Ratho Primary School

Attendance & Absence Policy

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OUR SCHOOL VISION:

At Ratho Primary School, we recognise a strong link between high levels of attendance and positive outcomes for children. This includes outcomes in terms of attainment and achievement, health and wellbeing and social, emotional and behavioural development. The purpose of this procedure is to promote high levels of attendance and set out a process that will be followed when there is a non-attendance. Staff will seek to inspire every child with a passion for learning which will demonstrate to them that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late.

Our Policy in context.

This policy does not stand alone and is written in conjunction with the following key guidance and policy documents from both a local and national perspective:

Attendance & Absence Procedures – City of Edinburgh Council (2020)

Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Promoting and Managing School Attendance – The Scottish Government (2019)

School Attendance: A Guide for Parents – The Scottish Government (2009)

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) – The Scottish Government (2013)

The Education (Scotland) Act – The Scottish Government (2016)

Inter - Agency Child Protection Procedures – Edinburgh & The Lothians (2012)

The Children and Young Person (Scotland) Act – The Scottish Government (2014)

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Responsibilities

At Ratho primary school, we know that every day counts in a child's education and we all strive to support our children to, where possible, attend our school on time, every day. All adults in our school community have a role to play in promoting, managing and supporting school attendance.

All staff	• Reinforce importance of coming to school and being on time • Notice if pupils are absent, missing activities or late • Praise good attendance, particularly of those who we know are often absent or late • Never publicly ask a child why they have not been in school or have been late
Our school office / admin staff	• Welcome our pupils when arriving late, sympathetically asking for a reason and where appropriate see if any support is needed • Update SEEMIS with TBC / Medical / Absence information • Inform school management of daily absence information • Communicate with families to confirm whereabouts of any pupils absent as part of the daily registration process • Follow up phone calls / texts / emails to identified parents / carers and update registers as required • Liaising with support / class staff
Our head teacher / depute head teacher	• Share the importance of good attendance regularly with parents in newsletters, school website, social media and parent/carer events • Meet with EWS as required to discuss below 85% pupils and identify supports that may be required • Constructively inform, communicate and discuss with families the reasons for absence or late-coming and how the school and partner agencies may be able to help them • Send trigger letters to families below 90% attendance or late comings
Our Pupil support officer	• Offer support and 1:1 sessions for pupils and families who may be struggling with issues in and out of school that would or could contribute to low attendance or late comings • Work closely with the school senior leadership team and engage as part of any supports that are put in place • Carry out home visits for absent children • Follow up phone calls to 90% trigger letters issued to offer support if required
Our teachers / in class staff	• Accurately record absence and lates in the Seemis database by 9am each morning • Discuss attendance with pupils / parents / carers, where appropriate, in relation to progress in learning • Inform school leadership team of any patterns of attendance or lates, especially if this is out of character or new • Share attendance data for any child under 95% at parent/carer consultations

We Aim:

- ✓ To maximise the attendance of all our children.
- ✓ To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone.
- ✓ To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties.
- ✓ To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- ✓ To work closely with and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and multi-agency teams within the GIRFEC procedures. The school understands that there can be additional reasons for a child's non-attendance at school, as set out in *Attendance & Absence Procedures – City of Edinburgh Council (2020*) – Section 9 '*Identifying and addressing barriers to attendance'*.

What is reasonably expected of our parents and carers?

- To keep their child's absences to a minimum.
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives on time, in school uniform, with the right equipment and in a positive mindset to learn.
- A reason should be offered for any lateness and appropriate and proportionate support accepted when this is an issue.
- To work closely with the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any issues that may impede a child's attendance
- To be aware of the curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to how sporadic attendance can affect a child's progress.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.
- To keep the school updated should contact numbers or address details change.
- Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office by phone or, in person if their child is absent from school. This needs to be done before school begins at 8.45am or the night before and a message left on the school's answering machine.

What is expected of us, as a school by our Local Authority:

- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- To develop procedures that enable our school to identify, follow up and record authorised and unauthorised absence, patterns of absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- To consistently record absence within the guidance of *The Education (Scotland Act (2016)* and City of Edinburgh Council procedures.
- To develop a range of strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- To encourage supportive and constructive communication between home and school.
- To develop procedures that could lead to a referral to the EWO for family support from The Area Attendance Advisory Group (AAAG) to help families ensure good attendance of their child at school.
- Support children in why they are experiencing difficulty in attending school, offer a tailored or bespoke curriculum that focuses on their interests and needs.

Managing attendance

Late arriving

- School starts at 8.50
- Lateness is classed as any child arriving after 8.50
- All children arriving after 8.50 must report to the school office
- The school office will record the pupil's late on SEEMIS
- If lateness is persistent and impacts attendance, the school will seek to meet the parents/carers to discuss concerns; Persistent lateness may be referred to the Education Welfare service.

Persistent absentees

A child who has an attendance figure of 85% or below is classed as a persistent absentee and may be referred to the Education Welfare Service after discussion with the EWS and senior leadership team to ensure a referral is appropriate. A child with attendance percentage between 90% & 95% will be closely monitored and supported to prevent them falling into the persistent absentee category. Reminder letters and SEEMIS reports will be issued regularly. The school may refer cases to the EWS and may also request medical evidence for further absences as this can be classed as a child protection issue**.**

Monitoring and evaluation

The school leadership team (HT/DHT) and the Pupil Support Officer (PSO) will meet on a monthly basis to review pupils with attendance of 90% and below. Letters will be issued to parents/carers of children with an overall attendance of 90% and below, followed up by a phone call to identify if any supports are required to help the child increase attendance. A record of these letters will be held in the child's file, along with any parent/carer response.

For any pupils with attendance of 85% or below, the senior leadership team will carry out a formal review / risk assessment and contact parents/carers to discuss the situation. The case may be referred to the EWS as a persistent absentee case.

From SEEMIS, a report can be drawn to focus on attendance below 90% or 85% as required.

The local authority publishes monthly attendance overviews for all its schools. This provides a guide to where a school is on a citywide basis and documents any improvements they have made.

As a school, we understand there may be other patterns and modes of attendance that may need to be put in place or requested by families / carers that a re acceptable by law. These can be discussed between school and parent/carers using the GIRFEC structures and suitable arrangements made. The school or external agencies can advise families on their rights in these areas and support them accordingly.

The role of Education welfare officers & Education welfare services

Ratho Primary works together with the Education Welfare Service to improve the attendance of all our children. The EWS team have a range of different strategies to support families with attendance below 85% and help raise awareness of the importance of school attendance. These range from written notifications to home visits or referrals to external support agencies.

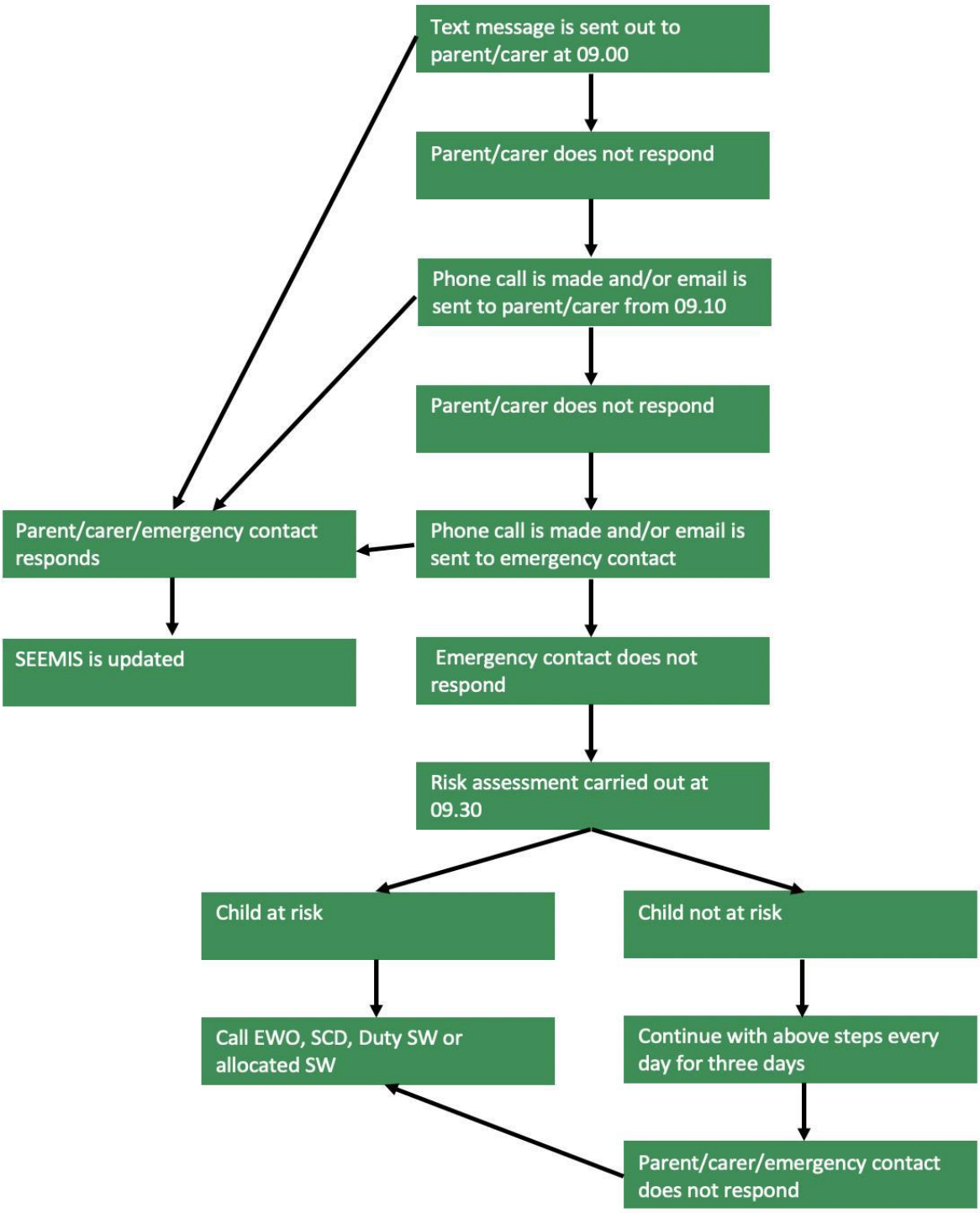
Daily Registration Procedures

The school gates open at 8.40 and the pupils enter school through the pupil entrances from 8.45. Any pupils arriving after 8.50 should enter the school via the main office entrance.

IN CLASSROOM		
TIME	**ACTION**	**PERSON/S RESPONSIBLE**
8.50 – 9.05	**Complete class registers and update SEEMIS database.**	**Class teachers**

SCHOOL OFFICE		
TIME	**ACTION**	**PERSON/S RESPONSIBLE**
8.50	**Pupils enter school via main office and lateness recorded on SEEMIS**	**Office staff**
8.45 onwards	**Teachers absence input to be monitored on SEEMIS – Update SEEMIS with correct absence codes. Record reason for absence on absence log**	**Office staff**
9.30	**Text message to be sent to parents/carers of any absence reasons that are TBC Alert HT/DHT/PSO of any known 'at risk or persistent' absent pupils**	**Office staff**
9.30	**Phone call / email to parents/carers or emergency contacts of any absences in SEEMIS that are TBC**	**Office staff**
10.00	**Daily absence report including percentages to be sent to HT / DHT / PSO**	**Office staff**
10.30	**Update SEEMIS with all codes and report any remaining TBC to HT/DHT**	**Office staff**

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TIME	**ACTION**	**PERSON/S RESPONSIBLE**
9.30	**Risk assessments to be carried out for absences (See flowchart below)**	**HT / DHT**


Text message is sent out to parent/carer at 09.00
Parent/carer does not respond
Phone call is made and/or email is sent to parent/carer from 09.10
Parent/carer does not respond
Parent/carer/emergency contact responds
Phone call is made and/or email is sent to emergency contact
SEEMIS is updated
Emergency contact does not respond
Risk assessment carried out at 09.30
Child at risk
Child not at risk
Call EWO, SCD, Duty SW or allocated SW
Continue with above steps every day for three days
Parent/carer/emergency contact does not respond