

Pupil Attendance Policy



Person Responsible for Policy:
Claire McKinney (Head Teacher)

Date of Adoption by Governing Body:
Spring 2026

Date of next review:
Spring 2029

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.

Families

Families 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, app message, voicemail or in writing.
- A pupil's absence must be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent.
- Families will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance.
- Families whose child's attendance is a cause for concern ,will be informed on a regular basis.
- Families should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.
- Families 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 examples. 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 promptly investigate all absenteeism, liaising closely with families. Staff, particularly support staff, will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently. It is the responsibility of the school to inform the Local Authority (LA) of persistent attendance related problems.

The school uses Arbor MIS which enables accurate, rapid recording, monitoring and analysing of pupil attendance. This impacts upon attendance.

Registration

Registers will be marked at 8.55am and 1.35pm with the appropriate codes as pupils enter the school building. If pupils are absent, office staff will keep registers until 9.15am to re-mark any absent pupils late. Any pupil arriving after 9am will be recorded at the office.

- Class teachers will be responsible for completing the register using the Arbor system as soon as possible and before 9.15am
- Parents are reminded that if a child arrives after the close of registers, the pupil must be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session
- Reasons for absence are recorded on the Sign-In app or on the Arbor system

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 cannot be granted for holiday purposes. It may be granted for other reasons under exceptional circumstances.

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 on a family holiday without permission.

Issuing of fines

A non-attendance fine of £80 (if paid within 21 days) or £160 (within 28 days) per parent, per child will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Where the absence is not isolated and/or there are extended absences in more than one academic year.
- Where a child is absent for 5 days (10 sessions) of consecutive unauthorised absence and/or 10 non-consecutive unauthorised absences within a 10-week period.
- For unauthorised absence and/or 10 non-consecutive unauthorised absences within a 10-week period, children will be placed on a 4 week Attendance Plan followed by a 6 week

Support Plan to enable and encourage a change in pattern of attendance

- Fines are capped at two per parent in a three-year period, with further offences leading to potential prosecution, court fines up to £2,500, or a parenting order

Key details on school absence fines

- A penalty notice is considered when a child misses 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised, consecutive, or non-consecutive absence within a 10-school-week period
- The fine is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days

Per-parent, per-child:

Fines apply to each parent/carer for each child, meaning a family with two children could face significant, multiple fines.

Repeat Offences:

Fines are capped at two per parent within a rolling three-year period. A third offence within this period will likely lead to direct prosecution in Magistrates' Court, bypassing further penalty notices.

Court Consequences:

If prosecuted, parents could face fines up to £2,500, a parenting order, or a community sentence.

Exceptions:

Fines may not be issued if the absence is for a valid reason, such as illness (if evidence like a GP appointment is provided) or authorized leave for exceptional circumstances.

Process:

Schools report unauthorised absences to the local authority, which then issues the penalty notice. Unpaid fines will trigger court action. Parents are often, but not always, given a warning first.

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 weeks of the stated day of return following a holiday. In this case the school will inform the LA and they will authorise removal from roll.
- The child moves out of the area or leaves the country. In this case the child will be reported as missing in education to the LA and the child will be removed from roll at a given date.

Procedures for following up absence

Absences should be explained by parents on the **first day of absence before 9am**. Notes, letters and telephone calls, voicemail and app messages will be recorded on Arbor against the absence by a member of the office staff.

For any unexplained school absence a text then phone call will be made to parents. Failure to respond to this will result in the absence being unauthorised and the Head Teacher will be informed.

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 LA.

Monitoring Attendance

Weekly - individual pupils: Attendance will be monitored by Support staff on a regular basis.

- Support Staff will monitor weekly attendance using A-Star Attendance to monitor weekly attendance.
- Should attendance fall below 93% a letter will be sent home informing parents their child's attendance has dropped. If there is no improvement subsequent letters will be sent and in some cases parents will be offered support from the school's early help worker and the Head Teacher will monitor attendance.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Good attendance will be praised appropriately.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evening etc) of the importance of good attendance. Whole school attendance by class will be reported in the weekly Friday Flyer newsletter.
- 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 make a termly report to Governors on attendance matters.
- The Head Teacher will meet with Parents and the school staffing team to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- School Family support team, visit families to discuss issues.
- Visits will be made to feeder primary schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible secondary transfer. Discussions with the secondary school teachers and schools SEN co-ordinator 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.