

Rainow Primary School

Caring, Learning, Achieving

Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy

Members of Staff Responsible:

Date approved by the full Governing body:

Date to be reviewed:

Headteacher

Autumn Term 2023

Autumn Term 2024

1. Rationale

"Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn."

(DfE: Working together to support attendance, Sep 22)

We know that there is a direct correlation between good attendance and high achievement. It is important that pupils develop a positive attitude to school attendance and punctuality so that they do not miss out on the opportunities at school. These qualities of reliability are important in adult life.

Poor attendance, especially when condoned by parents, disrupts a child's education. This causes a lack of continuity and progression in schoolwork and can establish patterns of behaviour which may lead to long-term issues.

Research tells us that:

- Five minutes late each day equates to three days lost each year
- 17 days missed from school each year can equate to a whole GCSE grade
- Attendance affects future outcomes
- Attendance affects wellbeing and a sense of belonging

2. Aims

We aim to:

- encourage good attendance and punctuality for every child (>97% attendance)
- monitor the attendance of our children carefully
- encourage an active dialogue with parents about attendance and punctuality
- maintain our attendance registers in accordance with DfE guidance
- monitor and discourage holiday absences
- report authorised and unauthorised absence
- monitor and discourage late arrivals
- report unauthorised absences to parents via the yearly report form

School Attendance Measures:

98% attendance or above	-	excellent
95% - 97.9%	-	good
92% - 94.9%	-	satisfactory
90% - 91.9%	-	concerns
Below 90%	-	serious concerns (persistent absenteeism)

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [School Attendance guidance from the Department for Education](#) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. It also has due regard to [Working together to improve school attendance \(DfE, Sep 22\)](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

4. School Procedures

Our procedures are based on the model outlined in the DfE guidance, ['Working Together to improve attendance'](#) (Sep 22):

EXPECT → MONITOR → LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND → FACILITATE SUPPORT →
FORMALISE SUPPORT → ENFORCE

4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive at school between 8.45 and 9.00am on school days.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.20pm.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on each day of an unplanned absence and explain the reason for the absence as soon as is practically possible, ideally before 9.00am.(see also Section 6).

Parents are asked to contact the school office and leave a message via phone, email or speak directly to a member of staff.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, or the attendance of the child is so low (below 90%) that the Local Authority's School Attendance Support Team advises that medical evidence is required.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or the attendance is very low (below 90%), the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

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

4.3 Collecting Pupils during the school day

If a pupil needs to be collected during the school day by a parent / carer, they need to be signed out of school at the school office, recording the time of collection and the reason for absence.

4.4 Medical or Dental Appointments

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. If this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and return to school as soon as possible after the appointment.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence.

Advance notice is required for authorising medical or dental absences. Parents are asked to contact the school via telephone or email.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in Section 5.

4.5 Lateness

The school doors open at 8.45am and close at 9.00am after which time pupils are required to enter school via the main reception.

- If a child arrives after the registration period but before 9.10am they will be marked as Late (L)
- If a child arrives after 9.10am this will be recorded as U for 'arrival after registration'.

Any child arriving late to school should enter via the main reception and will require an adult to sign them in. This process complies with our safeguarding policy where staff will record the attendance before the pupil goes to the classroom.

We will actively discourage lateness and concerns regarding the punctuality of pupils will be communicated to parents as necessary, so that we can discuss a way forward to help their punctuality to improve. That way, the child does not miss out on important learning at school. If a child is late on two or more occasions

during a week, a letter will be sent to parents to ensure they are aware of the situation and the amount of learning time lost. A file is kept in the office for late arrivals.

4.6 Following up absence (FIRST DAY CONTACT)

The school will follow up all absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Parents are expected to inform the school regarding the reason for absence, ideally by 9.00am on the day of absence.

The school will contact all parents / carers who have not provided a reason for absence by 10.00am.

If there is still no contact made by 10.30am the matter will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team so that further efforts to make direct contact with parents can be made, including the possible involvement of the Local Authority or other outside agencies.

4.7 Reporting to parents

The school reports attendance for the academic year to parents as part of the end of year reports in July. This will be reported as percentage for the academic year up to the summer half term, and include information about authorised and unauthorised absence.

4.8 Known / long-term medical conditions

If a child has or develops a condition which is likely to impact upon their attendance at school their parents or carer should contact the headteacher. The headteacher will arrange a meeting with the relevant staff and parents / carer, and other agencies where appropriate, to ensure that child is supported to manage their condition at school. Parents will be required to provide appropriate medical evidence. This approach will ensure that everyone is working together to ensure absences are minimised.

In some cases, if a condition is serious or long term, a care plan may be produced which formalises the agreed approach between all parties. The plan may include: the agreed approach to communication with parents; the suitability of a reduced timetable; the involvement of health care professionals; the appropriateness of work being sent home or the need for medical home tuition.

In cases of long-term absence there should be ongoing weekly communication between school and parents. Details of this communication will be formally recorded on the child's file on CPOMS (our online recording system).

4.9 Persistent Absence

Evidence from across the country shows that students of all abilities under-perform greatly as their attendance drops towards 90%. Any attendance below that causes even greater learning difficulties. This is referred to as persistent absence.

We will contact parents when a child's attendance begins to fall below 92% or there are noticeable patterns of absence in an effort to understand, support and improve attendance (See Appendix B).

If a child's attendance / punctuality continues to cause a concern, the school may request the involvement of the Local Authority's 'Attendance and Children Out of School Service' (School Attendance Support Team).

The core functions of this service, as explained in the DfE document, [School Attendance guidance from the Department for Education](#) are:

[Communication and Advice](#) (pg. 27)

[Target Support Meetings](#) (pg. 28)

[Multi-disciplinary support for families](#) (pg. 28 - 29)

[Legal Intervention](#) (pg. 30)

[Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School Head](#) (pg. 31)

4.10 Dual Registration

Where a child is dual registered with another educational establishment for a defined period of time, the child's attendance at that school will be monitored and an agreed plan of communication with parents and the other educational establishments will be agreed.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The school encourages all parents / carers to limit any absence during term-time to the absolute minimum. Any absence will disrupt a child's routine, affect their learning and have a negative impact on progress at school.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Illness and medical / dental appointments – as explained in sections 4.4.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Certain educational activities that involve pupils developing their talents in curriculum areas such as music, drama and sport.

If a parent requests leave of absence during term time, they are expected to put the request in writing to the headteacher, at least two weeks in advance, if possible. They must use the school's 'Absence Request Form' (see Appendix 1).

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence may be granted at the discretion of the headteacher.

The headteacher will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless the request is considered to be "exceptional circumstances". "Exceptional circumstances" do not include having access to cheaper holidays or cheap travel arrangements.

"Exceptional circumstances" include a short period of time for family bereavements, funerals and celebrations such as family weddings. It is unlikely that absences longer than five days will be authorised.

If a request for term-time absence is refused, the headteacher will write to the parent / carer to explain the decision. The letter will include information that a School Absence Penalty Notice fine may be imposed if

the absence occurs.

5.2 Legal Sanctions (Fixed Penalty Notice)

School can request the Local Authority to issue a fine to parents for an unauthorised absence by their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

A school absence penalty notice fine is £60 per parent per child, if paid within 21 days or £120 per parent per child, if paid within 28 days.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following advice from Cheshire East Council. This may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

6. Children Missing Education

We follow the guidance set out in the DfE document, [Children Missing in Education](#). (See also, Links to Other Policies)

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school aims to promote, celebrate and reward good attendance by:

- Working in partnership with parents and carers, and communicating with them regularly to encourage high attendance.
- Raising awareness with parents and carers via school newsletters and other communication.
- Providing breakfast club at school, if appropriate, and other strategies to promote good attendance.

8. Attendance monitoring

- The administration team and the attendance officer monitor pupil absence on a daily basis (see section 4).
- Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level in line with the DfE school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.
- The school monitors and analyses attendance of all pupils at least half-termly. A record is kept for senior staff to analyse and implement any actions with pupils and parents as necessary. We are able to meet with the Local Authority's Attendance and Children Out of School Service to clarify actions needed.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

9.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing the Attendance Policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Issuing school absence penalty notice fines where necessary.
- Following up any communication with parents.
- Working with all stakeholders, including the Local Authority, to encourage, understand, support and improve school attendance.

9.3 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the school office, both for morning and afternoon sessions.
- Passing on information shared by families regarding any situation which may affect attendance.

9.4 Administration Staff

Administration staff are expected to:

- Take calls and messages from parents about absence, implement the 'First Day Contact' system (see section 4), record attendance on the school system and inform the relevant staff.
- Monitor attendance and report concerns about attendance to the SLT and follow the actions required regarding recording the absence, contacting parents and keeping key staff updated.
- Provide the data on attendance to report to governors each term.
- Provide data on attendance for teachers' reports to parents.

Links to other school policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions (available from the school office)
- [Children Missing in Education.](#)
- [School Attendance guidance from the Department for Education \(valid until end of Aug 22\)](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance \(DfE, Sep 22\)](#)

Appendix A

ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

You do not have the right to take children on holiday in term time. It is a criminal offence for a parent to 'fail to secure their child's regular attendance at school'. Children are expected to attend school unless they are ill. The school is closed to children for a total of twelve weeks each year and holidays should be taken during these times. Headteachers can only give permission to take a child out of school when there are exceptional circumstances.

If you would like your child to be absent from school during term time, you will need to complete the request slip below so that, where possible, we can approve the absence. You should contact the school at least two weeks before the intended absence.

Absences will only be authorised if there are exceptional circumstances. Please see our Pupil Attendance Policy on the school website for examples. Please do not request absence when your child is preparing for or undertaking examinations. The class teacher will advise you about these.

We want all children to be happy and successful in our school, absences can seriously disrupt a child's progress.

.....

Planned dates of absence Total number of school days

Reason that the child needs to be taken out of school during term time

.....

.....

I/We request permission for to be absent from school on the above dates.

Signed Parent/Guardian

Date.....

Appendix B

Attendance Monitoring Procedure to Improve Persistent Absenteeism

1. Administration staff (admin) to monitor attendance weekly. Keep a list of children whose absence has dropped noticeably (or a notable pattern of absence) without legitimate reasons and / or shows no signs of improving.
2. After discussion with headteacher to consider individual circumstances, administration staff member to send Attendance Letter 1, stating the % attendance and the amount of learning time missed since the start of term. Continue to monitor the situation closely.
3. If no improvement, administration staff to send Attendance Letter 2, highlighting the lack of improvement from Letter 1 and updating parent / carer about the % attendance and the amount of learning time missed since the start of term. Administration staff member and headteacher to monitor the situation closely and arrange a meeting with parents / carers if the situation still does not improve. (All letters will be attached to the child's central record on our MIS system, SIMS, as an historic record / for future reference).
4. If child's attendance declines further, or remains static, the headteacher may seek advice from Cheshire East's 'Attendance and Children Out of School Service' (School Attendance Support Team).

NB. Persistent absenteeism will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Action will not be taken if there are legitimate (usually medical) reasons for absence. Historical attendance data will also be taken into account.

Any communication with families will always focus on trying to understand, support and improve the child's attendance.