RIDGEWOOD
SCHOOL

Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Revision Number : 2.0	
Approved by: Head Teacher	**Date Approved: January 2023**
Last Reviewed: January 2023	**Next review due by: January 2024**

Contents

1 Aims 3
2 Legislation and Guidance 3
3 Roles and Responsibilities 3
4 Recording attendance 5
5 Authorised and unauthorised absence 7
6 Strategies for promoting attendance 8
7 Attendance monitoring 8
8 Monitoring arrangements 11
9 Links with other policies 11

1 Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2 Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

If you have a link governor for attendance, or a committee responsible for attendance, add details of their role in the monitoring of student attendance.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jordanna Proctor and she can be contacted via Website Enquiries.

3.4 The attendance and welfare officer

The school attendance and welfare officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the designated senior leader responsible for attendance (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance and welfare officer is Louise Jones and can be contacted via Website Enquiries.3.5 [Class teachers/form tutors]

3.5 Form Tutors and Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office, via SIMs, each day.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Log calls from parents/carers on the school tracking and monitoring system in order to on absence, attendance and punctuality in a timely manner

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and timetabled session on time
- Ensure that their child is appropriately prepared for each day
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence using the dedicated attendance telephone number 01302 800490 (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Not to arrange a holiday in term time
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- If their child is absent from the academy for 5 days or longer provide medical evidence, i.e. an appointment card, indicating the reason for absence
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child on the Admissions Form
- Ensure that telephone contact numbers are available and if changed, the school is informed immediately
- Inform Ridgewood School immediately if they accept a place for their child at another school. Their child must continue to attend school each day until their start date at the new school

3.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time, achieving a minimum of 97% or above attendance
- Arrive to school and be in form room no later than 8.40am
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- 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
- Sixth form - Call the school to report their absence before 8.40am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

4 Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for a minimum of 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school and be in their form room by 8.40am on each school day.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the dedicated attendance telephone number 01302 800490 (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. Likewise, if their child is absent from the academy for 5 days or longer, parents/carers are asked to provide medical evidence, i.e. an appointment card, indicating the reason for absence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending an unavoidable medical or dental appointment during term-time will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. A full day's absence will not be authorised to attend a medical appointment.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. All punctually concerns are monitored closely. Parent/carer will be contacted if issues are identified.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Adapt the following to match your school's day-to-day process for following up on absence

Where any student we expect to attend school, does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a welfare visit to the home address
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels twice per year on their Creating Futures reports.

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

A Holiday Notification/Exceptional Circumstances form is available from Student Services, or our website. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed

this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

Due to Government legislation the headteacher is unable to authorise any holiday during term-time. This includes for Sixth Form students. 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.

5.2 Unauthorised absence

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term-time without permission (including when parents/carers have not informed the headteacher but where there is evidence to suggest that a student has been on holiday during term-time)
- Where a suspended student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6 Strategies for promoting attendance

High attendance is promoted using form board displays, whole school displays and running competitions/incentives.

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.

7 Attendance monitoring

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires Academies, local partners and families to work collaboratively.

Ridgewood Attendance Strategy		
Wave One: Expect	We promote and insist on high attendance from all students. This is communicated to all stakeholders in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: policies, school displays, whole school letters of communication, standards and expectations week, rewards/incentives.	
	Details	**Interventions**
Wave Two: Monitor	We have a dedicated attendance team who track and monitor patterns of attendance (at individual and cohort level). They work with all stakeholders to address poor attendance before it becomes a greater concern.	• First day telephone contact where reason for absence is unknown • Patterns of non-attendance may trigger a home visit by the attendance and welfare officer
Wave Three: Listen and understand	Where poor attendance is a barrier to student achievement our attendance and welfare officer will engage with students and their parents/carers to listen and understand. They will work to agree ways in which all involved can work together towards improved attendance.	• Letter one – Expectations • Letter two – Cause for concern • Letter three – Invitation to meeting • Home visits by the attendance and welfare officer • South Yorkshire Police truancy sweeps
No improvement, progress to wave four. Where absence intensifies, support intensifies.		
Wave Four: Facilitate support	Our attendance and welfare officer will work with others in school to facilitate support for individuals to overcome barriers. This may involve the Safeguarding Team or Early Help Co-ordinator, where poor attendance is a symptom of more complex issues that require expert support from external agencies.	• Parent/carer meeting with attendance and welfare officer and Associate Leader for Inclusion • Reintegration meeting with student • Form tutor/Achievement co-ordinator support • STAR Centre support • SENCO support • Safeguarding Team/Early Help support
Wave Five: Formalise support	Where absence persists and families are not engaging with support, our attendance and welfare officer will work to explain the consequences of non-attendance clearly. Support will be extended to enable parents/carers to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an Attendance Contract or Education Supervision Order.	• Formalised attendance contract • Parent/carer meeting with designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance • Education Supervision Order • Involvement of local authority • Attendance panel
Wave Six: Enforce	Where all routes of support have been exhausted and are not working or not being engaged with, attendance will be enforced through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the students' right to an education.	• Attendance Prosecution Section 444 (1) unauthorised absence or Section 444 (1a) aggravated offence • Education Supervision Order • Magistrate's Court Hearing and Summons • LA Specialist Support Prosecution and post prosecution interventions

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Form Tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absences

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular monitoring meetings with the parents/carers of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Stages of intervention for those who are persistently/severely absent include:
    - Letters sent to parents/carers at various stages of concern
    - The attendance and welfare officer will carry out home visits to engage families
    - Monitoring meetings with parents/carers to agree bespoke support to remove barriers to attendance
    - Attendance contracts
    - Additional needs team meetings to raise the profile of students whose attendance is a concern
    - Referral for Early Help/Safeguarding support/other external agency support.

8 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy

Appendix 1

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day