

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date of Policy:	1st September 2023
Review Cycle:	Annual
Author(s):	Headteacher
	Designated Safeguarding Lead

Introduction and Rationale

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. 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. The school monitors attendance and ensures quick and early intervention if a problem is identified and therefore a child must attend school every day that they are required to do so unless an exceptional circumstance arises. The Attendance & Punctuality Policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Intent

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. As an academy, the aim is to ensure that good attendance is rewarded and seen as an achievement. Students will be involved and responsible for promoting good attendance to their peers and staff will promote and monitor good attendance.

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:

- Clear communication about student attendance between the academy and parent(s)/carer(s)
- 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
- To ensure that the Academy actively promotes good attendance and the educational welfare of vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children and SEND students
- To recognise the important role of Form Tutors and Heads of Year in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure that important government legislation (outlined below) is adhered to for the safety of all students.
- To reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- To ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- To act early to address patterns of absence
- To build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- To promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation

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”.

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.

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. 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.

Implementation

Children are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a learner’s absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

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**, by 8.30am **and each day of absence thereafter**, stating the reason. The Pastoral Team will make telephone contact with home when a child is absent and the parent/carers has not notified the school of the absence. This will be followed up by contact via the school MIS. If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted the absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notice

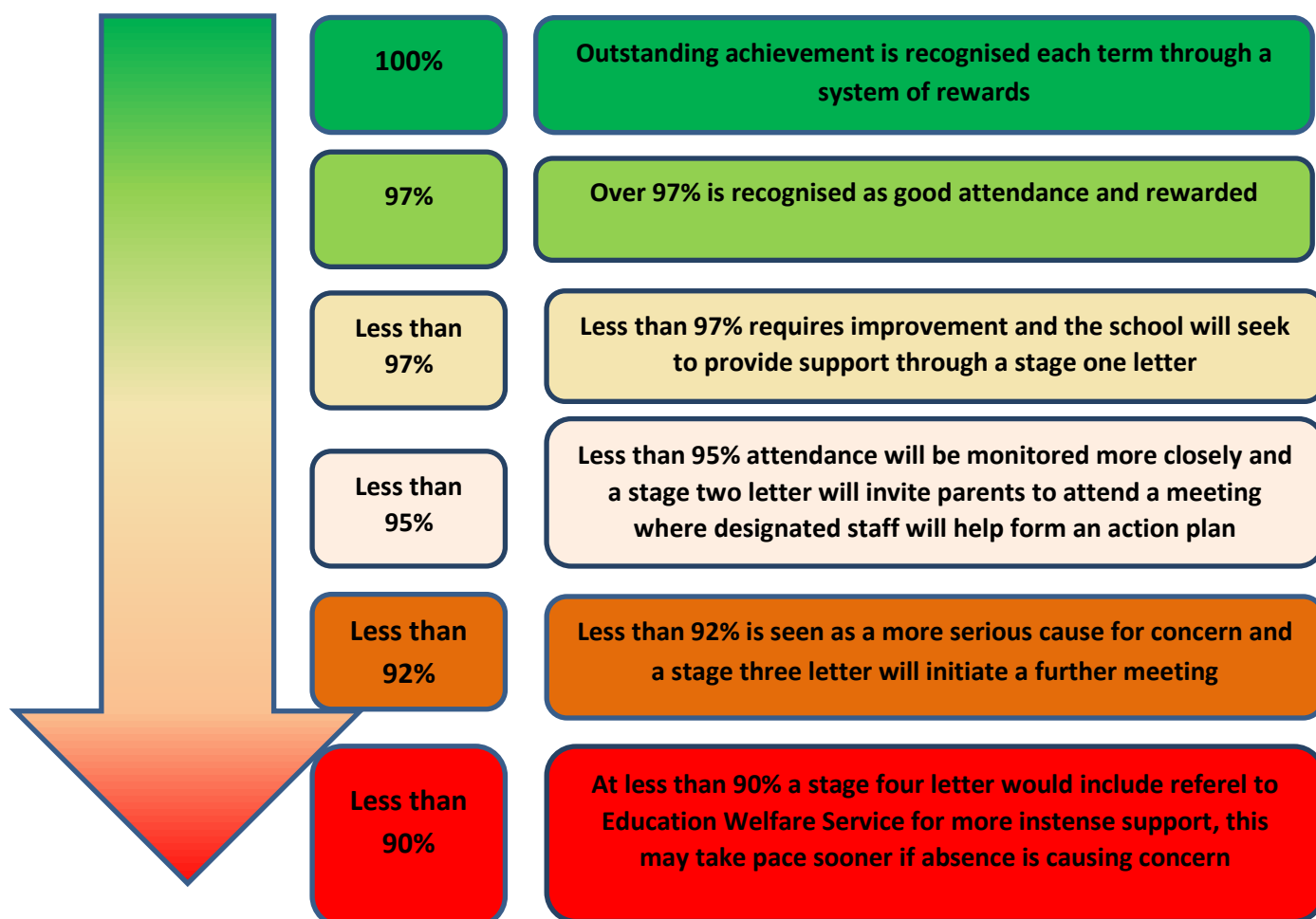
An absence may be coded as ‘unauthorised’ if:

- i. no reason for absence has been given
- ii. medical evidence is not received when requested
- iii. a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised
- iv. a pupil arrives at school after registration has closed at <insert time>.

Parents/carers should be aware that <insert school> may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the current term with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action. The Fixed Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carers who fails to ensure their child’s regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carers per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court (see appendix 1).

Parental engagement

The table below sets out the academy's attendance targets and at what stage parents/carers will be contacted about their child's attendance.



Punctuality

The school opens for all learners at 8.00am. Students are expected to attend line ups and registration at 8.35 and therefore should aim to arrive by 8.30 to give ample time to arrive at their designated form room.

Lateness

The school registers are opened at 8.40am each morning. These are legal documents and are marked twice daily.

All latecomers will be asked to enter through the pastoral entrance if arriving after 8.40am where they will be provided with support to help them ensure this doesn't become a persistent problem.

If a student arrives after 8.38, 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. Students will be expected to serve a Late detention at the end of the day for 15 minutes if there is no mitigating reason for lateness. Should they fail to attend this detention, this will be extended to a same day 30-minute detention after school.

Any late arrivals after 9.00am must report to the main entrance and be signed in at reception. A student arriving after 9.30 will be recorded on the register as U which means “late after registration has closed” which is an **unauthorised absence**. They will be issued with a 30 minute detention if there is no mitigating reason for lateness. 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.

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, including the possibility of a fine.

Absence will not be authorised on the first or last day of any half term if medical evidence is not provided.

Appointments

The school operates a signing out system for appointments and other periods of absence. 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. 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. 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. The school will not authorise a full day for a medical appointment where it can be deemed that they are able to attend before or after. Parents will be expected to collect their child from school for appointments.

Illness

Absence due to sickness should be reported to the school by 8.00am on the first day of absence and each day of absence thereafter. Any absence more than 5 days (10 sessions) should be supported by medical evidence. If no evidence is received, then the absence could be recorded as unauthorised. School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received. The school will work with all families on an individual basis if medical absences exceed the maximum threshold.

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 97% for no specific medical, or

other acceptable reason. The monitoring process will include a three-step referral procedure; this includes the issuing of standard letters. (See Appendix)

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)

Students who are unwell during the day must report to a member of staff to gain consent. If students are going home due to illness school will need to contact parents/carers directly. Pupils should never contact their parents directly and plan to be collected or leave site. Parents will be requested to collect their child if they are presenting as unwell in school for the safety of their child.

Application for Exceptional Circumstances.

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'.

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.

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.

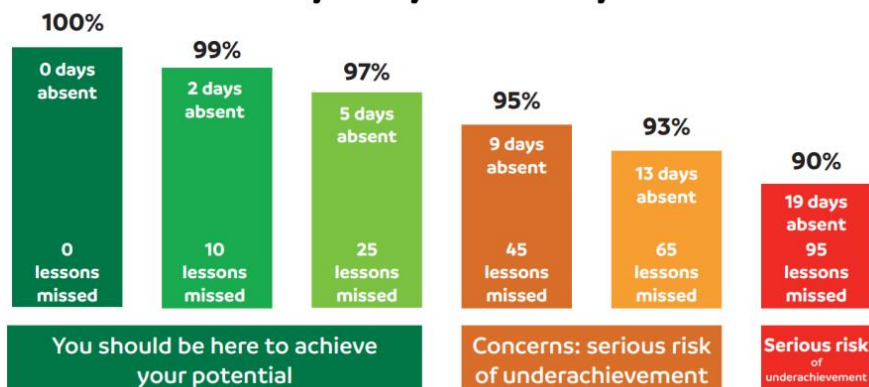
The school reports attendance levels to the Academy Trust.

Impact

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

Be a HERO

Here Everyday Ready On time



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Excellence & Kindness

Policy written: September 2020

Date Reviewed: September 2023

Date of next review: September 2024

Appendix 1

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 consider any exceptional circumstances when determining whether to issue an FPN

Appendix 2

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, 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:

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 more than 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	