



RIDGEWOOD
SCHOOL

Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy: Student Attendance and Punctuality	Effective Date: September 2016
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Revision History

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Introduction

Ridgewood School is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We are committed to providing a quality education for all our students. This can only be achieved with full attendance and the school will do its best to ensure maximum possible attendance, so that any problems that interfere with good attendance are identified and remedied as soon as possible.

For your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, on time and every day that the school is open. Students should only be absent if it is completely unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence seriously affects their learning. Any students' absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at the school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from the academy without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the academy regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend the School on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Expectations

We expect the following from all of our students:

- That they will attend the school every day it is open, achieving a minimum of 97% or above attendance, unless they are genuinely ill
- That they will be appropriately prepared for the day
- That they will inform their Form Tutor, Achievement Coordinator of any problems which affect attendance or punctuality

We expect the following from parents/carers in supporting the Home/School agreement with regards to attendance and punctuality:

- To ensure all students attend the school regularly, on time and be aware of their legal responsibilities

- To ensure they contact the school immediately whenever their child is unable to attend, using the dedicated attendance telephone number 01302 800490.
- To provide a written note in their child's planner when they return to the school
- To ensure that their child is appropriately prepared for the day
- To respond to any messages in their planner regarding attendance
- To contact the school in confidence whenever they have a problem concerning attendance or punctuality
- Not to arrange a holiday in term time
- To respond to the appropriate person regarding letters of concern immediately
- To make every effort to arrange dental and medical appointments out of the school day
- That telephone contact numbers are available and if changed, the school is informed immediately.

Parents can expect the following from Ridgewood School:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Early contact from the school when a student fails to attend the school without providing good reason or when a student is truanting
- Immediate response to problems notified to us
- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through competitions, certificates and rewards
- Support when there is a problem of long term illness
- Involvement with Doncaster Children's Services and the Police with any truancy sweeps
- Follow up procedures from Achievement Co-Ordinator and the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

These are instigated when:

- a) **Attendance drops below 95%.**
- b) **There are obvious patterns of repeated absence or lateness**
- c) **When lateness or truancy is an issue.**

The Law relating to attendance

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:-*

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and*
- (b) To any special educational needs he/ she may have Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

Furthermore, the Education Act 1996 and subsequent amendments to legislation give schools and local authorities the powers to take legal action against parents to enforce attendance at the school they are registered to attend.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Medical

Illness

- If your child feels ill in the morning please provide them with appropriate pain relief/medication and send them to school. Any medication should be handed in to Student Services who will administer it when required. Your child should be in school if they have a minor illness such as a headache, cold, sore throat or period pains.
- If your child is ill i.e. to the extent that they cannot get out of bed, then please ring the school to notify the attendance team of their absence. Please ensure that your child returns to the school as soon as possible, even if they are not 100%.
- If your child is absent from the school for 4 days or less then you must provide a written note in their planner. On their return to the academy, students will be asked for their note by their form tutor.
- If your child is absent from the academy for 5 days or longer please provide medical evidence, i.e. an appointment card, indicating the reason for absence.

Medical Appointments

A full day's absence will not be authorised for a medical appointment. Please arrange all appointments outside the school day. If the appointment is unavoidable, your child must come to school before and after the appointment. Any full day's absence will be marked as parental condoned truancy.

Absence requests

Requests for absence during term-time

Due to Government legislation the School is no longer able to authorise any holiday during school time. This absence will therefore be recorded as unauthorised absence on your child's attendance record unless this is deemed to be an exceptional circumstance which would need to be agreed by the Headteacher.

A Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority following your child's absence. Penalty notices are issued at £60 per parent* (if paid within 21 days) and £120 (if paid within 28 days) for each child. A Holiday Notification/Exceptional Circumstances form is available from Student Services or our website.

If you do not notify us but we have evidence that your child has been on holiday, a fixed penalty fine may still be issued.

Please note from September 2013 no Sixth Form student will be authorised a holiday.

Celebrating and rewarding good attendance

Good and improved attendance is rewarded by the school with various incentives for individual students, form groups and whole school. These include prize draws, certificates, post cards home and celebration assemblies.

Responding to non-attendance

Where we have had no contact from a parent/carer the school will respond in the following manner

- First day telephone contact will be implemented for all students after 9.30am, further attempts at communication may also be made. On different days throughout the week, members of the attendance team and /or a member of the Senior Leadership Team may visit any child who is absent from school
- Form Tutors will refer to Achievement Coordinators and Deputy Achievement Coordinators any concerns over non-attendance.
- With continued non-attendance the case will be brought to the attention of the Attendance and Welfare Officer. Further action may include participation in attendance improvement initiatives, home visits and/or meetings between the school, parents/carers and students and, if appropriate, other agencies in an attempt to identify and solve the problems which are preventing the student from attending school
- In cases where attendance does not improve appropriate action will be taken by the Attendance and Welfare Officer in liaison with the Deputy Achievement Coordinator and the Deputy Head in charge of Attendance.
- Re-integration – the return of a student to the academy after long term absence requires special planning. The Achievement Coordinator and Attendance and Welfare Officer in consultation with the Form Tutor who will be responsible for establishing and managing a programme for return which meets the individuals' needs. Staff will be informed of the return of long term absentees and of any special arrangements that have been made.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from the School has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of an absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the school for a good reason like genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school and or the Local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular non-attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, excusing them from attending makes the situation worse as it gives the impression that attendance does not matter.

Persistent absence:

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages a child's educational prospects.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Absence Procedures for parents/carers

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence on the Attendance Line 01302 800490.
- Provide a written note in their planner on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

Personal Details

It is vital that parental details are correct. There are times when we need to contact parents/carers to discuss absence or more importantly to contact a parent in the event of an emergency. Data check sheets are distributed at the start of the year and it is the expectation that parents notify the school of any changes in personal contact details.

Moving to a different school or academy

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different School/Academy they must inform Ridgewood School as soon as possible. **Your child/children must continue their education with the school** until their start date at the new school.

Schools/academies may be reluctant to take a child onto roll where attendance is low and so it is imperative that they continue to attend.

A student will not be removed from the schools roll until we have received confirmation that they have started at the new school/Academy and the following information has been received and investigated.

- The date the student is leaving this school and starting a new School/Academy.

- The address of the new School/Academy, and confirmation from that School/Academy that the student has been admitted.
- The new home address.

The students' School/Academy record will then be sent on to the new school/academy as soon as possible. In the case of movement abroad records will be provided for the student to take with them.

In the event that the School has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority as a 'Child Missing Education'.

The School will complete a 'Common Transfer File' (CTF) for all pupils leaving the academy for another school/academy.

New students

Any parent wishing to apply for a place at the school may do so following our admissions policy.