



# Attendance Policy

**Appendix 1 – School Attendance Targets**  
**Appendix 2 – Attendance Codes**

## **Commitment to Attendance**

The staff of all schools in the North Runnymede Learning Partnership (NRLP) are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, children, governors and the Local Authority, to building schools which serve the community and of which the community is proud. All schools work together within the North Runnymede Learning Partnership to bring consistency to their attendance policies.

Regular attendance is key to achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters: staying healthy, enjoying and achieving, keeping safe, contributing to the community, and social and economic well-being. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

## **Parent Responsibility and The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his/her age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he/she may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

## **Registers**

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child 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 at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

## **Categorisation of Absence**

Any child who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

### **1. Unauthorised absence**

This is for those children where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

### **2. Authorised absence**

This is for those children who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

### **3. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note: Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Most types of dual registration

#### **Registration & Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at 8.50am. The registers will remain open until 9.15am. Any child who arrives within this period will be marked present. However, if the register has been completed and returned to the office, they will be marked as present but late. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation.

The afternoon registration will be taken at 1.10pm.

#### **Escalation Process**

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school before 10.30am on the day of absence. However, if the child is absent and no reason has been provided the following procedure may apply:

##### **First and Second Day Absence**

If the school has not been notified, the parent will be telephoned to request reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised as determined by the school. A message will be left where no contact can be made.

##### **Third Day Absence**

The school will telephone the parent to request reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. If no response is received by the school further contact may be made by the school by other means (e.g. letter/ personal call/truancy patrol)

##### **Ten Days Absence**

Any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days may be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to Education Welfare. This is a legal requirement. The school may include details of the action that they have taken.

Where a child is absent from school the following procedure may be followed for welcoming them back. If they have been off for up to 5 days, the classteacher will welcome them back and check that they are OK. For longer term absences a more formal reintegration will take place involving the classteacher and headteacher/deputy if deemed appropriate, with a plan to catch up if possible work that has been missed.

##### **Frequent Absence**

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Our Education Welfare Officer meets with the headteacher on a half termly basis to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a child begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school may try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

1. Phone call to parent by headteacher/ deputy head and issues discussed with child within school.
2. Letter sent to parents stating concerns about attendance, inviting them into school to meet to discuss the issues.
3. Meeting at school with headteacher and classteacher.

If this does not resolve the attendance issues, the school may refer to Education Welfare.

### **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance falls below 85% across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and parents' fullest support and co-operation is needed to tackle this.

All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

Parents may be notified by a letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and be invited to a meeting where a plan may be drawn up to address the issues identified.

### **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

### **Exceptional Leave of Absence**

**There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.**

Any savings that you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. It is widely known that the link between a child's attendance and attainment is irrefutable. Graduates earn an average of £15.01 per hour; young people who leave school with no qualifications earn an average of £7.44 per hour.

School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in **extremely** exceptional circumstances (e.g. immediate family bereavement).

Where a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made, in writing, to the headteacher who will consider the application on behalf of the Governors.

If a holiday is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it may be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare may be notified.

### **Penalty Notices for Holidays:**

- In line with the guidance from the DfE, holidays during SATS week will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- The headteacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when students are taken out of school for 5 (10 sessions) or more day's holiday or leave of absence **without** school authorisation.
- Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days.

- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

### **Truancy Patrol**

When a child comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, their pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter will be sent to the parent / carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 schooldays, a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent / carer.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice may be issued. Again, the Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- £50 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £100 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

### **The Education Welfare Officer**

Our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) monitors the attendance of all children on a half termly basis. She will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school may make a referral to Education Welfare. The EWO will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed or unauthorised absence persists, the EWO can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

All staff are expected to:

- Keep a register of attendance and raise attendance concerns with the headteacher
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality
- Provide pastoral support to address attendance issues.

The headteacher will

- Promote the attendance policy within the school and ensure that it is implemented effectively.
- Monitor and review attendance procedures and work with the office assistant to ensure reasons for absence are identified and interventions put in place if required.
- Work with families to resolve attendance issues.
- Meet with the EWO on a half termly basis to identify and action any attendance support.
- Identify and monitor attendance of PA children.

The Office Assistant responsible for attendance will

- Ensure morning and afternoon registers are taken and are up to date.
- Contact parents and request reasons for absence.
- Collate daily attendance records and, together with the headteacher, put in place agreed procedures to monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality.

The Governing Body will

- Monitor and review the attendance policy on an annual basis.
- Agree appropriate absence targets on an annual basis (see Appendix 1).
- Plays an active role in ensuring targets are met by monitoring attendance data on a termly basis.

## Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

All students must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark. Registration will be taken by subject teachers during period 1 (am registration) and period 5 (pm registration).

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances