

The Ripley Academy

A member of the East Midlands Education Trust



Attendance Policy

September 2021



Achieving Excellence Together

Policy Reviewed:	June 2021
Reviewed by:	Deputy Headteacher
Next review due:	September 2022

Introduction

For a student to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to regulations, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers' should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school reception for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made.

You may be issued with a penalty notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

Each year, the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets that reflect both the national and our past attendance performance.

This policy contains within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Expectations

We expect that students will:

- attend school every day
- attend punctually every day (be on the school site by 8.30am)
- attend fully prepared every day (equipment, planner, uniform etc.)

We expect that parents/carers will:

- ensure their child attends school every day
- ensure their child attends punctually and fully prepared every day
- make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours (as far as possible)
- notify the school daily of any absences (before 9.00am on every day of absence)
- notify the school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- provide a safe learning environment
- keep accurate records of attendance and punctuality
- contact parents/carers when a child fails to attend and no reason has been given
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through the Rewards system
- report each child's attendance via the school reporting system
- inform parents/carers when there are concerns regarding attendance and/or punctuality

Attendance and Registration Procedures

Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence from registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. This will be marked with an "N" code whilst investigation into the absence takes place. After one week if no legitimate reason for absence is found then the "N" code will be changed to an "O" unauthorised absence code by a member of the Student Support Team or the Attendance Officer.

Lateness

Morning registration takes place at the start of day at 8.40am and students should be on the school site before 8.30am. The registers will remain open for twenty minutes. Any student arriving after 9.00am will be marked as Late and given an "L" code on the register. Students arriving late to school (after 9am) should report directly to main reception on entry.

Any student arriving to school after 9.00am without a valid reason will also receive an appropriate sanction from their Head of Year. Students arriving after 9.00am without an acceptable explanation will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered when supported with evidence (letter or appointment card) from home. Afternoon registration is taken at 2.00pm and the registers will close at 2.05pm.

Good punctuality is very important for a settled start to the day and form tutors will monitor punctuality to morning registration. Students who arrive late to morning registration are expected to make up the exact minutes of their lateness at break time with the Attendance Officer.

Student Procedures during the School Day

If a student arrives late after 8.40am, they must sign in at main reception. A reason must be given, supported by a letter from home whenever possible. The time the student signs in must be recorded. Late records will be maintained for each student and an appropriate sanction will be issued by their Head of Year for repeated and regular lateness.

If any student needs to leave whilst school is in session, they must sign out at main reception. Students will not be allowed to sign out without their parents/carers written (ideally) or telephone permission. No student will be allowed to sign out without this permission.

All these procedures are very important as in the event of a fire drill it is vital there is an accurate record of who is on the school site at that time.

First Day of Absence

Parents and carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of their child's absence and provide a reason for their non-attendance to school.

This should be done by using the Student Absence Line or parent/ carer notes handed in either the main reception or via the form tutor. If no contact has been made by 9.00am, a member of the Student Support Team will contact parents/carers by 10.00am at the latest. The information obtained from the student's parents or carers will be recorded and transferred to the Student Absence Record Management system. In the comment box, the administrator will record a brief reason for the absence and will add their initials to verify the information added to the student's attendance record. Any concerns regarding absence on a day should be passed immediately to the Attendance Officer for further investigation.

Subsequent Absences

Each subsequent day of absence (unless otherwise formally advised of long term absence by parent or carer) will be treated as the first day of absence and a member of the Student Support Team will attempt to contact the student's parents or carers, by telephone, by 10.00am. If there is no contact from the parent or carer after three days of absence, an unannounced home visit will take place by the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer may visit the home of a student where there are concerns over attendance, and they have not been able to make contact with parents/carers.

Continuing Absence

If there is has still been no contact from the parents or carers after 6 days, a further visit is made and a letter issued referring to the Ten Day absence criteria.

Ten Days Absence

The Local Authority will be notified of any student who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days. This is done by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team and is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken to date. Please refer to the school's 'Children Missing in Education' policy which can be found on the school website.

Persistent Absenteeism (students whose attendance is 90% or below)

It is the responsibility of the Student Support Team to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns to the Attendance Officer. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents or carers. It is the responsibility of the Student Support Team to communicate actions taken and how the matter has been resolved, or otherwise, to the Attendance Officer (unless the Attendance Officer has had the meeting, and then it is the Attendance Officer's responsibility to inform the Deputy Headteacher of any actions and decisions made).

From September 2015, the Department for Education has changed the threshold for persistent absence from 85% to 90%. Please see table below for estimated cumulative persistence absence figures for the academic year.

	10% absence for the academic year
Half term 1	8 or more sessions
Half term 1-2 (Autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half term 1-3	21 or more sessions
Half term 1-4 (Spring and Autumn terms)	27 or more sessions
Half term 1-5	32 or more sessions
Half term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

- Please note there are two sessions every school day – morning and afternoon

Medical Concerns

If any student is absent from school due to illness, a letter must be provided by parents or carers. Prolonged absence due to medical reasons (over five days) will require medical evidence (i.e. a doctor's note, hospital appointment card, prescription etc).

If diagnosed medical reasons significantly affect a student's attendance, the school may initiate a 'Medical Attendance Support Panel' meeting. Please refer the school's 'Supporting Students with Medical Conditions' policy which can be found on the school website.

Medical Attendance Support Panel

Students with diagnosed medical conditions whose attendance level is around 90% may be invited, with their parents, to attend a Medical Attendance Support Panel meeting. The Attendance Officer, a member of the Student Support Team will be in attendance to discuss ways in which the student may be supported by the school in order to improve attendance levels. The aim of the meeting is to ensure that the school is doing everything it can to support the student.

All Medical Attendance Support Panel meetings will take place with the student's parent or carers present. If the parent or carer declines to attend, they will be given the option to give their consent for the meeting to take place without them. In this exceptional case, the student's form tutor will also attend the meeting in order to further support the student concerned.

Attendance Officer

Any student who has an attendance level below 94% will be under the remit of the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer makes decisions in relation to home visits, fixed penalty warning letters, fixed penalties, referral to the Attendance Panel, fast track referral and/or any other appropriate action in conjunction with the person with designated responsibility for attendance on the Senior Leadership Team.

Attendance Panel/Fast Track

Any student with a level of attendance at or below 90% can, in liaison with the Attendance Officer, be subject to an Attendance Panel referral.

The panel will examine the reasons for the absence and develop strategies for improving the student's attendance. The student's attendance will be reviewed every four weeks until a 90% (or above) attendance is achieved.

If any student who has been referred to the Attendance Panel continues to record a decline in attendance, they will be subject to the fast track process which will be initiated by the Attendance Officer. This process will fast track the parents or carers of persistent absentees to court to consider legal proceedings.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all students are made to feel welcome. This is the responsibility of the form tutor. The student should be brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students by the form tutor. If required, the form tutor will involve a member of the Student Support Team who will provide support to help the student catch up on missed work.

Absence Notes

If a written note explaining the student's absence has been received by the form tutor, it must be passed to the Student Support Team so that the information is recorded and the evidence is kept secure. This is the responsibility of the form tutor. If the note has been written into the student planner the form tutor must send the student to a member of the Student Support Team so that the entry can be copied and put on file. Notes from parents and carers will be kept on file and may be used for further investigation if required.

Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents and carers of the importance of good attendance. They will also remind them that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. Parents will receive regular reports that include the current attendance percentage for their child.

Leave of Absence from School

Leave of Absence from school will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. All requests for leave of absence from school must be made in writing to the Head of School, at least two weeks' prior the requested leave of absence. A decision will then be made as to whether the request meets the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances' and parents/carers will be notified by letter. If the request is rejected and the leave of absence still is taken, then the information will be passed to Derbyshire County Council for a decision as to whether a fixed penalty notice will be given or not.

Although some parents may find themselves in difficult circumstances which require them to organise holidays in term time, The Ripley Academy believes students should not miss school for this reason. Whilst we understand the difficulties parents/carers may have in organising holidays during the school holidays and the benefits to be had from cheaper term-time holidays, this type of absence is detrimental to a child's education. There is a common misconception that any child is allowed to take 10 days' holiday per year; this is not true. From September 2013, government guidelines advise that no absence should be authorised in advance except when due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Bereavement and life threatening illness are considered to be exceptional circumstances. Please note that the cost or availability of holidays does not constitute 'exceptional circumstances'.

Moving/Transferring Schools

It is important that parents keep the Deputy Headteacher informed when they are considering changing schools, as we have a duty to inform the Local Authority of any child that we believe has left our school and has not provided forwarding information on their destination and education provision. If we are unable to establish your child's new school, we would have to refer them as a missing child to Derbyshire County Council. As a result, your child's name may be kept on a missing register and efforts will be made to trace them. It is also important to know about a new school so that we can send on your child's records.

At the point when you have decided to change school, please ask the school office for a Pupil Exit Form (Appendix 1). If you are concerned that the details of your destination should not be shared with anyone but the Deputy Headteacher, please discuss this with him/her.

Rewards

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded at The Ripley Academy. Exceptional 100% attendance and punctuality of individual students will be rewarded during termly Praise Assemblies.

Individuals will receive a reward signature for a week of 100% attendance; they will also receive a reward signature for 1 week's 100% punctuality.

Students who significantly improve their previous poor attendance levels will be praised by the Deputy Headteacher.



Appendix 1

The Ripley Academy Pupil Exit Form

Pupil's name	Date of birth dd / mm / yr.
Where are you moving to? (address if possible)	
If moving abroad, destination country (if new home address not known)	
When are you moving?	
Last date your child will attend this school (or if not known, approximate date)	
Details of new school if known.	
Parent/Carer(s) Name(s)	Signature(s)
Date	

Please return this form to the Deputy Headteacher before your child leaves.

Thank you.