



Rise Park
Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

Rise Park Academy Trust is committed to providing a full and successful education for every child so that they achieve very well, establish good and lasting relationships with their peers and are well prepared for Key Stages 2/3. Regular and punctual attendance is crucial and the school works closely with all parents and families to establish the strong home school links and communication systems to underpin these.

Rights and Responsibilities

Rise Park Academy Trust:

- Encourages and promotes good attendance
- Expects pupils to attend school regularly, on time, properly equipped and ready to learn.
- Communicates with parents immediately if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality
- Works in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as soon as possible.
- Reports to parents on individual achievement and attendance at least annually

Parents:

- Have a responsibility to ensure that children arrive on time and attend regularly, properly dressed, equipped and ready to learn.
- Are responsible for informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call to the school office on the first morning of any absence
- Will be kept fully informed of their child's attendance and punctuality record

Pupils:

- Are listened to and respected by all staff
- Have individual records of attendance and punctuality acknowledged by the school
- Will be welcomed back and receive assistance following periods of absence

Parents do not have a right to take children out of school in term time. In exceptional circumstances the school may grant leave of absence on receipt of a letter of application.

Registration

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils' attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised. A certified extract from the register can be used in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of three years following completion at the end of the academic year.

An electronic registration system (SIMS) is used. Staff are made aware of the registration process as part of their induction procedure. Every pupil should be called by name when the register is taken.

Registers are returned to the school office at the end of the registration period for safety and will be secured, but accessible, in case of an emergency, during fire drills etc.

The administrative team log attendance information onto the Schools Information Management System and ensure that registers are kept safely and available for inspection by relevant professionals.

Notes from parents regarding pupil absence are stored and retained in the pupil's file.

Accurate registers are completed at 8.55am and 1:00pm (RPJ) and 1.15pm (RPI) each school day; registers close 10 minutes after these times. Up until closure a child can be marked late but should still report to the office.

If a pupil arrives after a register has closed they and their parents should report to the school office so that time of arrival and reason for lateness can be noted in the late book. A pupil arriving after the register has closed without an acceptable reason will be marked as having unauthorised absence for that session.

The Administrative Officer is responsible for attendance issues and liaises regularly with class teachers and the Headteacher to identify and discuss any attendance / punctuality concerns.

Procedures for following up absence/ lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made then the school will:

- Contact the parent by telephone where concern has been identified about a pupil's attendance.
- Send a note requesting reason for absence.

If no response is received then an unauthorised absence letter is sent to the parent/carer.

If this letter does not elicit an explanation for the absence a second letter may be sent to the parent/carer, the Education Welfare Service will be informed and the parent may be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher/Educational Welfare Officer. This meeting is to identify and resolve any difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parent/carer is made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

- If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved at this meeting then a formal referral is made to the Education Welfare Service, and a formal intervention planned.
- If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, *in exceptional circumstances* there may be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system.
- Where a pupil is persistently late, the school will write to the parent/carer reminding them of their responsibility to get their child to school on time and prepared for school and if there is no improvement the school will write to the parent/carer inviting them to a school based meeting.
- If a parent is persistently late collecting a child at the end of the school day the school will write to the parent/carer inviting them to a school based meeting and/or refer the case to the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Attendance is monitored by the Administrative Officer and Headteacher on a monthly basis.
- If their child's attendance falls below 95%, the case is monitored by the school/Educational Welfare Officer.
- Parents are notified by the school if their child's attendance falls below 90%
- If attendance does not improve, parents are invited to a school meeting.
- The Education Welfare Service work alongside the school and can be called in to formally monitor a case where attendance falls below 90%.
- Cases of persistent absence (20 or more sessions missed) are closely monitored by the school in consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer, and subsequent corrective action taken, which may lead to legal proceedings being instigated. Absence data is robustly examined by the Headteacher, Directors and Governors.

Absence

Absence for the following reasons could be authorised where parents have advised school of the absence by telephone or in writing on the child's return to school (consideration will be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language):

- Sickness
- **Unavoidable** medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance (up to a maximum of 3 days)
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- Parent in the Armed Forces who is granted mandatory holiday leave

Absence will be recorded as unauthorised if due to any other reason.

It may be necessary for the school or Education Welfare Service to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence e.g. appointment cards/letters, medical certificate, letter from GP, Passport Office etc.

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Education Welfare Officer may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

Strategies for promoting attendance/punctuality

In the belief that pupils are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs, the curriculum is regularly reviewed.

Certificates are awarded for those pupils achieving 100% attendance during each term and for 100% attendance over the academic year.

Attendance statistics are collected and used to inform pastoral and curricular decisions.

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement and the School Brochure. Opportunities to maintain awareness of attendance and what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence, through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports are used.

Parents of pupils with a known attendance issue will be interviewed and will be set targets for improvement.

All incidents, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, are promptly investigated by the school (e.g. possible bullying) alongside our Behaviour and Equality policies.

Parents who persistently withdraw their children from school during term time for holidays/unauthorised absences, **or annex a family holiday before/after a school holiday period,** may be subject to a fixed penalty of £60 per parent per pupil, rising to £120 per parent per pupil if not paid within two weeks. All persistent absentees will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service, who will examine each case individually, which may lead to the imposition of a fixed penalty charge. **Sickness absence which also occurs adjacent to a school holiday period will need to be supported by medical evidence in order for it to be authorised.**

Pupil absences will be tracked across both schools and, in the case of persistent holiday absence (e.g. 3 holiday absences taken in term time, with fining applied) legal action may be taken by the local authority, which could lead to a further fine being levied of up to a maximum of £2,500 or a custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

N.B. All fixed penalty charges/subsequent fines charged will be collected by the local authority for use by the Educational Welfare Service.

This policy , in conjunction with our Leave of Absence for School Based Staff Guidance, will be reviewed, from its effective implementation, on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.

Acting Chair of Directors:

(Mr D.Stevens)

Date: 1.12.17.