



Attendance Policy

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| Adopted by the Governing Body | December 2023 |
| Next Review date | December 2024 |

This policy is based on the Local Authority Policy

RATIONALE

Poor attendance disadvantages pupils.

Even though our pupils can experience medical difficulties, we encourage high attendance. We aim to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available and to keep routines as normal.

Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils. However, it is also recognised that some pupils suffer from both degenerative and health related conditions.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the school.

All pupils, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

AIMS

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school, in line with their disability
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To encourage parents to ensure that pupils arrive at school on time.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, pupils, teachers and governors.
- To safeguard pupils with poor attendance as necessary in line with child protection policy and procedures

Who is responsible for attendance issues in school

- The School has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues.
- Members of school staff both teaching and non teaching have responsibility for attendance issues in school. **See appendix 1 for a detailed breakdown of these roles and responsibilities.**

- Attendance matters are reviewed by the head and members of the senior management team and our wellbeing team
- Attendance issues are reported at least termly to the Governing body.

School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A pupil going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

PROCEDURES

Registers-

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately.

Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations

Reynolds Cross School use SIMS to keep registers and the procedures for marking registers are as follows:

| Procedure | Person responsible |
|--|---|
| 1. Registers must be taken at the start of the 9.30 morning session and once during the afternoon session 1.30 | Receptionist |
| 2. On each occasion a school must record whether a child was present, absent or present at approved educational activity. No pupil should be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is called or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher | Office manager/ receptionist |
| 3. Spaces must not be left in the register | Receptionist |

Every half a day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the Head Teacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as

satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Head Headteacher. [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].

School has procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks.

Attendance registers may be kept manually or electronically.

School complies with and uses the DFE compulsory national attendance codes.

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|----------|--|-------------------------------------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Approved Education Activity |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Non-compulsory school age absence | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

Parents –

Absence:

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the 1st day of absence and maintain contact with the school throughout the absence. This should be via the school office Dojo before 8am on the morning of the start of the absence.

Illness:

It is a schools decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

However schools can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

In fact it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing addition services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness

The types of scenario's when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

Requests for leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Procedure for requesting a planned absence

- All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (Appendix 2) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.
- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the

children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.

- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absences for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office (Appendix 2). There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Head teacher.
- Where the head teacher is satisfied that there **are** exceptional circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence, the pupils attendance record, they may use the absence leave calculator
- If the Head teacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer (*appendix 3 : model pro forma*)
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised. A letter informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent. The letter provided in this guidance (appendix 4) must be used.
- If once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions) is met then the absences should be referred immediately to the Education Enforcement Team for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

Other reasons for absences:

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time, notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons.

The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

Examples of authorised absence may include, days of religious observance, illness, and medical appointments.

Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as late. After three late marks parents/carers will be contacted to establish reasons and offered support.

School registration will close at 9.30am.

Poor attendance

Those children whose attendance falls below national average will be closely monitored and further action considered. School will challenge the attitude of those pupils and parents who give a low priority to attendance

All registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis.

Schools will analyse individual pupil data to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern and parents will be informed by the school where their child's attendance causes concern.

If school are concerned about the pupil's attendance they may conduct 'reasonable enquiries'. This may take the form of a door step visit to ensure the child's welfare.

A safe and well visit may be conducted when;

- A pupil is absent from school without a valid reason
- The school hasn't received a reply to a follow-up text or call or
- The school received a reply that they're concerned about

Occasionally safe and well checks will be conducted unannounced.

School has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance.

After school has attempted to address attendance issues with parents, and if there is no improvement the Education Enforcement Team will be informed where the child's attendance remains a concern.

School has in place a system for enabling returning pupils to catch up on learning and re-integrate within the school.

Persistent Absences

Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be identified (pupils with more than 10 % absence rate) and an action plan will be put in place to address the underlying reasons for the absence level (Appendix 5 Pupil Profile).

ATTENDANCE PANELS

Parents of pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern may be invited to attend an attendance panel. An attendance panel is a formal meeting to discuss the child's school attendance, identify and barriers to regular school attendance and agree a target and action plan to improve school attendance.

An attendance panel is chaired by a school governor or senior member of school staff. School representatives will be present this may include anyone in school who is involved with your child for an example a member of Family support.

Data Analysis

Schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, and this happens weekly. Most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

School will use data effectively to identify particular groups of children whose absences cause concern.

Schools will use data to track the attendance of individual pupils.

Where attendance is a concern, school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender to help illuminate areas of concern.

Schools will use data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and take action to address and improve those areas.

Schools will use data to monitor and evaluate these interventions.

Appendix 1

Reynalds Cross School Roles and Responsibilities for school attendance

| Name | Role | Responsibilities |
|------|---------------------------|--|
| | Schools Governors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure compliance with relevant legislation (eg pupil registration, attendance registers) • Setting Attendance targets • Reviewing school attendance • Agreeing and Reviewing School Policy • Chairing attendance panels |
| | Head Teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with relevant legislation • Putting into practice school policy • Authorising/unauthorising absences • Leave of absence request • Line management • Contact with parents : overview of clear and escalating interventions • Responsibility for links with Education Enforcement Team • Attendance at attendance panels |
| | Wellbeing group 1 Leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with relevant legislation • Putting into practice school policy • Line management • Contact with parents : • overview of clear and escalating interventions • recording and evaluation of interventions • Data analysis • Responsibility for links with Education Enforcement Team • Data analysis. • Promoting school attendance • Management of reward scheme • Pupil Profiles • Planning attendance panels |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First day calling • Late arrivals • Attendance targeting • Day to day responsibility for escalating approach |
| | Class teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking registers • Promoting importance of regular schools attendance • Providing early warning of attendance concerns • Positive role modelling • Following policy and procedures |
| | School Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining registers • First day calling • Late arrivals • Attendance targeting • Process for clearing registers • Day to day responsibility for escalating approach • Certification |

Appendix 2

SCHOOL ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Form to be returned to the school office with a minimum of two weeks notice

Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised leave of absence and requests will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Name of Pupil | Class |
| Date of birth | |
| Please detail below the exceptional circumstance why you are requesting to take your child out of school. You may be invited into school to discuss your request with the head teacher or a member of SLT (please attaché your supporting evidence) | |
| Address..... | |
| Leave of absence from date:..... to date | |
| Number of schools days that your child will be absent from school | |
| Signature | Date |
| Name of Parent/Carer | |

Leave of absence which has not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised. These may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for consideration which could result in a Penalty Notice.

For School Use:

Previous requests for leave of absence Yes / No Attendance
..... %

Evidence provided for exceptional circumstance Yes / No

Arrange to meet with Parent/Carer Yes / No Date & time
.....

Authorised

Unauthorised

By Headteacher

Appendix 3

Authorised Exceptional Leave of Absence Standard Letter

TO THE PARENTS OF:-

Dear Parents

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

I write to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

Requests for leave of absence are never taken lightly and in making this decision I have accepted your reason and evidence for the exceptional circumstance.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc Class Teacher/File

Appendix 4

Unauthorised Leave of absence letter

TO THE PARENTS OF:

Dear (inset name of parent. A individual letter should be sent to each parent, for each child as each is potentially a separate offence and a penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each fine)

Re Leave of absences request for (pupil name dob)

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

On this occasion I am not able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence.

Therefore a penalty notice may be issued to each pupil.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact myself or the Education Welfare Service on 0121 779 1737

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

c.c. Class Teacher/File

Appendix 6

Appendix 5

Attendance Profile

Name:

Form:

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Date: | Att. % (attach registration certificate) | Siblings : |
| SEN <input type="checkbox"/> | EHCP <input type="checkbox"/> | Young Carer <input type="checkbox"/> |
| FSM Y/N | Exclusion no days : | LAC Y/N |
| Current school interventions: <input type="checkbox"/> Learning mentor <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum support <input type="checkbox"/> Exclusions <input type="checkbox"/> Report <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | Other agencies currently involved: <input type="checkbox"/> Education Welfare Service <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Offending Team <input type="checkbox"/> Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service <input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist Inclusion Support Service <i>(i.e. ESD, Hearing Impairment etc.)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Families First <input type="checkbox"/> CAF Other please specify..... |
| Key Issues (including reasons for absence if known): Pupil Developmental Needs (for example, Educational Needs, Behavioural Needs, Social Relationships, Health Needs) Parenting Capacity (parental engagement, attitude towards education, routine and boundaries, parental issues such and drug and alcohol misuse) Family and Environmental Factors (Housing, Finance,) | | |
| Historical Attendance Concerns ? | | |

Action Plan:

Profile completed by:

Review date: