



Attendance Policy

Date of Review: Spring 2018

Date of Review: Spring 2021

Policy Statement

Richard Avenue Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil.

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Richard Avenue Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents and staff.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of the lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their teacher, and if the need should arise, from the Head teacher. At the end of each term, pupils who attendance has been excellent will be presented with a certificate. The best class award will be given at the end of the year.

Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, appropriately dressed and equipped, and in a fit condition to learn.

- If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify school on the first day of absence – by telephone call or in writing
- A pupil's absence must be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent.
- Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance
- Parents whose child's attendance is a cause for concern, will be informed on a regular basis.
- Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.
- Parents whose first language is not English, or who have literacy problems, will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication

School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school will employ a range of strategies (see below) to encourage good attendance and punctuality, and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff, particularly support staff, will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently. It is the responsibility of the school to inform the Inclusion team of attendance related problems. The school uses an OMR system which enables accurate, rapid recording, monitoring and analysing of pupil attendance. This impacts upon attendance.

Registration

Registers will be called at 8.55 a.m. and 1.40 p.m. and will be marked present or absent in pencil in accordance with the list of symbols as set out in the register. All absences will be amended the following week.

- Registers will close as soon as pupils enter the school building. If pupils are absent, staff will keep registers until 9.15am to re-mark any absent pupils late. Any pupil arriving after 9.15am will be recorded at the office.
- Class teachers will be responsible for sending the register to the office at 9.15 a.m. and 1.40 p.m. or if class has 100% attendance, as soon as possible.
- Parents are reminded that if a child arrives after the close of registers, and an unacceptable explanation is forthcoming, the pupil must be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.
- Reasons for absence that are recorded in writing will be kept in an envelope attached to the inside of the register. These will be removed half termly by the office clerk and put in a file for each class.

Absence can be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave (defined as leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the Governing Body or Head teacher)
- The pupil was ill 'or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'
- The school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following:
 1. the child's transport to and from school
 2. boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school
 3. enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in the Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) are met
- There is a family bereavement
- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral unit
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (i.e. if a pupil is attending an older sibling's graduation)
- Leave of absence is granted by the school for a family holiday of no more than two weeks. (Parents should be reminded that they cannot expect that, as of right, the school will agree to a family holiday during term time).

Absence should be unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming (and staff have done their best to find out a reason).
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after younger siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances).
- The pupil is shopping during school hours.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. birthdays).
- The pupil is absent from school on a family holiday for a period of time longer than that negotiated with the school (normally a maximum of 2 weeks).
- The pupil is on a family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead, seek retrospective approval on their return.

Removal from role

Children will be removed from role under the following circumstances:

- The child moves to another school and notification from the receiving school is given.
- The child does not return within two week of the stated day of return following a holiday. In this case, the Inclusion team will be involved in a home visit before removal from role by the Head teacher.

Holidays

Parents are urged strongly to avoid taking family holidays during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday. If, however, parents apply to the school in advance, the school may grant up to two weeks term time in any year to go on a family holiday. Apart from this, leave in term time can only be given in exceptional circumstances.

Occasionally, holidays of more than two weeks to visit family overseas may be planned. Parents are urged to discuss with the Head teacher, the most appropriate time of year, point in the child's educational career, previous attendance record, for this visit to take place. This will help minimise disruption to the child's progress at school.

Procedures for following up absence

Absences should be explained by parents on the **first day of absence**. Notes, letters and telephone message slips should be retained by the class teachers for recording purposes and then passed to the school clerk for filing.

On the sixth day of any unexplained school absence, a 'phone call, or letter will be sent to parents. Failure to respond to this will result in the involvement of the Inclusion Team.

When pupils return to school after a period of absence they should bring a note explaining the reason and duration of absence (unless the absence was for one day only and notification had already been given or permission had been previously granted, e.g. annual holiday leave).

If a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Inclusion team during their consultation visit.

Notes from parents will be placed in the envelope within the register, by the class teacher. All telephone messages regarding absence, or lateness are to be recorded on a pre-printed slip and placed in the register envelope.

Monitoring Attendance

Weekly – individual pupils - Attendance will be monitored by the Head teacher, Support staff and Office clerk on a regular basis.

- Each term, pupils who have not achieved 90% attendance or are consistently late the previous term, will be monitored by support staff. Parents will be informed.
- A weekly spreadsheet, including previous attendance data will be created to monitor weekly attendance.
- A meeting with the Head Teacher and support staff will occur every 4 weeks to monitor progress of all pupils, but particularly, target pupils. The procedures are:
 - a) Letter to parents from school
 - b) Stage 1 attendance (letter)
 - c) Letter or visit from inclusion team
 - d) Stage 2 attendance (meeting with LA, HT and Attendance School Governor)
 - e) Stage 3 +
- Inclusion team will support Head teacher in monitoring individual pupils causing great concern.
- Pupils who are being monitored and have shown (i) some progress – are rewarded with ESDC stickers, pens, pencils etc. (ii) great progress – are rewarded with a certificate and 'thank you' letter sent home to parents via post.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Good attendance will be praised appropriately. A cup and certificate is awarded weekly to the two classes with the highest attendance in the previous week (above 95%).
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evening etc) of the importance of good attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time, will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be integrated back into school upon their return
- The Head teacher will have meetings every 4 weeks with support staff to monitor attendance.
- The Head teacher will make a termly report to Governors on attendance matters
- The Head teacher will have regular meetings with the Inclusion team in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties
- Visits will be made to feeder primary schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible secondary transfer. Discussions with the secondary school teachers, and the Inclusion team will seek to identify those pupils who may require extra support during this process.

This policy was compiled in full consultation with staff and governors and will be reviewed every three years or when legislation changes.