _____ To: _____

Total School Days Requested:

Reason for Request (please provide full details, including why this is exceptional):

I understand that:

- Leave of absence during term time is not a right and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- If the request is not authorised and I take my child out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- The school may request that the local authority issue a penalty notice for unauthorised term-time leave.

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

For School Use Only

Decision: ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Reason for Decision:

Headteacher Signature:

Date:

Appendix B – Attendance Support Plan

Child's Name:

Class:

Current Attendance %:

Date of Plan:

Review Date:

Barriers to Attendance (identified through discussion with parents/child):

Targets for Improvement:

Target	By When	Outcome
1.		
2.		
3.		

Support to be Provided by School:

Parent/Carer Commitment:

Signatures:

Parent/Carer: **Date:**

Attendance Officer: **Date:**

Headteacher: **Date:**

Review of Policy Dates

REVIEW DATE	REVIEWED BY	SIGNED OFF (Name & Role)
Oct 2025	Governing Body	**Chair:** Sohaib Tanvir
Next Review Due:		
Oct 2026	Governing Body	**Chair:**
	Headteacher	**Headteacher:**