



Attendance Policy & Procedures

Adopted by Governing Body:

September 2018

Next Full Review Due:

September 2020

Reviewer/s:

Mr A Wood, Vice Principal.

Mrs E Tolan, Attendance Officer.

References:

- *“School Attendance” Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, Department for Education, October 2014*
- *“School attendance parental responsibility measures” Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police, Department for Education, January 2015*
- Education Act 1996, Section 444
- *“Prosecution and Penalty Notice Advice for Academies and Maintained Schools who have decided not to buy into the Attendance and Pupil Support Service”, Directorate for Children and Young People, Kirklees Council, April 2015*

Attendance and punctuality

164. Inspectors will consider:

- Overall absence and persistent absence rates for all pupils, and for different groups in relation to national figures for all pupils
- The extent to which low attenders are improving their attendance over time and whether attendance is consistently low (in the lowest 10%).
- Punctuality in arriving at school and at lessons.

“School Inspection Handbook: Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare” Ofsted, August 2015

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Rationale

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary.

The Government expects Schools and Academies to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Encourage parent/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at the school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

Overall aims of the Academy's attendance strategy

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected
- To ensure the Trust attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, students and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of students and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Specific Responsibilities

The Academy will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently
- Attendance targets are set for the school, year groups and individual students
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed

Children are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and be registered punctually
- Where able, inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences

The Parent/ Carers will:

- Ensure good attendance (97% and above)
- Inform school on each day of absence and give specific reason
- Discuss planned absences with school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time

The Trust attendance procedures

- Parent/carers are asked to telephone school before the start of the Academy day to notify of their child's absence

- Authorised absence, e.g. illness, must be supported by a letter from the parent/carer explaining the reason for the absence
- Children who wish to leave the premises during the day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents notifying us of the reason. Children will need to be collected by a parent/carer and should not be sent home unaccompanied
- Children arriving at school after registration should sign in at the general office and should sign out if leaving the premises before the end of the day
- Where parent/carers fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the School's Attendance Officer will endeavour to contact them.

Unauthorised Absences

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- The school has not given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent
- The school does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for the absence
- Medical evidence requested by the school is not forthcoming
- No explanation of absence is received within two weeks
- If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parent/carers may not authorise any absence. In cases where parent/carers seem to condone unauthorised absence, the school may involve the court officer
- The Governing Body have agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and/ or persistent lateness
- Parent/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and will have 15 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and/ or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice

Legislation on Penalty Notices

The Education Act 1996 says that:

"If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence".

There are two offences relating to parental responsibility for ensuring regular attendance at school or alternative provision:

- 1) If a registered student is absent without authorisation then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. A conviction for this offence can result in a fine of up to £1,000.
- 2) If the parent knows that their child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. This is known as an aggravated offence. A conviction for this offence may result in a substantial fine up to a maximum of £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months and/or a community penalty.

Section 444ZA applies the offence to where parents fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the Local Authority or Governing Body has arranged alternative provision. There are specific defences in respect of these offences. Unless one of the defences listed in the Education Act 1996 applies, the offence is likely to be proven and the parent found guilty.

The defences are summarised below:

- The parent proves the child did not attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause
- The child is absent with leave (permission given by the school)
- The child is absent on a day specifically set aside for religious observation by the religious body to which the parent belongs

- The Local Authority has failed to make appropriate travel arrangements (where it is obliged to do so) to facilitate the child's attendance
- The child is of no fixed abode and the parent proves his trade or business requires him to travel from place to place

The Court may well have sympathy where the defence is given as 'bullying'. It is helpful therefore to demonstrate that where bullying has been cited, the school have put in measures to investigate the claims and support the student in the event of any subsequent allegation.

Where the Local Authority believes that a parent has a legitimate defence prosecution will not proceed.

Work to be undertaken by the Academy prior to considering a prosecution

It is expected that the individual Academies will have clear systems in place for managing attendance.

These should include:

- 1) Adopting an Attendance Policy in line with Department for Education expectations
- 2) Efforts made to support the child
- 3) Meetings in the Academy and clear plans agreed with parents/carers. These plans should clearly state what is expected from parents/carers. These expectations should be reasonable and achievable. Plans should also include what additional support will be provided by the Academy and where appropriate other agencies
- 4) Letters including a "final warning letter" advising parents that they have failed to co-operate and that the school intends to request prosecution by the Local Authority
- 5) The Academy must give consideration of the issues that may impact on attendance. This is by no means an exhaustive list but could include:
 - Parents/carers having mental health issues or being elderly or infirm
 - The child being beyond parents/carers control
 - Any special educational needs the child may have
 - If a child has significant anxiety issues re: school attendance which indicates a mental health problem
 - Child safeguarding concerns
 - Poverty

None of these factors would by themselves prevent prosecution but may indicate that attendance concerns may be better addressed using other strategies such as:

- Multi-agency approaches (Early Help Assessment)
- Referral to appropriate agencies
- Referral to the Single Point of Referral (SPR) panel
- Support available from the Attendance & Pupil Support Service (APSS) as part of traded services

Schools will need to have considered these options prior to a prosecution taking place. Generally, prosecution should not be considered where parents/carers appear to be making genuine and consistent efforts to improve their child's attendance.

Where there are other agencies involved such as Children's Social Care, Youth Offending Team (YOT) or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) the views of these agencies should be sought prior to prosecution.

It is expected that schools will ensure, where parents do not speak sufficient English, that the school makes provision for translating letters and other documentation and use interpreters for meetings. Careful consideration should be given to the benefits of prosecution for Year 11 students who are in their final two terms at school.

Penalty Notices for Non-School Attendance

Non-school attendance not related to leave can have many complex underlying factors related to the child, family and school, and is rarely simply a matter of parental culpability. Our experience has been that where there have not been significant efforts to engage with children and their parents with plans to improve attendance then if used in isolation the outcome of penalty notices is poor. Therefore the expectation is that the Academy will follow similar processes to those required for prosecution. The Academy may feel that a penalty notice is a more measured response than proceeding straight to court. For example the school may decide to use a penalty notice where it is the first time significant attendance difficulties have occurred and they feel that a penalty notice is likely to have an impact. This would allow the Academy to retain court proceedings as a future option.

Prosecution for Irregular School Attendance

Where a school wish to request the Local Authority issue a penalty notice for irregular school attendance they must refer to the Code of Conduct which states there must be evidence available to demonstrate that:

- The child has had more than 15% unauthorised absence within a continuous six week period;
- Support has been offered by the school (Academy);
- All reasonable attempts have been made to engage the parent/carer and to provide opportunities for the parent to address the poor attendance;
- Parenting or similar contracts have been offered which were clear in the expectations of the parent and the support that would be offered;
- DfE guidance on the use of parenting contracts has been followed;
- Parents have been made aware of the legal sanctions available including the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued;
- The pursuit of an Education Supervision Order or a Parenting Order may not be appropriate to bring about improvement in the student's attendance

Statutory Services provided by local authorities

Local Authorities have a duty to enforce the legal responsibility upon parents to ensure that their compulsory school aged child receives a suitable education at school or otherwise.

The Attendance & Pupil Support Service carries out that function on behalf of the Local Authority:

Legal responsibilities:

- Provides advice and guidance around the legal consequences of non-attendance at school
- Issues formal warnings and Penalty Notices
- Carries out legal action in respect of section 444 of the Education act 1996 and sections 437 and 443 in relation to School Attendance Orders
- Acts as Court appointed 'Responsible Officer' for Parenting Orders and Education Supervision Officers
- Provides Court with sworn statements and case chronologies
- Records, monitors and reports to Government Office

Attendance:

- Monitoring and analysis of school attendance data
- Monitoring of the school roll

Children Missing in Education and Elective Home Education:

- Follows up all enquiries where children are missing from education with a view to providing a school place
- Carries out initial visits and checks for parents wishing to home educate and undertakes follow up visits to ensure parents are fulfilling their legal duty

Employment and Performance:

- Issues work permits
- Checks work undertaken is within legal parameters
- Gains permission from parents, employers, school, APSS
- Undertakes challenge when required where a young person is engaged in prohibited work or where attendance at school falls below required level for permit to remain in place
- Carries out premises checks where concerns are raised
- Undertakes regular spot checks of premises where young people may be employed
- Has membership of a national organisation providing up to date advice on legislation and guidelines
- Issues performance licences
- Follows up attendance issues resulting from involvement in performances
- Carries out premises checks wherever there is a performance
- Has responsibility for licensing children's chaperones

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance**Aims:**

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across The Trust
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality through rewarding good attendance and punctuality in line with targets set by the Trust and national expectations

Celebration Assemblies - Whilst the delivery may differ in its nature, all school's within the trust will use assemblies to publically recognise, celebrate and reward children/form groups/year groups with excellent and/or 100% attendance.

Academy Newsletters - Newsletters will highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. In particular it will include the Academy's performance against target as well as initiatives to promote, reward and recognise excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

Rewards - These will be reviewed at least on an annual basis for their impact on promoting good levels of attendance and/or punctuality.

Breakfast Club - This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off before the start of the day, ensuring they are on time. The club is supervised by Academy staff.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers and other Academy staff regularly promote good attendance and punctuality with their classes/year groups. Good levels of class attendance and punctuality is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

Daily procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Ensure children arrive at the Academy on time every day	Parents/carers	Children are punctual and have good attendance
Inform the Academy before the start of school day if their child will be absent	Parents/carers	Office/Support staff update registration codes
Children arriving late to the Academy are registered at reception	Office staff in charge of late registration	Absence mark on SIMS amended to a late mark
Named social worker informed of absence for LAC and / or other vulnerable children	Attendance Officer	Safeguarding procedures are followed to ensure safety of vulnerable children
Teachers record attendance This is done at the start of each session	Teachers/Supply staff	Staff use a paper register, if required. Teacher takes responsibility for promptly informing main office if any concerns
1 st day absence phone calls or texts are made to ask parents about their child's unexplained absence for that day. Attendance lead member of staff informed of attendance/punctuality issues	Office Staff	Attendance codes updated
Provide a written note, including dates of and reason for absence upon the child's return to the Academy	Parent/carers	Office staff/Teachers collect these and pass on for filing
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced by year group and for the whole Academy.	Attendance Officer	Entered into Attendance Overview spread sheet to allow for monitoring and analysis

Identified staff in each Academy will be responsible for leading on attendance.

This will include:

Leadership Team Member – responsible for overseeing all attendance matters at the Academy.

Attendance Officer – Ensure attendance of all children is accurately recorded and first day calling.

Class Teacher – Ensure attendance is recorded and good attendance and punctuality is promoted.

Designated Safeguarding Leads – Oversee attendance matters for Looked after Children (LAC) and other vulnerable children decided by the school (likely to be at Section 17 and 47). Where appropriate engage with parent/carers through meetings and/or parental contracts.

SENCO - Oversee attendance matters for those children with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Need. Where appropriate engage with parent/carers through meetings and/or parental contracts.

Parent/Carer-Teacher consultation evenings - This provides an opportunity for Academy staff to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where appropriate these evenings can be used to meet with parent/carers where there maybe issues around attendance.

Specific Responsibilities:

Weekly procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced and shared in Assemblies Statistics placed on newsletter/website	Attendance Officer	Children are able to see which class(es) have been successful with their attendance and punctuality
Absence codes for individual pupils are updated using SIMS to show reason for absence	Office staff	Information provided here is used to provide targeted interventions as appropriate
Half termly and termly procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Analyse attendance/punctuality data to monitor trends and progress	Attendance SLT Lead	SLT/Teaching staff are able to target year groups and implement appropriate strategies
Attendance Panel to include the relevant staff: e.g. SLT Attendance Lead, Attendance Officer, Heads of Year, Medical, Additional Needs	SLT Attendance Lead	Panel review and agree minuted actions for all children under 93%
Discussions as required in response to specific attendance/punctuality concerns of a particular cohort of children	Attendance Lead and SLT	Strategies produced
Individual attendance/punctuality discussed with children and families, at parents' evenings	Class teachers	Mentoring and advice on attendance/ punctuality issues provided to all families
Analyse attendance/punctuality data and information to identify cases of concern and develop appropriate interventions	Attendance Lead	Support Plans offered/used.
Meeting to discuss individual cases, monitor progress and refer new concerns. Support and meeting provided for students and families	Attendance Lead / SLT	Targeted intervention for individual concerns
Review success and impact of	Attendance Lead	Amend and refine interventions as

attendance/punctuality strategies for the term	/ SLT	appropriate
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External Agencies who maybe engaged to support improving attendance for children where significant barriers maybe present

Local Authority
 School Nurse Service
 Mental and Emotional Health - CAMHs,
 Social Care
 Family Support
 Integrated Youth Support Service
 Targeted Youth Support
 West Yorkshire Police

Returning to school after a long term absence

Children who are returning after a long term absence will be supported by each Academy through a variety of strategies/interventions which may include the following: Parental Contracts, part-time timetables, home tuition, Health Care Plans, joint working with external agencies. A meeting will be held involving a representative from the school and parent/carers to decide on the level of support which will be required.

Promoting good attendance for children who are not yet of compulsory school age

Excellent levels of attendance will be promoted in all phases of education in all Academies within the Trust. In some this may include some children who may not be of compulsory school age. This will be done in a supportive manner and parent/ carers will be given opportunities to engage with the school through parental meetings and either the school's or at parent/carers requests. Each Academy will ensure that it follows the relevant legislation in regards to the children within its particular setting.

Appendices

A – Attendance procedures

(add date)

NEW SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to remind you of our procedures for school attendance during this academic year. I would be grateful if you could please take the time to read this letter and support us.

Rycroft Primary Academy is working closely with the Local Authority in order to improve school attendance and punctuality throughout the school. We recognise the importance of working with parents and carers who have a legal responsibility to ensure their child achieves satisfactory levels of attendance.

- The procedures are based on traffic lights to create a more simplistic and consistent approach to promoting school attendance.
- Attendance above 97% will be coded 'Green' (Safety Zone)
- Attendance between 91% and 96% will be coded 'Amber' (At Risk Zone)
- Attendance below 90% will be coded 'Red' (Danger Zone)

Unfortunately your child fell into the Red category this half term and your child's attendance will be monitored for six school weeks (add dates).

We recognise that children may have a legitimate reason to be absent from school, and we are also aware that some families face difficulties which may impact on their child's education, therefore the traffic light system has been put in place in an attempt to support families. It aims to highlight concerns at an early stage in an attempt to prevent legal action from being taken against parents who fail to ensure that their child attends school.

We therefore hope that you will continue to support our school by promoting school attendance and by informing us if you feel there are any issues that are preventing your child from attending school regularly.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me on 01274 683128

Yours sincerely

Helen Pearson
Executive Principal

Eileen Tolan
Safeguarding Officer

B – Attendance Meeting Letter

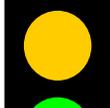
(Add date)

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MEETING

Ryecroft Primary Academy is currently working very closely with the Local Authority to promote the importance of attending school regularly. We introduced the Traffic Light System to monitor attendance and identify students who may need support.

Your child's attendance is in the following Zone:-

	Red – Danger Zone - Below 90%	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Amber – At Risk Zone – 91% - 96%	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Green – Safety Zone – 97% - 100%	<input type="checkbox"/>

I would like to invite you in for a meeting on (Add date) to discuss any help or support we can offer to raise your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A. Wood
Vice Principal

Mrs E. Tolan
Safeguarding Officer

Please confirm that you are able to attend the meeting Yes/No

I will contact Mrs Tolan to rearrange the meeting.

Signed-----Parent/Guardian

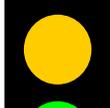
C – Further monitoring

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – FURTHER MONITORING

Ryecroft Primary Academy is currently working very closely with the Local Authority to promote the importance of attending school regularly. We introduced the Traffic Light System to monitor attendance and identify students who may need support.

Your child's attendance is in the following Zone:-

	Red – Danger Zone - Below 90%	<input type="text"/>
	Amber – At Risk Zone – 91% - 96%	<input type="text"/>
	Green – Safety Zone – 97% - 100%	<input type="text"/>

We recently met with you to discuss your child's attendance and agreed to monitor for a further six weeks.

As their attendance was (%) over the monitoring period we will monitor for a further 6 weeks. Week beginning (Add Date)

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A. Wood
Vice Principal

Mrs E. Tolan
Safeguarding Officer

D – EWS referral

(Add date)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – Referral to the Education Welfare Service

Ryecroft Primary Academy is working very closely with the Local Authority to promote the importance of attending school regularly. We introduced the Traffic Light System to monitor attendance and identify students who may need support.

Your child's attendance for the last school year was in the following Zone:-

	Red – Danger Zone - Below 90%	<input type="text"/>
	Amber – At Risk Zone – 91% - 96%	<input type="text"/>
	Green – Safety Zone – 97% - 100%	<input type="text"/>

We wrote to invite you in for a meeting to discuss your child's attendance during the last school term.

We monitored your child's attendance again over the last six school weeks and unfortunately it did not improve. In view of this matter our school policy states that the next course of action is to refer to the Education Social Worker Service.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Wood
Vice Principal

Eileen Tolan
Safeguarding Officer

E – Attendance Success Letter

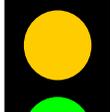
(Add Date)

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE - SUCCESS

Ryecroft Primary Academy is currently working very closely with the Local Authority to promote the importance of attending school regularly. We introduced the Traffic Light System to monitor attendance and identify students who may need support.

Your child's attendance is in the following Zone:-

	Red – Danger Zone - Below 90%	<input type="text"/>
	Amber – At Risk Zone – 91% - 96%	<input type="text"/>
	Green – Safety Zone – 97% - 100%	<input type="text"/>

We recently met with you to discuss your child's attendance and agreed to monitor for a further six weeks.

We are really pleased that you have raised their attendance and passed the Challenge.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further Help or support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A. Wood
Vice Principal

Mrs E. Tolan
Safeguarding Officer

F – EWS penalty letter

Penalty Notice Request - Unauthorised Term Time Holiday/Leave of Absence

1) Parent or Carer	Title Mr	First Name		Last Name	
2) Parent or Carer	Title Ms	First Name		Last Name	

(Note: Penalty Notices are issued against both parents/carers. Full names are essential. Please complete in Block Capitals or type)

Address	
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Pupil	First Name		Last Name		DOB	
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(Note: One form per child)

School	Ryecroft Primary Academy
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Information about this term time absence:

Was permission for this absence requested in advance by the parent/carer? **Yes**

Was permission given? **No**

Dates of unauthorised absence	From		To	
Dates of any absence you have authorised	From		To	

Signed (Headteacher) **Date**

Please forward this form to the Principal Education Social Worker together with:

- A copy of letter to parent(s) advising them that the holiday request has been refused (if applicable).
- A copy of letter to parent(s) advising them that a Penalty Notice will be issued.
- Copies of the children's attendance for this academic year.
(If this request is in the autumn term also enclose a printout for the previous academic year).

**ESWS Admin only

PN Spreadsheet

First day 6 week period		21 day due date		Sessions	Admin	Date	Checked
Last day 6 week period		28 day due date					

1) PN	Date Paid	Method	Withdrawn	Reason
				A B C
2) PN	Date Paid	Method	Withdrawn	Reason
				A B C

DOB:
Forename:
Surname:

Database

Worker	Date opened	Admin	Closure Signature	Date closed	Admin
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G – Attendance Action Timeline

Attendance Action Timeline

- Half Termly meeting to discuss P.A's Mr. A Wood Mrs E. Tolan
- Letter one sent to parents entitled New Attendance Procedures.
- Pupil monitored for six weeks.

- Letter two entitled School Attendance Meeting
- Sent to parents whose child failed the first six week monitoring period.

- Letter three entitled School Attendance Further Monitoring.
- Sent to parents after the meeting to monitor for a further six weeks.

- Letter four entitled School Attendance Success.
- Sent to parents when their child has passed the Attendance Challenge and attendance has been raised to above 90%.

- Letter five entitled Referral to the Education Welfare Service.
- Sent to parents if their child failed the final monitoring period.

- Referral Entitled Education Social Work service Referral Form.
- Sent to ESW service.

- Fixed Penalty Notice.