



Rockwood Nursery School

Attendance Policy

Agreed by Governing Board on [20th October 2025]

Policy will be reviewed by [October 2026]

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1 Introduction

This is a successful nursery and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all pupils to achieve their potential and aspire to excellence.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at nursery, on time, every day the nursery is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Absence or late arrival also disrupts daily routines and teaching and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for the transition to primary school and, eventually, secondary and higher education, training and employment.

It is very important therefore that you make sure your child attends regularly and our attendance policy sets out how together we will achieve this. The policy will be applied fairly and consistently and we will always consider the individual needs of pupils, and their families, who have specific barriers to attendance. We will also be mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and give consideration to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our attendance target this year is 90%, but all pupils should strive to achieve 100% attendance if they can.

2 Responsibilities and expectations

2.1 Families

Parents and pupils should know the times the nursery day starts and finishes and when the register closes (see section 4, below), the processes for requesting leave (see section 3.4), and the process for informing nursery of the reason for unexpected absence (as follows).

If your child is going to be absent, parents must inform nursery as soon as possible and at the latest by 9.15am on the first day of absence by calling nursery on 01282 426711.

Even though nursery school education is not defined as 'compulsory', good attendance is crucial to your child's success and progress.

Children who attend high-quality early education and childcare between ages 2 and 4 on average perform better at every stage of school, with children from low-income families benefitting the most. In fact, the benefit of spending at least 2 years in early education and childcare is equivalent to gaining a higher grade in around 7 GCSEs (Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life, Sept 2025).

The nursery placement is funded by public money allocated specifically for early years education. It is intended to support your child's development and readiness for school. It is important therefore that parents/carers ensure their children attend their funded provision.

The process for parents reporting absence is as follows:

If your child is going to be absent, please inform the nursery as soon as possible and at least by 9am/12.30pm via telephone or by email (01282 426711 or info@rockwoodnursery.com). Please be sure to include your name, your child's name and the reason for absence and expected return date.

2.2 Nursery

Headteacher

- Lead on giving attendance a high profile.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and protected time allocated to discharge those responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the nursery confirms to statutory requirements regarding attendance.
- Consider each request for leave against the nursery's criteria, decide whether some, all, or none of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision.
- Where there is uncertainty regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence, or to request further evidence to support the decision-making process.
- Provide regular reports to the governing body on nursery attendance, including persistent absence and vulnerable groups.
- Monitor half-termly data to identify concerns and target attendance support as necessary (refer to Graduated Support Pathway for specifics)
- Each classroom will display a weekly attendance parentage and number of minutes learning lost through lateness.

Attendance officer current procedures

- Follow up absences for which a notification has not been received, as outlined in Section 5.
- Update attendance registers daily and weekly.
- Update SIMS with absence reasons and relevant authorised or unauthorised codes.
- Document and monitor persistent absence on CPOMS (digital safeguarding tool) and as detailed in Section 3.3.

All nursery staff

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for pupils and a safe learning environment, particularly for those returning to nursery following a period of absence.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise that absence is a symptom of other issues impacting a pupil's welfare and can be a warning sign of safeguarding concerns.
- Adhere to the procedures in place within nursery to promote good attendance.
- Promote the link between attendance and educational attainment to pupils and parents.
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the Headteacher.
- Raise any concerns about attendance with the Headteacher or attendance officer.

Governors

- Ensure compliance with The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually or more frequently if required.

- Agree targets for attendance at Rockwood Nursery School.
- Where the nursery is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, instigate a review of nursery's attendance procedures.
- Authorise the Headteacher (or other designated person) to make decisions regarding leave of absence requests.
- Work with the Headteacher in establishing equitable and consistent criteria against which leave requests will be considered.

Schools are bound by a range of attendance legislation, regulations and guidance; please see the appendix for further details.

Nursery attendance contacts

For parents to notify nursery of a pupil's absence: 012825 426711 – dedicated voicemail facility or email info@rockwoodnursery.com

Contacts for day to day enquiries about attendance: Paul Holden (School Business Manager), Pamela Flory (Admin Support)

Support for specific and more serious attendance concerns: Faith Stringer (Headteacher)

2.3 Lancashire County Council (the local authority)

School Attendance Support Team

Each school has a named contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can advise schools on attendance related matters, and with whom Targeting Support Meetings will be held. For mainstream nursery schools this will be a School Attendance Support Worker (SASW).

3 Types of absence

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the nursery as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. A list of codes used in the register is shown at Appendix 3.

3.1 Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from nursery for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in nursery time, emergencies, or other unavoidable causes or exceptional circumstances.

The NHS has guidance to help parents assess if their child is well enough to attend nursery:
Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

3.2 Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the nursery does not consider reasonable or justifiable. If nursery has followed its attendance procedures and a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, the nursery may seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team or request legal interventions from the School Attendance Legal Team. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping their child off nursery unnecessarily.
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily.

- Holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the Headteacher.
- Days that exceed an amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised and, if there is any uncertainty relating to an absence, nursery may request further confirmation from parents before an absence is authorised. For absence due to illness, this may be in the form of:

- Sight of an appointment for your GP or for the hospital, clinic, etc.
- Sight of prescribed medication or prescription for medication.
- Sight of medical notes/records.
- A letter from a medical professional such as a specialist or consultant.
- School's medical evidence slip, authorised by a pharmacist, doctor, receptionist, etc, which indicates that you have sought medical advice and outlines your child's medical condition.

Parents should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence.

Whilst any child may be off nursery because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend nursery for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend it is better to speak to nursery as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a nursery, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence. We will also ensure that the voice of the child is heard, along with their parents' views.

3.3 Persistent Absence (PA)

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 15% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised and unauthorised (including illness, exclusion, holiday, etc). Absence at this level can damage any pupil's educational prospects and may be detrimental to their emotional wellbeing so we expect parents' full support and co-operation to address this.

At Rockwood Nursery School we monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the persistent absence threshold will be prioritised and parents will be informed of this promptly. Pupils who are persistent absentees are tracked and monitored carefully and the attendance procedures below (section 5) will be followed.

3.4 Leave during term time

By law, maintained schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Taking a child out of nursery in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence. If leave is being requested that involves arranging travel or accommodation, approval must be obtained from the Headteacher before making any bookings.

Leave of absence in term time **will not** be granted unless:

- a request for leave has been made in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides (using the form available on the nursery website / from the nursery office), **and**
- the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the request.
- the child's current attendance is 90% or more

Due to the need to evidence exceptional circumstances, parents are advised to provide nursery with any relevant information regarding their request at the point of application if they believe the circumstances are exceptional.

In considering the request nursery will also consider other factors such as:

- The timing of the requested leave, e.g. when a pupil is just starting at nursery.
- A pupil's attendance record already includes unauthorised absence.
- Attendance is already a concern, or could become a concern, as a result of taking leave.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the nursery, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in withdrawal of the place.

3.5 Religious absence

Nursery will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, e.g. Eid, and this will be marked as code R in the register. The day authorised will be that set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if the Headteacher agrees that exceptional circumstances apply; this would be marked in the register as code C.

4 Registration

4.1 Attendance registration

Morning registration is between 8.30am and 8.35am however the register does stay open until 8.45am.

Afternoon registration is between 12.15pm and 12.20pm however the register does stay open until 12.30pm.

4.2 Late arrival

Arriving between 8.35am and 8.45am will result in a late mark as code L.

Arriving between 12.20pm and 12.30pm will result in a late mark as code L

Code L means the pupil was as late (before the register closed) but present for the session.

Pupils who arrive after the register has closed (8.45am/12.30pm) and without a valid reason for being late (such as attending a dental or medical appointment) will be marked as code U, which is classed as an unauthorised absence but indicates that the pupil was physically present in nursery for part of the session.

4.3 Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting important news and information for the day.

Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of nursery.

If your child is often late you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher discuss ways to improve punctuality, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to nursery on time.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed may result in further action, as outlined below, under section 5.

5 Nursery attendance procedures

5.1 First and further days of absence

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will telephone you on the first day of absence to find out what the reason is and when your child is expected to return. If we are unable to contact you, we will approach your emergency contacts for assistance in reaching you. We will continue to try to reach you by telephone/email for two more days and this may extend to a unannounced home visit and/or a request for contact being posted through your letterbox. If by day 5 we have not had contact with you, the Headteacher will contact the police and request that a welfare check be carried out. Failure to engage with nursery about your child's absence will, along with all measures to reach you, be recorded on the CPOMS system. (Child Protection System).

5.2 Attendance concerns

Parents are expected to contact nursery at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any attendance problems together; this is nearly always successful. However, if concerns persist or absences are unexplained, nursery will use the following procedures and interventions, as required, to support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality:

- Telephone calls and/or letters to make parents aware of nursery's concern about their child's attendance.
- When there is uncertainty about the reason for absence, nursery may ask parents to provide appropriate evidence.
- Invitation to meetings to discuss concerns with the Headteacher.
- Attendance contracts to identify barriers to regular attendance, ways to overcome these and agree targets for improvement.
- The Early Help Assessment (EHA) process and/or referral to other agencies and services, including School Nurses and Primary Mental Health Workers, if appropriate.
- If, after 10 days we have not been able to contact the family and they are not under statutory services, nursery will contact the local authority for further guidance and advice.

At any stage, we may seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team.

5.3 On roll pupils with medical needs who have difficulty attending nursery

Government guidance on supporting pupils at nursery with medical conditions emphasises the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils, whether their condition is short or long term.

Nursery will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be in the form of reasonable adjustments, specific support or resources used within nursery, or by sourcing appropriate provision at another establishment.

When a pupil has been absent from nursery for an extended period, the Headteacher and other support services will work with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

6 Notifications nursery must submit to the local authority

6.1 Admissions

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

6.2 Leavers

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in Regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

This will be completed within and no later than 5 days after the nursery is notified of a child leaving. Where a nursery school notifies a local authority that a child's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the nursery must provide the local authority with the required information as laid out in the regulations. This includes the child's name, date of birth, address and destination school/nursery along with their expected start date.

If parents/carers are unable to confirm a nursery/school place, CFW service and health services will be informed and a request made to support parents in doing this.

Both on/off roll notifications are completed and submitted electronically via common transfer files (CTFs and CMLs) no later than 5 days after joining/leaving dates.

6.3 Pupils who fail to attend

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil age who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission (codes G, O, and/or U) for a continuous period of 10 days or more. In Lancashire schools, this can be done via a variety of means and nursery can contact the School Attendance Support Team for further advice.

As part of our safeguarding commitment, if a child has stopped attending and their location is unknown, we will make reasonable enquiries to establish their whereabouts, jointly with services in the local authority/police/health services and the CFW team. The child's name will then be deleted from the school register.

Appendix 1: School attendance and the law

There are many pieces of legislation and government regulations and guidance that are relevant to school attendance and to children and their parents and carers. The list below relates to this attendance policy but is not exhaustive. Some elements of government regulations and DfE guidance do not apply to academies and independent schools (but may apply to independent special schools).

Schools

Attendance and absence registration codes

Working together to improve school attendance, DfE statutory guidance 2024, explains which codes schools should use to record attendance and absence in their registers, and specifies the DfE's expectations of schools and local authorities with respect to school attendance.

Data protection

Schools must ensure that personal data is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. See Rockwood Nursery School's Privacy Notice for information about how personal data will be used.

Duty for schools to include attendance information in reports for parents

The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005

Duty for schools to notify the local authority when pupils join or leave school

Regulation 13 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Duty for schools to report attendance concerns about individual pupils to the local authority

Regulation 13 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Duty for schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Keeping children safe in education, DfE statutory guidance, regularly updated

Duty for schools to share attendance data with the Government

Section 537A of the Education Act 1996 and

Share your daily school attendance, DfE guidance 2024

Leave of absence

Regulation 11 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Legal interventions

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child who is on a school roll fails to attend regularly and those absences are recorded by the school as unauthorised.

Legal interventions are available under the following acts, guidance and regulations:

- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- Section 36 of the Children Act 1989
- Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE guidance 2015

Pupils experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools, DfE 2023

Mental health and behaviour in schools, DfE 2018

Pupils with health needs who cannot attend school

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, DfE statutory guidance 2023

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, DfE statutory guidance 2015

Pupils with individual needs and specific barriers to attendance

When considering the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance, schools should be mindful of their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Equality Act 2010. The Technical Guidance for Schools in England, published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, outlines the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for schools.

Regulations regarding participation in performances

The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

Regulations regarding removal from roll

Regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Regulations regarding the school day and number of sessions

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999

Requirement for mainstream, state-funded schools to deliver a school week of at least 32.5 hours

Length of the school week, DfE guidance 2023

Specialist and alternative provision settings are also encouraged to consider extending their core week where appropriate.

Rockwood Nursery School Graduated Attendance Support Pathway

% attendance and support depend on context for absence

Universal Pathway	Improvement Pathway	Targeted/Intensive Support Pathway
<p>Nursery first approach/nursery led Pupil attendance above 90%</p>	<p>Nursery and LA School Attendance Support Team, wider services Pupil attendance 85-90% equal to 5.5 - 3.8 weeks absent each school year</p>	<p>Nursery intensive support - SAST/CFW and wider services Pupil attendance below 85% equal to more than 5.5 weeks absent each school year</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery's own attendance initiatives calling/emailing/use of register codes to monitor absences and parental engagement • Nursery attendance helpline/emails • Nursery attendance local networks • Nursery's attendance policy and improvement pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late monitoring • Celebrate good attendance 	<p>As column 1 plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters/LA letters to parents • Home visits/nursery meetings • Attendance contracts with parents • Develop and monitor action plans • Early Help (nursery led referrals) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time timetables/session reviews • Recognise/celebrate improved attendance • FSW/health services and other external agencies deemed appropriate 	<p>As columns 1 and 2 plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place review in line with our attendance policy – we will ensure all barriers to attendance are addressed, place may be withdrawn • CFW community and family intensive support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAST involvement • Recognise/celebrate improved attendance • 3rd Sector support work

Appendix 3

Register Codes and their Use

PRESENT

/ \ - marks present am/pm sessions

ABSENT WITH AUTHORISED REASONS

- M – absent for a medical appointment
- I – absent with illness
- C – exceptional circumstances pre-approved absence for holiday
- Y4 – unavoidable whole school closure (bad weather/emergencies)
- R – religious observance (one day per religious festival)

ABSENT WITH NO or UNAUTHORISED REASONS

- N – no reason given for absence
- G – holiday which is not authorised
- O – absence notified but with unauthorised reason

LATES

- L – late before register closes (8.35am – 8.45am & 12.20 pm – 12.30pm)
- U – late after register closes (after 8.45am/12.45pm) – this shows the child was actually in nursery but was so late their attendance mark is affected

Appendix 4

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Missing nursery can disrupt a child's learning progression, as well as their ability to engage with peers and participate in ongoing projects. Parental support in maintaining regular nursery attendance is highly appreciated and can make a significant difference in a pupil's educational journey.

Parents/carers should obtain permission from the headteacher **before** taking a child out of nursery for leave during term time for **any reason**.

Absences taken without permission may be unauthorised by the nursery. Parents do not have the automatic right to insist that nursery absences are authorised, only the nursery may decide how to mark the register. Nurseries must take into account the statutory Department for Education (DfE) guidance when deciding whether to authorise a leave request. Nurseries can grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances at their discretion.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during nursery hours.

This form should be fully completed **by the parent with whom the child normally resides** and returned to nursery for consideration well in advance of the proposed leave and before committing to any expense. Once received the headteacher (or delegated person) will decide whether to approve the request, bearing in mind the current regulations and government guidance.

First name of child	<input type="text"/>	Surname of child	<input type="text"/>
Date of birth	<input type="text"/>	Year group	<input type="text"/>
First name of parent/carer	<input type="text"/>	Surname of parent/carer	<input type="text"/>
Relationship to child	<input type="text"/>		
Home address	<input type="text"/>		
Postcode	<input type="text"/>	Telephone number	<input type="text"/>

Provide details of any siblings at the nursery who you also wish to apply for leave for

First name of child	Surname of child	Date of Birth	Year Group
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Length of absence (number of nursery)		Destination (if applicable)	
Date of departure		Date due back in nursery	
UK emergency contact and telephone number			
Other emergency contact details (if leave is outside the UK)			
<p>Provide information regarding the exceptional circumstances for leave. (additional documents may be attached)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>			

I confirm I am the parent with whom the child normally resides (tick)

I confirm I have included any relevant information for consideration (tick)

Parent/carer signature

Date

NURSERY SECTION

Date
Received

Pupil
Attendance
%

Date discussed with
parents (if
applicable)

The headteacher/authorised person has considered this leave request.

The outcome of the request is: (circle)

Not Approved

Permission not granted

Approved

Permission granted

Partially Approved

Some days to be authorised

If only some of the leave is to be approved, number of days which will be authorised

Reason(s) for decision

Headteacher/appropriate person signature

A copy of this form should be provided to the parent(s).

Parents will be individually notified in writing of the outcome of this request.