

The Rydal Academy

Attendance Policy

Accepted by: Local Governing Body May 2016

Approving Body : Local Governing Body

Committee : Local Governing Body

Review Cycle: 1 year

Last reviewed: December 2021

Date for next review: December 2022

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

The Rydal Academy expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We aim to support pupils and their families so that excellent attendance can be attained.

- Our current school target for attendance is 96%.
- At the Rydal Academy, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

Overall Aims:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents/carers, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Procedures for attendance/punctuality:

Daily

- Class Teachers to complete morning and afternoon session registers on SIMS and submit at end of registration period.
- Administration Assistant to conduct 'First Call' and record reasons for absence on SIMS system (Must be specific)
- Administration Assistant to follow up any missed marks with Class Teachers.
- Administration Assistant to send a message through school text service to any parents unable to contact through First Call.
- Administration Assistant to refer any pupils with no reason for absence provided after 5 days to Children's Access Point
- Attendance officer may make home visits to follow up absence to offer advice, challenge and support regarding getting the pupil into school.

Weekly

- Attendance team to monitor attendance and inform Class Teachers of any significant changes.
- Administration Assistant to produce School Prospectus report from SIMs for Headteacher to identify whole school and class attendance to be used in assemblies.
- Class Attendance certificate and trophy presented in assembly.

Half termly

- Attendance Analysis meeting (Pastoral Lead, Administration Assistant) to meet during the penultimate week of each half term. Review Whole School Overview; Cohort Overview; Class Overview; Class lists of individual percentage attendance.
- Update attendance officer's target pupils list.
- Administration Assistant to send out Low Attendance letter; reminder or meeting letters.
- Attendance Support meetings (Parent or Carer / Pastoral lead / Administration Assistant) to discuss actions to improve attendance.

Termly

- 100% Attendance Awards in assembly.
- 100% Attendance and High Attendance club (96%+) attendance banners to be displayed in playgrounds for parents and children to view.
- Attendance letters sent out to all children (High, Good, Average, Low, Persistent Absentee)
- Late letters sent out. (More than 5 lates per term)
- Analysis of cohort, class and individual attendance as part of data analysis meetings with teaching staff.
- Analysis of attainment and progress of low attendees against school tracking system.
- Pastoral Lead to complete governors report information on attendance and mobility for previous term.

Annual

- Attendance Assembly (Awards for 100% attendance; 96%+ attendance; improved attendance on previous year)
- Mid-year Attendance Review and action planning with Senior Leadership Team.
- Annual Attendance Review meeting and action planning (Pastoral lead / Education / Support Officer / Administration Assistant)
- Pastoral lead to report to Governors on attendance for academic year.

Parents/carers

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents/carers should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomachaches etc. parents/carers should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, doctors or hospital appointment, parents/carers should let the school know and if possible provide evidence of the appointment. It is expected that appointments will be made out of school time wherever possible. Pupils' should be brought back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.

Therefore, parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school if no previous discussion has been noted.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life which may affect the child's learning.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

Aims:

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 96%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 96%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Weekly Celebration Assemblies

Celebration Assemblies are held every week. Classes with the highest attendance receive attendance award.

Breakfast Club

Daily Breakfast Club is free every day. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 7:30 am, ensuring they are on time for school. The club is supervised by members of staff.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

End of Term Attendance Rewards

At the end of each term there is a reward for children who have achieved attendance at over 96% and 100%. Rewards come in the form of sticker, Marvellous Me badges and £100 gift certificate for the winner of the 'pound a percent' raffle.

Sharing attendance data

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of class attendance. The classes achieving the highest attendance figures are shared in termly assemblies. This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the class teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

Parent/pupil consultations

This provides an opportunity for class teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance.

Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using SIMS. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times.

Morning Register

Class registers remain open until 9:45am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register and close down SIMS. The teacher may submit the register as many times as they wish before 9.15 am (e.g. if a mistake has been made or a child has arrived slightly late) but at 9.45am the register must be correct and submitted.

From 9.00 am the school playground gates are closed. The main office deal with children arriving late. The children's names and classes are recorded in SIMS. This is to ensure that no children are missed on the register due to arriving in school late. Teachers are asked to check their registers again after morning assembly to ensure they are up to date.

The School Administrator officer then checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked '/' (present) in the registers and corrects any mistakes or inputs codes for children who are known to be absent. The administrator then begins first day absence calls.

Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence.

School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality.

Monitoring Absence

Any children with attendance of less than 94% in the previous term will be monitored by the Attendance Officer.

Requests for absence during term time

Permission from the Headteacher must be sought for all absences that occur during term-time. A 'request for leave of absence' form must be completed in advance of the absence (available from the school reception or to download from the school's website). Only the Headteacher can decide if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. For absences that are due to sporting or other educational activities which have not been organised by school, evidence of the event must accompany the 'request for leave of absence' form. Holidays taken in term time can have a very negative impact on a pupil's education, as well as school's attendance statistics and children's learning. Under current regulations, Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances', deemed exceptional by only the Headteacher. Therefore the Rydal Academy does not authorise any term time holidays to ensure the system is fair and equitable. All unauthorised holidays will be referred for a holiday fine to the local authority.

Attendance Meetings

The Attendance lead and the attendance administrator communicate regularly to track children's attendance and ensure the systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 94% and parents are invited to work in partnership with the school.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken. Please note that: penalties and prosecutions may be in respect of each parent for each child. In order to improve attendance and tackle lateness, the school uses the Local Authority Penalty Notices procedures. If a pupil has 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent of 5 school days) in any 6 week period, including unauthorised sessions caused by holidays and punctuality, this may result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of the Penalty Notice Process.

Persistent Absenteeism

The Department for Education deems that if a pupil's attendance drops below 90% they become known as a Persistent Absentee, regardless of the reason for the absence and irrespective of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any pupil's educational prospects and parent/carer's full support and co-operation is required to avoid this. At The Rydal Academy all absence is monitored thoroughly and any case seen to have reached the Persistent Absence level or becoming at risk of reaching it, is given priority.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life. Local authorities should have robust procedures and policies in place to enable them to meet their duty in relation to these children, including appointing a named person that schools and other agencies can make referrals. Local authorities should undertake regular reviews and evaluate their processes to ensure that these continue to be fit for purpose in identifying and dealing with CMEs in their area. As a school we will inform the local authority if a child has not been in school for 5 consecutive days unless the child is under child protection, when the school will contact children's services if a child has not attended for 5 days without providing a valid reason for absence.

Covid 19 amendments 2021-2021

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance has been mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

School attendance registers have a new category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021-2022 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) [\[footnote 3\]](#)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Attendance codes

From the beginning of the new academic year 2021-2022, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the pandemic in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak.
- If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.
- In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test.