

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

2021 - 2022



The Rudheath Senior Academy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Rudheath Senior Academy recognises the importance of good attendance and the impact it has on children's progress, attainment, enjoyment of learning and relationships within school.
- 1.2 Good attendance helps a child to realise their potential and ensure they are motivated, confident and enjoy a diverse range of curricular opportunities and experiences; it is promoted via our policy and prospectus and is recognised and rewarded as an achievement.
- 1.3 The school monitors attendance and ensures quick and early intervention if a problem is identified and therefore a child must attend school on each and every day that they are required to do so unless an exceptional circumstance arises.
- 1.4 The Attendance & Punctuality Policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

2. INTENT

- 2.1 The intent of the attendance policy is to help create a culture in which good attendance is seen as the norm and to reflect consistently high standards of expectations.
- 2.2 As an academy, the aim is to ensure that good attendance is rewarded and seen as an achievement.
- 2.3 Students will be involved and responsible for promoting good attendance to their peers and staff will promote and monitor good attendance.
- 2.4 The policy aims to help provide a set of clear and achievable structures which can be followed and maintained to meet the aims and objectives set out below:
 - 2.4.1 Clear communication about student attendance between the academy and parent(s)/carer(s).
 - 2.4.2 To ensure there is an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information which is routinely evaluated by designated staff in order to provide timely intervention for students whose attendance is below national average.
 - 2.4.3 To ensure that the Academy actively promotes good attendance and the educational welfare of vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children and SEND students.
 - 2.4.4 To recognise the important role of Form Tutors and Heads of Year in promoting and monitoring good attendance.
 - 2.4.5 To ensure that important government legislation (outlined below) is adhered to for the safety of all students.

3. LEGISLATION

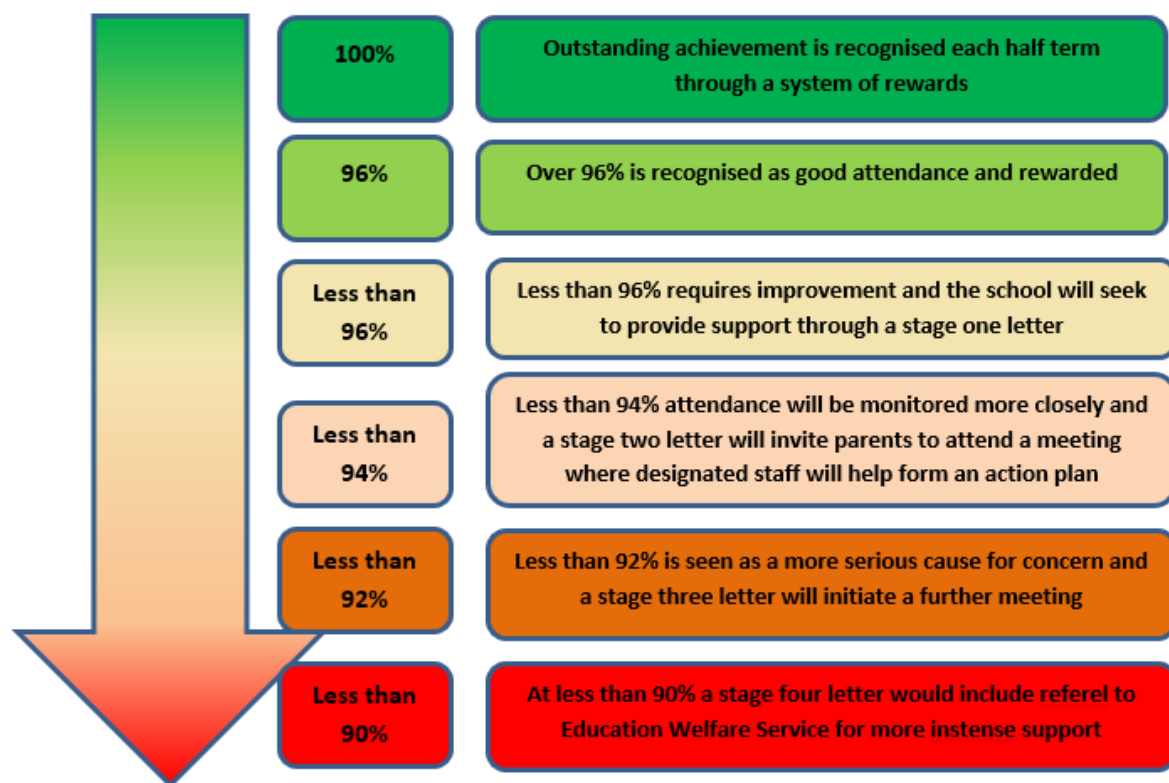
- 3.1 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable ... to [their] age, ability and aptitude, and ...to any special educational needs [they] may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.
- 3.2 Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child’s attendance at the school at which they are registered, where that absence is not authorised by the school.
- 3.3 Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.
- 3.4 For the purposes of Education Law the definition ‘parental responsibility’ lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Children are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
 - 4.1.1 Authorised (where the school approves a learner’s absence)
 - 4.1.2 Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)
- 4.2 The school has a duty to safeguard all of its learners- therefore if a child is absent, parents/carers should **inform the school on the first day of absence, and each day of absence thereafter**, stating the reason.
- 4.3 The school office will make telephone contact with home when a child is absent and the parent/carers has not notified the school of the absence.
- 4.4 If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted the absence will be unauthorised.
- 4.5 At this point, due to concern about the welfare or wellbeing of the child, the school may refer the case to Attend EDC (the academy’s appointed welfare service) who will visit the family home.

5. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 The table below sets out the academy’s attendance targets and at what stage parents/carers will be contacted about their child’s attendance:



6. PUNCTUALITY

- 6.1 The school opens for all learners at 8.00am. Students are expected to attend form time registration at 8.45am and therefore should aim to arrive by 8.35am to give ample time to arrive at their designated form room.

7. ESCALATION OF INTERVENTIONS

- 7.1 **The school registers are opened at 8.45am each morning.** These are legal documents and are marked twice daily.
- 7.2 **All latecomers will be asked to enter through the pastoral entrance if arriving after 8.45** where they will be provided with support to help them ensure this doesn't become a persistent problem.
- 7.3 **If a student arrives after 8.55, they will be given a "late" mark (L)** with the number of minutes late recorded. This may initiate a support plan where this becomes persistent.
- 7.4 Any late arrivals after 9.30am must report to the main entrance and be signed in at reception. Where they will recorded on the register as U which is an unauthorised absence.
- 7.5 If the school has been advised that a child will arrive late due to a dental/medical appointment, an attendance mark will be given on arrival.

- 7.6 Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action may be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

8. APPOINTMENTS

- 8.1 The school operates a signing out system for appointments and other periods of absence.
- 8.2 Learners leaving school, for any reason whatsoever, will be signed out, and if appropriate, back in again. This enables the school to monitor absence levels for appointments, and for health and safety reasons should the school need to be evacuated.
- 8.3 Parents and guardians should avoid appointments within the school day, where possible, and inform the school where this is not possible in advance of the appointment.
- 8.4 Copies of appointments cards with the surgery stamp or a text message/email from the surgery (providing it has the child's name on it) are the only forms of accepted evidence; these must be shown before signing out to help verify the absence.

9. ILLNESS

- 9.1 Absence due to sickness should be reported to the school by 8.45am on the first day of absence and each day of absence thereafter.
- 9.2 Any absence in excess of 5 days (10 sessions) should be supported by medical evidence. If no evidence is received then the absence could be recorded as unauthorised.
- 9.3 School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received.
- 9.4 The school will work with all families on an individual basis if medical absences exceed the maximum threshold.
- 9.5 When appropriate, parents will be informed of their child's attendance level, and may be invited into school to discuss their child's attendance if it was to drop below 96% for no specific medical, or other acceptable reason.
- 9.6 The monitoring process will include a three-step referral procedure; this includes the issuing of standard letters. (See Appendix).
- 9.7 Where a pattern of poor attendance exists and attendance does not improve despite the school's involvement, home visits may be requested by our Educational Welfare Service. (VIP Education)

10. APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 10.1 In September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any Leave of Absence (holiday) during term time unless there are 'Exceptional Circumstances'.
- 10.2 The Head Teacher and Trustees will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form available from the school office and return to school, where possible, with two weeks' notice. It should be noted that if any application is declined an unauthorised absence occurs then school may apply to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice which would be issued to each parent/carer according to the appropriate legislation.
- 10.3 A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away, but also they are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid. Clearly, there are times when children are unwell and cannot avoid being absent from school. Absence for any reason other than sickness must be avoided.
- 10.4 The school reports attendance levels to the Academy Trust.

11. IMPACT

- 11.1 All students will achieve well by developing knowledge and skills on their journey through school.
- 11.2 Due to robust monitoring of attendance, vulnerable and children with SEND will have fair and equitable access to school in order to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- 11.3 Students will leave the academy ready for a successful transition to further education and employment where good attendance is essential.

Appendix 1 – Code of Conduct for Education Fixed Penalty Notice

Cheshire West & Chester

Code of Conduct for Education Fixed Penalty Notice (Unauthorised Leave of Absence & Irregular Attendance)

1. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
2. A maximum of two FPNs may be issued in an academic year and these FPNs may be issued against each parent/carer of a child. Once two FPNs have been issued, should there be further unauthorised absences, the Local Authority are able to move to prosecution immediately.
3. A FPN may be issued per parent per child.
4. Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if:
 - Unauthorised absences of at least 10 consecutive school sessions (five school days).
 - Sessions either side of a weekend or school holiday will be counted as consecutive school days.
 - For poorly attending learners, at least 10 sessions (five school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during a school term. These do not need to be consecutive.
 - For poorly attending learners, persistent late arrive at school in a term. Persistent means at least 10 sessions of late arrival.
 - Truancy
 - The presence of an excluded child in a public place in the child's first five days of exclusion.
6. The academy must notify parents of the Attendance Policy and clearly state that parents may receive an FPN for an unauthorised leave of absence relating to holiday in term time.
7. Schools and the Education Welfare Services will take into account and exceptional circumstances when determining whether to issue a FPN.

Appendix 2 – Attendance Percentages

What does 'percentage attendance' mean?

Parents/carers should be advised that from September 2015 the Government have categorised those pupils who have attendance of 90% and below as 'Persistent Absence' pupils (P.A.). RSA will be specifically targeting this cohort of pupils, in an effort to improve their attendance in the future. The table below shows the learning time lost against percentage attendance figures.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	1.4 Weeks	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	3.4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	5.4 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	36 Days	72 Sessions	7.1 Weeks	180 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	9.3 Weeks	240 Lessons

Appendix 3 – Absence Codes

Absence Codes:

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used for **authorised absence** on the register.

Code I	Illness	Schools can request medical evidence from parents/carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.
Code M	Medical or dental appointments	Parents/Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.
Code C	Other circumstances	This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, i.e. – family funeral.
Code D	Dual Registered	This code will be used if a pupil is registered at two schools.
Code J	Interview	This code will be used when it has been agreed that the pupil can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam
Code P	Approved sporting activity	This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, i.e. – training sessions, trials and sporting events.
Code R	Religious Observation	This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only authorise one day absence for religious events.
Code V	Educational visits and trips	
Code W	Work Experience	
Code G	Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period	
Code U	Arrived late to school after 9.30am	
Code N	Reason for absence not yet provided	
Code O	Absent from school without authorisation	

Letters to parents regarding low attendance:

Stage 1 letter

Our ref: XXXX

Date

Name

Address

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

RE: Stage 1 Attendance letter

<insert student name> Re: Attendance – XX%

At The Rudheath Senior Academy we have a strong focus on attendance to ensure that all students make excellent progress and achieve their very best potential.

Our records show that <insert student name> attendance is XX%. (Please see enclosed attendance record). As this is just falling below the national expected minimum of 96% we are therefore writing to offer additional support and to open communication in the hope that we can improve their attendance and ensure that it improves.

Good attendance is key to ensuring that pupils progress well at school. In addition, your child's attendance record has to be conveyed in any future reference provided by the school.

We are hopeful that your child's attendance will improve and we wish to offer our support and ask that you communicate to us any provision or assistance which you feel may be beneficial or communicate any reasons why you feel that improved attendance may be difficult so that we can work together in supporting your child.

The aim is for your child's attendance to improve within the next 4 weeks in order to avoid having to issue a continued attendance concern letter. If you would like to discuss anything in relation to this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.Morrell
Assistant Head Teacher

Stage 2 letter

Our ref: XXXX Date

Name

Address
United Kingdom

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

Re: Invitation to Stage 2 Attendance Action Plan meeting

<insert student name> Re: Attendance – XX%

At The Rudheath Senior Academy we have a strong focus on attendance to ensure that all students make excellent progress and achieve their very best potential.

Our records show that <insert student name> attendance is XX%. (Please see enclosed attendance record). As this is now below the national expected minimum of 96% and a previous letter has been issued to offer support, we are therefore now writing to offer further provision and to strengthen communication by inviting you to come into school on <day, date and time> when we will discuss the matter and form an Action Plan.

If you would like us to attend the family home or meet at another location please advise us at your earliest convenience.

I look forward to seeing you at this meeting. If this is inconvenient, please contact me as soon as possible to rearrange a more suitable time.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.Morrell
Assistant Head Teacher

Stage 3 letter (a)

Our ref: XXXX

Date
Name
Address
United Kingdom

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

Re: Invitation to Stage 3 Attendance planning meeting after no response

<insert student name> Re: Attendance – XX%

I am writing to you regarding the previous letter I sent out requesting a meeting regarding <insert student name> attendance record. Unfortunately I have had no response.

Our records show that <insert student name> attendance is XX%. (Please see enclosed attendance record). This is below the national expected minimum of 96% and is therefore a cause for concern.

You are invited to attend a meeting to be held at the academy on <day, date and time>.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss a way forward in improving your <insert student name> attendance. A representative of the Local Authority may be present at this meeting to ensure that we can form a robust action plan and make rapid progress due to the fact that the previous meeting has not been attended.

You are urged to attend this meeting as failure to do so may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued against you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.Morrell
Assistant Head Teacher

Stage 3 letter (b)

Our ref: XXXX

Date

Name
Address
United Kingdom

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

Re: Invitation to Stage 3 Attendance planning meeting after no improvement

<insert student name> Re: Attendance – XX%

I am writing to you regarding the previous meeting regarding <insert student name> attendance record. Unfortunately their attendance has not improved and there is now a more serious concern about their welfare and educational needs being met.

Our records show that <insert student name> attendance is XX%. (Please see enclosed attendance record). This is now well below the 96% expected minimum and is therefore a major cause for concern.

You are invited to attend a meeting to be held at the academy on <day, date and time>. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss a way forward in improving your <insert student name> attendance.

A representative of the Local Authority may be present at this meeting to ensure that we can form a robust action plan and make rapid progress due to the fact that your child's attendance is not improving.

You are urged to attend this meeting as failure to do so may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued against you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.Morrell
Assistant Head Teacher

Letter after Stage 3 – Attendance Action Plan

Our ref: XXXX

Date

Name

Address

United Kingdom

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

<insert student name> Re: Attendance – XX%

I am writing to you regarding the recent meeting which we had concerning <insert student name> attendance at the Rudheath Senior Academy.

I have enclosed a copy of the Action Plan for your information and attention.

May I take this opportunity to inform you that: under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, you have a legal responsibility to ensure that <insert student name> attends the academy regularly. Failure to do so may lead in legal action being taken against you by the Local Authority resulting in prosecution.

Thank you for attending the recent meeting; it is only by all working together that we can achieve the best possible educational and social outcomes for our students.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.Morrell
Assistant Head Teacher

Letter after failure to attend Stage 3 meeting

Our ref: XXXX

Date

Name

Address

United Kingdom

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

<insert student name> Re: Attendance – XX%

As you failed to attend a meeting on <day, date and time>, you are now invited to attend a meeting to be held at the academy on <day, date and time>.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss a way forward in improving your child's attendance. A representative of the Local Authority will be present at this meeting.

You are urged to attend this meeting as failure to do so may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued against you. I enclose a copy of your child's registration certificate.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.Morrell
Assistant Head Teacher

Stage 4 letter: still no improvement after Stage 3 meeting and plan

Our ref: XXXX

Date

Name

Address

United Kingdom

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

<insert student name> Re: Attendance – XX%

<insert student name> attendance at the Rudheath Senior Academy is currently XX%. This is falling well below the 95% minimum attendance which the Department for Education expects every student to register within the academic year.

The academy has made efforts to engage with you in attempting to improve this situation but despite this there has been no improvement in <insert student name> attendance.

Consequently, the Headteacher can fulfil the statutory obligations under the Education Act 1996 and notify the Local Authority to prepare prosecution papers against you. This may result in a maximum fine of £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.

If you wish to discuss this matter, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.Morrell
Assistant Head Teacher