

The Russell School

Attendance and Absence Policy



Responsibility: FGB

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Introduction

The Russell School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

As a school, we expect all pupils on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. A pupil's attendance should be at least 96%, and anything below 90% is considered Persistent Absence (PA).

We are a UNICEF Rights Respecting School and this policy links directly to Article 28 (right to education).

The School's Approach

Wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do at The Russell School. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents / carers.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance. Attendance is everyone's business at The Russell School and we are committed to ensuring our children feel safe and happy within our community.

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, pupils and parents / carers.
- Having a graduated approach to supporting families to ensure good attendance.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent / carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

In the first instance, any attendance queries should be raised with the office team on info@russell.richmond.sch.uk. If attendance is becoming a barrier to learning, Laura Brooks, Headteacher will oversee. She can be contacted via the school office.

1. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

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

Authorised absence:

- Illness for pupils whose attendance is 90% or above.
- Illness – for illness which falls within 3 consecutive days either side of half term, medical evidence will be required for the absence to be authorised.
- Illness – for more than 5 consecutive days off ill we will require medical evidence in order for the absence to be authorised.
- Illness for a pupil who is Persistently Absent (attendance under 90%) - whilst illness is considered an authorised absence, if a pupil is Persistently Absent with illness, evidence from a medical professional is required in order to authorise the absence. This can be a:-
 - letter/certificate from a GP stating a pupil is not fit to attend school
 - GP/medical appointment card/email/text confirmation
 - photograph of prescribed medication, dated and with the pupil's full name
- Medical or dental appointments – it is expected that the parent/carer make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents/carers will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment. Supporting evidence is required for leave to be authorised.
- Religious observances for which the school has granted leave - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- External examinations - for examinations in the morning it is expected the pupil attends school after the examination, and for examinations in the afternoon it is expected the pupil attends school in the morning. Supporting evidence is required for leave to be authorised.
- School visits – it is expected that pupils visit prospective secondary schools by attending their open evenings. When this is not possible and school visits need to be arranged during the school day, the pupil is to attend school before and after the visit.
- Exceptional leave of absence is authorised entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. It is rarely granted and almost never to those whose attendance is below 96%.

Unauthorised absence:

- Family holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Any event where the date is up to the organiser i.e. Weddings
- Birthdays/family days out – pupils are expected to attend school as normal when their birthday falls within term time.

- Illness where a pupil is already Persistently Absent (under 90%) and medical evidence has not been provided.
- If the authenticity of a pupil's absence is in doubt, the school can request parents/carers to provide evidence to support the absence request. The school can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied with the authenticity of the absence but should advise parents of their intention. The school will not request evidence unnecessarily.
- Parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Parents/carers keeping pupils off school when another family member is unwell
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

2. Attendance expectations

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

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The gates to the school are opened at 8.30am and shut at 8.50am prompt. This is to give parents and carers the time to walk from their drop-off point back to the gate. Children are expected to be in their classrooms by 8.45am in time for the morning register to be taken. The afternoon register is taken after lunch break has finished, which is at 1.15pm. The school day finishes at 3.15pm

Children who arrive after the register has been taken, but before 9.10am are coded with an 'L' for being late. Arrivals after 9.10am are coded with a "U" meaning that it is an unauthorised absence. Late arrivals also sign in a Late Book that is held in the school office. A senior member of staff will address the issue of persistent lateness with a child's parents / carers. If there is no improvement in a child's punctuality, the school may refer the child to the EWS. Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day.

3. Absence procedures

An Application for Leave of Absence Request Form (Appendix 5) must be completed by the parent/carer two weeks in advance and returned to the school office.

For absences through illness, parents are asked to contact the school via phone or email, by 8.50am on the first day to advise why their child is absent: 0208 940 1446 or info@russell.richmond.sch.uk explaining the absence.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent/carer has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent/carer 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 pupil is absent due to illness (refer to section 1 of this policy as to when evidence will be required); 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 Persistent Absence, the school will inform the Educational Welfare Officer at the Local Authority, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation. The pupil's attendance will continue to be monitored and if it does not improve a formal meeting may be arranged with the pupil's parent/carer.

4. Attendance register

The school uses Arbor (School Information Management System) 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 day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are present or absent.

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:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- 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 = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil 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 pupils 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.

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

5. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents/carers 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 pupil and the impact on the pupil'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/carers, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents/carers to contact the headteacher in writing 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. Please email the school office on info@russell.richmond.sch.uk marking your email for the attention of the Headteacher.

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

Illness and healthcare appointments

Refer to section 1 of this policy which has further details regarding absence for illness and healthcare appointments.

An Application for Leave of Absence Request Form (Appendix 5) must be completed by the parent/carer in advance and returned to the school office for healthcare appointments.

If a pupil has vomiting or diarrhoea they must stay at home from school for 48 hours after their last bout of either symptom.

If a pupil has a raised temperature, they must stay home from school until it has gone away. They must not be given medication to lower their temperature temporarily and sent into school.

Further information can be found here to help you decide if your child is too ill to come to school <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Religious observance

Parents/carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance by completing the Leave of Absence Request Form (Appendix 5).

The school will only accept requests from parents/carers 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 pupil's parents/carers 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 pupil's parent/carer 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 pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

6. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils 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 pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any Educational Healthcare plans (EHC plans) or Individual Healthcare Plans (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 pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health concerns, 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 pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's policy.

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

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils 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 pupil is attending school as normal and there have been signs of significant improvement.

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

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

7. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- Immediately alert SLT and other staff via walkie talkies
- If HT / AHT / Inco lead not on-site, alert SBM. In absence of SBM, alert office team
- SLT / SMB / Office team will direct all support staff to begin search of classrooms and area immediately outside classroom. They will direct available staff to search playgrounds
- Office team to put front door onto lockdown mode

The following areas will be systematically searched:

- All classrooms
 - All areas immediately outside classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Cloakrooms
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
 - If the pupil has not been found after 5 minutes, then the parents/carers of the pupil will be notified.
 - The school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contact numbers provided.
 - If the parents/carers have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
 - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
 - If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
 - When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
 - Parents/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Positive Relationships Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

8. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the headteacher, supported by the Senior Leadership Team, 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.
 - Engaging with Educational Welfare Officer at the local authority.

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 pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

9. Working with parents/carers to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents/carers and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils 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 pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

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

The school will ensure that parents/carers are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents/carers 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. Attendance will be shared with parents at parents / carer eve meetings and as part of the end of year report. For families with children whose attendance is below 96%, attendance will be shared regularly via formal letter. The school 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 headteacher will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents/carers to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. anxiety, with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the safeguarding team and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Where a pupil 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 pupil 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.

10. Monitoring and analysing absence

The headteacher 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, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with Special Educational Needs, Looked After Children and pupils eligible for Free School Meals.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

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

- 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 weekly reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils 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 Senior Leadership Team in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice that has been shown to be effective with other schools.

11. Training of staff

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance.

A member of the school staff will attend local authority update training sessions.

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.

12. 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 (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Regulation Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

13. 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 Senior Leadership Team 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 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the Senior Leadership Team to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil 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 pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.

- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils 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 (headteacher) 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 pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the local authority of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with at least two emergency contact numbers.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

14. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 per cent.

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

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance and Punctuality Monitoring Procedures

The Russell School has adopted the following attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. The office team inform the Headteacher which pupils are absent, and the reasons given, before 10.30 every morning.
2. The attendance of any pupils on the safeguarding register is monitored weekly
3. Each teacher is given a weekly breakdown of attendance patterns in the class.
4. A spreadsheet is shared in SLT meetings bi-termly and annual attendance/punctuality to date.
5. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
6. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
7. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
8. If a pupil is late more than 10 times a Punctuality letter (appendix 1) will be sent to parents/carers with the expectations that punctuality quickly improves. Should punctuality not improve, a meeting will be scheduled with the attendance officer to establish the reason behind the lateness and what the school can do to help improve the pupil's punctuality.
9. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent, an Absence Monitoring letter (appendix 2) is sent to parents/carers raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard, and ask if there are any issues or problems the school should be aware of so the school can help to improve the pupil's attendance.
10. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a Persistent Absence Monitoring letter (appendix 3) is sent to parents/carers explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and ask if there are any issues or problems the school should be aware of so the school can help to improve the pupil's attendance.
11. If a pupil's attendance continues to fall, a further letter will be sent advising parents/carers of a four week monitoring period (appendix 4).
12. If attendance does not improve during the four week period a meeting will be scheduled with parents/carers and the school's attendance officer and/or Headteacher.

All children whose attendance falls below 90% will be monitored very closely and the school's actions around this will involve the Local Authority via the Education Welfare Officer.

Appendix 1 – Punctuality letter

Dear [Parent/Carer]

Re: Punctuality at School

In our recent monitoring of punctuality review [Child] was identified as a pupil whose punctuality is below what we would expect to see.

[CHILD] has exceeded 10 late marks this academic year and I am concerned about their ongoing punctuality at school and the significant amount of learning they are missing.

It is essential that children are at school and on time every day to ensure they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to make good progress. The school gates open at 8.30am, and morning registration is taken at 8:45am. Pupils attending after this time will receive a late mark.

[CHILD] has [NUMBER] late marks for this academic year and has missed in excess of [MINUTES] minutes of learning. It is important that immediate steps are taken to ensure that their punctuality is significantly improved.

Persistent lateness can affect a child's achievement and progress in school and in addition disturbs the start of the lesson for the rest of the class. Children often feel embarrassed entering the classroom late and can find it difficult to catch up, having missed the introduction to the lesson. As a parent I would ask you to support the school in establishing good habits for your child by helping them to arrive at school each day on time.

If there are any concerns or circumstances affecting why you are finding it difficult for XX to arrive on time to school, please ensure you make an appointment to see me at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Laura Brooks

Headteacher

Appendix 2 – Absence Monitoring letter (Attendance below 96%)

Dear [Parent/Carer]]

Re: Your child's attendance

Full attendance at school is essential to the all-round development of your child. As a school, we expect every child's attendance to be at least 96% so they can make the most of their learning and fulfil their potential.

We understand that sometimes a significant illness might cause attendance to drop for a period of time; i.e. COVID-19, chickenpox, or flu. However, attendance should rapidly improve again once a child has recovered.

Your child's attendance

[CHILD]'s attendance is currently [NUMBER]% and they have missed [DAYS] days of learning since the beginning of the school year. If their attendance falls further, they are at risk of becoming 'Persistently Absent'.

What does persistently absent mean?

If a child's attendance falls below 90% they are identified as 'Persistently Absent' and are missing at least 10%, which is a considerable amount of their education.

The information below shows how many days of school a child will miss each half term if they are persistently absent.

Each school day is made up of two sessions; morning and afternoon (am/pm). This means that a child is absent for two sessions if they miss one day of school.

Autumn 1 Half term – 90% or less attendance is 3 or more school days missed

Autumn 2 Half term – 90% or less attendance is 6 or more school days missed

Spring 1 Half term – 90% or less attendance is 9 or more school days missed

Spring 2 Half term – 90% or less attendance is 12 or more school days missed

Summer 1 Half term – 90% or less attendance is 15 or more school days missed

Summer 2 Half term – 90% or less attendance is 19 or more school days missed

Working with you to improve your child's attendance

We look forward to [CHILD]'s attendance improving in the coming weeks and we want to work together to support you to improve their attendance. If there are any concerns or circumstances affecting your child's attendance, other than illness, please ensure you make an appointment to see me at your earliest convenience.

If you require more information regarding attendance, you can visit the policy section on our website or ask at the school office to view our Attendance Policy.

Yours sincerely

Laura Brooks
Headteacher

Appendix 3 – Persistent Absence Monitoring letter (Attendance below 90%)

Dear [Parent/Carer]

Re: Persistent Absence Monitoring

Full attendance at school is essential to the all-round development of your child. As a school, we expect every child's attendance to be at least 96% so they can make the most of their learning and fulfil their potential.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% they are identified as 'Persistently Absent' and are missing a considerable amount of their education. To put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year – your child will spend more time at home than at school this academic year.

[Child]'s attendance is currently [number]% and they have missed [number] days of learning since the beginning of the school year.

We want to work together to support you in improving [Child]'s attendance. It is important to understand why their attendance is lower than expected. Together with you, we can look at barriers to good attendance and ways to motivate children to come to school. We can also draw on the expertise of other services to help. Please contact me if you would like to talk this through on 020 89401446 or office@russell.richmond.sch.uk marking your email for my attention.

Medical evidence when your child is absent

We appreciate that children can become ill and need days off to recover, however while your child's attendance is below 90% we would now ask you to seek medical advice for future illnesses, and provide evidence of this in order for it to be authorised by the school.

Medical evidence can be in the form of: -

- A letter/certificate from your GP stating your child is not fit to attend school
- a GP/medical appointment card/email/text confirmation
- a photograph of prescribed medication, dated and with your child's full name

If your child continues to be persistently absent

We look forward to your child's attendance improving in the coming weeks. However, if their attendance remains under 90%, a referral may be made to the local authority's Education Welfare Officer to explore further ways to support their attendance.

Yours sincerely

Laura Brooks
Headteacher

Appendix 4 – Four Week Monitoring

Dear [Parent/Carer]

Re: Your child's continued absences

Since we wrote to you on [date], [Child]'s attendance has failed to improve significantly, and is now [number]%. .

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. It is important that low attendance is dealt with as early as possible to prevent poor habits of attendance forming with [Child]. Poor attendance habits now will make it increasingly difficult for you to ensure your child attends school regularly as they get older.

If their attendance fails to improve over the next 4 weeks, an appointment will be made for us to meet to discuss their absences, and a referral may be made to the local authority's Education Welfare to explore further ways to support you and your family.

Medical evidence for future absences

We appreciate that children can become ill and need days off to recover, however given [Child]'s level of attendance we would like to remind you to seek medical advice for any future illnesses and provide evidence of this in order for any absence to be authorised by the school.

Working together to improve your child's attendance

We would like to see an immediate improvement in your child's attendance. Full attendance at school is essential to the all-round development of your child, and we are here to support you so that they can make the most of their educational opportunities. We can help with a wide range of issues and are committed to working with you in the best interests of your child. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns or would like to meet.

We would appreciate your support to make sure [Child]'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Laura Brooks
Headteacher

Appendix 5 – Leave of Absence Request Form



THE RUSSELL SCHOOL

APPLICATION FOR ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

The law states that parents and carers do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays or occasional absences during term time. The policy of The Russell School complies with current DfE regulations and does not authorise absence for holidays during term time. However, when there are exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may consider giving permission for absence on compassionate grounds. In these circumstances, parents must complete this application form and have it signed by the Headteacher before the occasion of absence, at least two school weeks in advance when possible, otherwise an unauthorised absence will be recorded. The Headteacher may ask for a further face-to-face meeting.

Child's Name:

Class:

Absence Dates Requested:

From:

To:

Reason For Absence Request (please provide as much detail as possible to assist the Headteacher in making an informed decision and to assist the school with absence monitoring):

Family Holiday.

Parent/ Carer Signature:

Date:

When considering a request for absence during term time, I understand that the Headteacher will take the following into account:

- My child's overall pattern of attendance
- The age of my child
- My child's stage in their education
- The educational needs and progress of my child
- The time of year (key teaching and assessment times)
- The length, destination and purpose of visit
- Whether it is likely to be a rare event in the life of my child
- The family circumstances and the reasons for requesting a term time absence
- Any other factors brought to the attention of the school

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date of Return to School:	Percentage of attendance in previous academic year:
Absence:	<div>Authorised</div> <div>Unauthorised</div>
Signed Laura Brooks Headteacher	Date reply sent to parent