

# Rutlish School



## Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy

<b>Committee ownership for this policy:</b> F&P, Curr, Incl, Prem, RR6, FGB	Inclusion
<b>Must be approved by FGB:</b> Y / N	N
<b>Required by:</b>	School
<b>Frequency of review:</b>	Every 3 Years
<b>Date last reviewed:</b>	Autumn 2023
<b>Date of next review:</b>	Autumn 2026
<b>Display on website:</b> Y / N	Y
<b>Responsible</b>	Deputy Headteacher
<b>This policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of next review in order to reflect changes in legislation, where appropriate.</b>	

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## 1. AIM OF POLICY

Rutlish School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Providing clear guidelines for students, parents/carers, staff and governors.
- To keep accurate and up to date records of attendance and punctuality

## 2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

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

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Working together to improve school attendance guidance

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All students must be placed on both registers.

## 3. ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance is essential. Any absence affects the students schooling and has a serious impact on their learning. The school is responsible for ensuring an attendance register is taken morning and afternoon.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Parent/carer should advise the school if they are aware of concerns that are affecting their child's attendance. Their first point of contact would normally be the Form Tutor.

It is the Local Authority's responsibility to ensure parent/carer meet their responsibilities. The education welfare officer (EWO) will work with the school and parent/carer.

Headteachers are required to inform the Local Authority if a student fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and is unauthorised.

## 4. ATTENDANCE TARGET

The school attendance target is set annually and is monitored by the governor's Inclusion Committee. The minimum expected attendance for the school is 96%.

## 5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

### **Unplanned absence**

Parent/carer must notify the school via the Rutlish App on the first day of an unplanned absence, for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health. This should be before 8am or as soon as practically possible. If you are unable to use the Rutlish App, please contact the school Attendance Officer.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Students should return to school as soon as they are well enough. The reason for the absence should be written in their planner and signed by a parent/carer for the student to show to their form tutor.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or the student's attendance is a cause for concern, the school may ask parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carer will be notified of this.

Other types of unauthorised absence may be:

- Parent/carer keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Days trips and holidays in term time
- Looking after other children/siblings

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Where possible, medical and dental appointments should be made out of school hours. If this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. These absences will normally be authorised but advance notice is required. Parents/carers should notify the school of any medical appointments, with supporting evidence, via the Rutlish App. Where possible, the date and time of the appointment should be written in the student's planner and shown to the form tutor.

Student's should sign out with the attendance office prior to leaving the school for a medical or dental appointment. On occasion, it may be appropriate for the Attendance Officer to request an appointment letter/card.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance via a Leave of Absence request form.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

Students should arrive at school prior to registration at 8.30am. Students arriving late should sign in at the attendance office or in Manor House. Students who arrive late but before 9.30am will be marked as late. Students who arrive after 9.30am will be marked as absent for the morning session which will negatively impact their attendance.

Students who are late will be sanctioned by their tutor. Students who are repeatedly late will be sanctioned by the Head or Deputy Head of Year. It may also be necessary to meet with parents/carers to address punctuality concerns.

### **Requests for leave during term time**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually and a leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Absence requests, for absence other than unplanned absence or medical appointments, should be made using the Leave of Absence Request form available on the school website. Each request for absence will take into consideration:

- the circumstances for the request

- supporting evidence
- the student's overall attendance
- the stage of the student's education and their progress

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments-
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent/carer belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent/carer's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Attendance at an interview with another education establishment or a prospective employer.

Usually term-time holiday will not be authorised. If an absence request has not been agreed by the Headteacher and the student still goes on holiday, this absence will be unauthorised.

Study leave for exams is not granted by default. For Year 11 and RR6 students, study leave is at the discretion of the Headteacher, and students and parents/carers will be advised in advance.

### **Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason and will ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. The school will identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use, and what interventions may be necessary to improve school attendance.

## **6. CHILDREN AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION**

The school will notify Children's Services and the Education Welfare Service of any child missing education for five consecutive days via an EWS and/or a MASH referral where there has been no communication from the parent/carer or if the absence is unauthorised. The school will also continue to make attempts to contact the parent/carer to establish the location, safety and well-being of the child following the DfE Children Missing Education guidance

## **7. ATTENDANCE MONITORING**

The Attendance Officer monitors student absence. If a student's absence goes above 2 days we will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parent/carer, a student's absence continues to rise we will consider involving the education welfare officer.

The Attendance Officer reports attendance information:

- Daily to the Head of Year with details of who is absent and the reason
- Weekly to the Head of Year absence by session with known reasons.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee. The Heads of Year will follow up any attendance concerns with the student and parent/carer.

Student-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and report this to the Governing Body.

Attendance is reported termly to parents/carers in a student's school report.

## **8. INTERNAL SANCTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS**

The school has sanctions for lateness and poor attendance, which include:

- Form Tutor, Department or Head of Year detention
- EWO involvement and referral to EWS

- Referral to the Family Liaison Officer
- Parent/carer contracts
- Referral to MASH

## **9. LEGAL SANCTIONS**

Schools can fine parent/carer for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a Local Authority penalty notice, parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This 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
- where an excluded 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 the parent/carer or withdraw the notice.

## **10. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

The school celebrates good attendance with assemblies, certificates and letters home.

Tutors, Heads of Year and the senior leadership team promote good attendance through regular assemblies, discussions at tutor time, praise or one-to-one conversation when an individual student may have attendance concerns.

Pastoral meetings are attended fortnightly by the representatives from safeguarding, SEND, EWS and the school pastoral leads to identify attendance concerns and triage support or interventions needed to ensure attendance is good.

## **11. REMOVAL FROM THE SCHOOL ROLL**

The school will inform the Local Authority of any student who is going to be removed from the admissions register. Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days the student can be removed from the admission register. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. We will work closely with the Local Authority from the fifth day of absence.

Rutlish school is aware that off-rolling is unlawful. Ofsted defines off-rolling as, "the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil." We are committed to following all statutory exclusions procedures to ensure that every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment.

## **12. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION**

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be at a school. A child is of compulsory school age from the school term after their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they reach the age of 16. Additionally, the

Government requires young people to participate in education or training, which can include home education, until the age of 18.

Schools should not persuade parents to withdraw their child from the school roll to avoid exclusions or because of a poor attendance/behaviour record. Schools should ensure that they refer any parent/carer who may be contemplating educating other than at school to the Education Welfare Service so that they can be provided with detailed information, and offered support and advice from the Local Authority about the requirements before they make any commitment to this route. The school should not remove the student from roll until the parent/carer has received information and confirmed in writing that they are accepting responsibility for their child's education.

### **13. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **The Governing Body**

The governing body will monitor attendance for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

#### **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and liaises with the Educational Welfare Officer for the issuing of fixed-penalty notices.

#### **The Attendance Officer**

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance and punctuality data at the school and individual student level alerting form tutors and heads of year when concerns arise
- Reports concerns about attendance to the senior leadership team
- Works with the Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Makes calls, daily, to parent/carer if a student is absent and the school has not been notified

#### **The Pastoral Team**

Form tutors should actively promote good attendance and punctuality. They should take prompt action where students are late or absent without explanation.

They are responsible for completing the register on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the attendance office.

The wider pastoral team are responsible for monitoring attendance and supporting interventions needed to improve school attendance.

#### **Subject teachers**

Subject teachers should complete the register within the first 15 minutes of the lesson starting. They should reinforce that poor punctuality has a detrimental effect on the learning of students.

They should ensure students catch up work missed during absence.

#### **Administration staff**

The Attendance Officer is expected to take calls from parent/carer about absence and record it on the school system. If other administration staff take a call from a parent/carer they should ensure details are passed to the Attendance Officer.