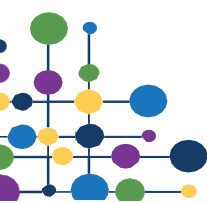


Royds Hall Community Secondary School Attendance Policy

Version:	MAT 1
Author:	Greg Wadsworth
Date:	13.12.2018
Approved by governors:	
Approved by Directors	12.02.19

Record of Alterations: Reviewed Oct 2021





SHARE MAT Policy for ATTENDANCE

Guiding principles

Parents, carers and staff share the responsibility in ensuring that student attendance at SHARE MAT schools is maximised, and that the rates of unauthorised and unexplained absence are kept to a minimum. Every child has a right to access education and attendance plays a vital role in ensuring the positive outcomes possible are ensured for all.

All SHARE MAT schools will ensure encouragement and rewarding of good attendance. Schools within the MAT will recognise external factors which influence attendance and ensure they work in partnership with parents and carers, along with other relevant services to deal with any issues. All schools will take a proactive approach in promoting good attendance through setting clear expectations with students and parents/carers whilst providing effective and efficient systems for monitoring attendance in line with legal requirements.

Specific responsibilities and procedures may differ in each school in the MAT; these procedures are available on request from the individual school.

Royds Hall Community School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. This attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- admissions
- anti-bullying
- child protection
- exclusion
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards.

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's Home School Agreement, which parents must sign following their child's admission to the school.

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and pupils via the school website.

The Department for Education guidance states that schools should:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every child has access to full-time education
- Act early to address patterns of absence

Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age, who are registered to a school, attend regularly. All pupils must be punctual to their lessons.

Statement of intent

We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to aspire for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the

education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to strive consistently to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Why regular attendance is important

Learning and Achievement

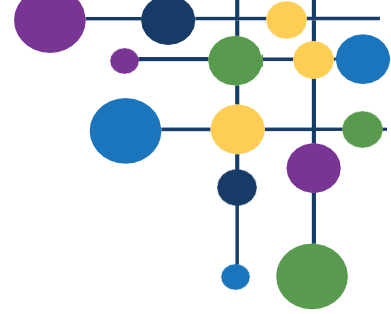
- As a parent/carer you want the best for your child. Having a good education is an important factor in opening up more opportunities in adult life.
- A child who is absent one day of school per week misses an equivalent of two years of their school life.
- 90% of young people with absence rates below 85% fail to achieve five or more good grades at GCSE and around one third achieve no GCSEs at all.
- Poor examination results limit young people's options and poor attendance suggests to colleges and employers that these students are unreliable.
- Poor school attendance is closely associated with crime - a quarter of school age offenders have truanted repeatedly.
- At least 1 million children take at least one half day off a year without permission.
- 7.5 million school days are missed each year through unauthorised absence.
- Absence at any stage of your child's education leads to gaps in their learning. This in turn can
 - mean that they fall behind in work
 - affect their motivation
 - affect their enjoyment of learning
 - lead to poor behaviour
 - affect their desire to attend school regularly
 - affect their confidence in school
 - mean they miss out on the social life of school and extra-curricular opportunities and experiences
 - affect their ability to have or keep friendships.
- There is a clearly documented link between high attendance and high achievement.
- Of students who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve 5 good passes including English and Maths.
- Of students who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve 5 good passes including English and Maths.
- Of students who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve 5 good passes including English and Maths.
- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'



Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each student is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance
Behaviour Management
Health and Safety
Access to the Curriculum
Anti-bullying.

Failing to attend this school regularly will be considered a safeguarding matter.

In the first instance staff will attempt to contact parents/carers by telephone or text message. If staff are unable to determine the student's whereabouts then it may be necessary for attendance staff to do an unannounced home visit.

If staff are still unable to determine the student's whereabouts and believe there is a risk to the child's safety or wellbeing, then the police will be contacted.

It is vital that parents/carers keep school up to date with contact details – phone numbers, address, email address and additional people to contact – to ensure staff can speak to parents/carers in this situation. Each school will keep at least two contacts on record for each student and attempt to contact both should a child be absent.

If a student has been absent for a significant period of time and the school has been unable to contact parents/carers then the child will be considered a Child Missing in Education. The relevant local authority will be contacted and will undertake their own investigation to determine whether the child is on holiday, away from home or has left the area.

If a student has been absent for 20 school days or more and the school is unable to determine their whereabouts or believes they are away from home, then they will be removed from roll and lose their place at the school.

If parents/carers inform the school they are taking their child abroad during term time (see term time holidays and leave of absence section for more details) the school may ask for proof of travel for safeguarding purposes.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

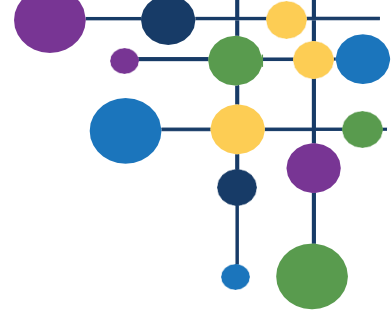
Promoting regular attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular home – school communications;
- Report to you at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
 - Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.





Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

Responsibilities of the school attendance officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the attendance officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the attendance officer can use sanctions such as penalty notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Kirklees Council.

Responsibilities of classroom and pastoral staff

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of students

- Attend every day unless they are too ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive in school on time
- Go to all their lessons and tutor times on time
- Take responsibility for registering at the attendance office if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours
- Under no circumstances will students leave school site without permission.

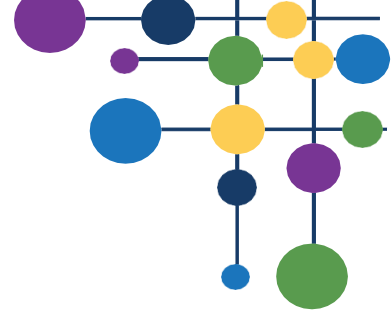
Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- inform the school on the first day and each subsequent day of absence that their son/daughter will not be attending by 8.15am.
- discuss with the attendance office or community progress leader any planned absences **at least 4 weeks in advance.**
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone, text or school app on the first and every subsequent day of absence.
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- only request leave of absence if it is for an 'exceptional' circumstance.
- If a student will be absent due to medical appointment, parents/carers should inform school by providing an appointment letter so a copy can be taken for the student's record. Parents/carers can also write a note in the student's planner or contact the key contact at school. Although schools understand that appointments are important, it is requested that these are sought outside of school time wherever possible as they are still classed as an absence. Wherever possible, students should attend school before and after appointments as it is not normal procedure to authorise a full day of absence for such appointments. Headteachers reserve the right to receive a letter, appointment card or other written confirmation, such as a medical appointment card, prior to authorising absence.





Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Unauthorised absence are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Waiting in for deliveries or tradesmen
- Parents/carers own appointments.

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 never better 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.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and vital information and news for the day. Late arrival students also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The doors open at 08:15am and we expect your child to be in class for the start of lessons at 08:30am. Registers are marked by teachers and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

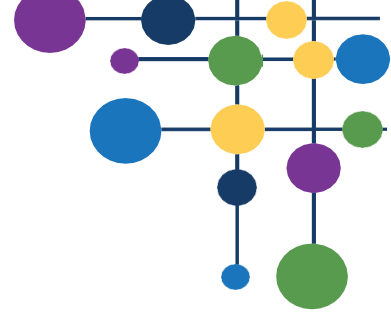
If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the community progress leader at secondary school and/or attendance officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to all lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

It is better to be late to school than to not arrive at all. However, we always encourage punctuality at school. Not only is it a good habit to learn from an early age, it will help them when they come to have a job later in life, but being on time is also important for a child because -

- it helps them settle into the school day well, with everybody else
- it helps them make and keep friends
- it improves self-confidence
 - class teachers often include learning sessions during registration.





In fact, by regularly arriving late, students can miss a great deal of lesson time:-

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to 3 days lost each year
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for nearly 2 weeks a year
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 18 days a year
- It can be embarrassing
- It can damage a child's confidence
- It may lead to children being confused and missing vital instructions, information and bits of news at the start of the day
- It disrupts everyone else's learning.

Absence Procedures

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on each day of absence, certainly no later than 08:30am
- Royds Hall Community School has a free school app www.myedschoolapp.com/get please download for: reporting absence, access to information about your child's attendance, timetable, behaviour and achievements. Messages sent through the app are free.
- Or, you can phone the Attendance Office on 01484 463366 - option 2
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you;
- Medical evidence is requested for all medical appointments, please provide one of the following:
1) Appointment card. 2) Appointment letter. 3) Prescription. 4) Labelled and dated medicine bottle/packet. 5) Doctors note/letter.

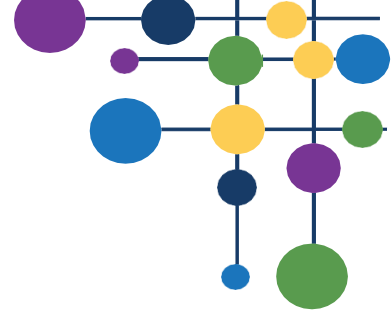
If your child is absent we will:

- send an absence text to your child's first contact as soon as your child is marked absent on the class register and no reason for absence has been reported to school. If no response is received to this initial text, a second text will be sent requesting that you contact us immediately with a reason for your child's absence. If we do not receive a response to this second text we will ring all the contacts we have on file for your child until we are able to ascertain a reason for absence. If we are unable to contact anyone we will alert the headteacher and designated safeguarding lead who will decide whether a home visit or other agency involvement is required.
- Visit your home address if there are safeguarding concerns
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer, deputy headteacher and/or pastoral leaders, assistant headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the attendance officer if attendance moves below 90%;
- The attendance officer will hold weekly meetings with the community progress leaders to discuss/action plan all students under 96% attendance. The senior community progress leader to discuss/action plan all students under 90% attendance.
- The attendance officer will also hold weekly/fortnightly meetings with those listed above. These meetings are to discuss the lowest attending 100 students. This meeting is called the focus 100.

In cases of minor illness or ailment (cold, headache, period pains etc.), schools expect the student to attend. If parents feel unsure about a student's ability to attend, they should be sent with a note in their planner to show to relevant staff within the school. Staff with responsibility for assessing whether a student is well enough to be in school will see students if they become unwell during the day, and if they are unfit to stay in school, a member of staff will contact parents/carers to collect them. Students will not be allowed to go home unless they have made contact with a parent/carer or other person listed as a contact on the student's record.

Students should not, under any circumstance, contact parents/carers or others to say they wish to go home. If this is the case parents are advised to contact the school to check that medical advice has been sought. If a parent/carer arrives at school without school being aware, the student will not be sent with them until an assessment has been made in school.





Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of issues, including absence and medical emergencies, so we need to have your current contact numbers and email addresses at all times. To help us to help you and your child parents are asked to make sure we always have up-to-date contact details – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence 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 you will be informed of this immediately. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the attendance officer.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

You should **NOT** expect your child to be allowed leave of absence in term time. Parents do **NOT** have a legal right to take children out of school. School terms are designed to offer opportunities for holidays to be taken throughout the academic year without disrupting the education of students.

Leave of absence is something SHARE MAT strongly disapproves of during term-time as it can have serious detrimental impact on educational outcomes. Absence from school clearly correlates with lower attainment and progress, with every day missed possibly affecting chances of strong educational outcomes.

It is not true that students can 'catch up'. Research shows that by missing lessons, students fall behind, and lessons are NOT repeated at a later date; The Department of Education regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are *exceptional circumstances*. Parents who take their children out of school during the school term without the headteacher's authorisation or beyond an agreed date risk being issued a penalty notice or taken to court.

The penalty notice is £60, for each parent of each child, if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid after this date but within 28 days. Non-payment of a penalty notice will normally trigger a prosecution (under the provisions of section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or under the provisions of S103 (3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). The prosecution can only be for the original offence and NOT for the non-payment of the penalty notice.

Where parents/carers continue to take unauthorised leave of absences in term time, despite having previously been issued with a penalty notice, the local authority will consider a prosecution under S 444 of the Education Act 1996.

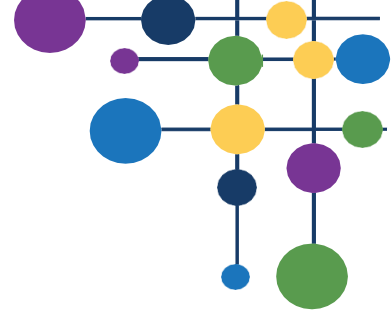
If the local authority decide to prosecute parents/carers based on the evidence that the school provides then parents/carers would be expected to attend court and may face a fine of up to a maximum of £2500. There is also a chance that a community order could be put in place and the possibility of a three month's jail sentence. Parents/carers could receive a criminal record.

In addition:

- You risk losing your child's place at school if they are absent for 20 days or more
- You risk your child's future through lost learning and lower achievement
- You risk your child feeling left behind and left out

In 'exceptional' circumstances, headteachers can allow a small amount of time out of school.





Special or exceptional circumstances do **NOT** include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Availability of cheaper flights
- Availability of desired/cheaper accommodation
- Poor weather in school holidays
- Overlap with the beginning or the end of term
- Trips abroad
- Seeing relatives
- Weddings
- Funerals

As a guide, any unauthorised absence in excess of 4 consecutive days, parents/carers are likely to receive a penalty notice. The school will notify parents/carers in advance if taking this course of action and then parents/carers will hear in due course from the relevant local authority once they have processed the penalty notice.

If you still feel that you wish to apply to take your child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances, please request a 'leave of absence request form' from your child's community progress leader, the attendance officer, school reception or print a copy from the school's website. The form should be received by the headteacher **FOUR** school weeks in advance of the proposed date.

Absence for sporting activities are assessed as above on a case by case basis and may be authorised as an 'approved sporting activity'. A decision of whether or not to approve these requests will be made based on the student's attendance and behaviour, and as a result, may mean that the same sporting absence may be authorised for one child and not another.

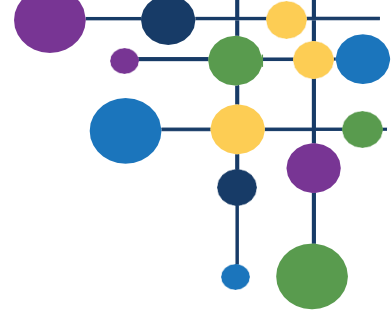
Religious Observance

Royds Hall Community School believes in respecting, promoting and celebrating the cultural and religious diversity of its pupils, parents and the community. Given the rich diversity of our school, parents will want to celebrate some of the major religious festivals with their children at home. Parents will therefore be seeking permission from schools to authorise their children's absence during these religious festivals. Whilst schools recognise the importance faith and religious observance play in the lives of many of its pupils and want to respect the wishes of parents to celebrate religious festivals with their children, it is important to strike the right balance between authorising such absence and the effect on pupil's progress. The Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 Section 2 states that absence for religious observance should be "treated as authorised [absence] ... on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body which the parent belongs". Thus, if the parent's religious body marks the day as a religious festival, the school must authorise the absence. Leave for pupils for religious observance should only be agreed if the dates fall outside of normal holiday periods.

Many of the main Christian festivals, for example Christmas and Easter, take place during the school holidays. The two main festivals celebrated by Muslims are Eid-ul-fitr (marking the end of Ramadan) and Eid-ul-Adha (marking the end of Hajj). These Muslim celebrations occur according to the lunar calendar in different countries and it is difficult to predict when pupils may need to be absent from school until very close to the day itself. For example, Eid-ul-fitr and Eid-ul-Adha come 10 days earlier every year and can change according to when the moon is. However, there may be occasions when a festival falls twice in a calendar year. The main festivals celebrated by Jews include Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The commonly celebrated festivals by Sikhs include Baisakhi, Diwali and Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev. Hindus main festivals include Diwali and the New Year Day (day after Diwali) and the main Buddhist festivals include Vesak (Buddha Day) and Dhammacakka Day. **In most cases up to two days throughout a school year for religious observance should be sufficient.**

Schools should use their discretion where a parent does not belong to a religious body, as they may want to celebrate an alternative festival that they feel is important to them, such as Pagan or Wicca festivals. When parents request leave for their children for religious observance, pupils should be granted a day's authorised absence for a particular religious festival. **Where a religious festival falls during a school holiday or at the weekend, no authorised absence should be granted.**





Requests for preparation for religious festivals should be regarded as unauthorised absence. Guidance and expectations from school, will be sent by letter to parents just before the religious festival. If parents/carers are going to seek permission for their child's absence for religious observance, they need to make school aware. It is easy to do this using the school app. Alternatively, call the attendance office on 01484 463366 – Option 2 or visit school reception.

Students are expected to return to school promptly on the day following the authorised day of absence.

School targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96.5% and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to high achievement and we believe our students can be outstanding.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our home - school communications and we ask for your full support.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

In secondary school your child will bring home a school planner each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it.

Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

Royds Hall Community School has a free school app www.myedschoolapp.com/get please download for access to information about your child's attendance, timetable, behaviour and achievements. Messages sent through the app are free.

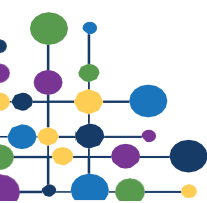
Once downloaded, parents/carers can check their child's attendance by clicking 'My student' followed by 'Attendance'.

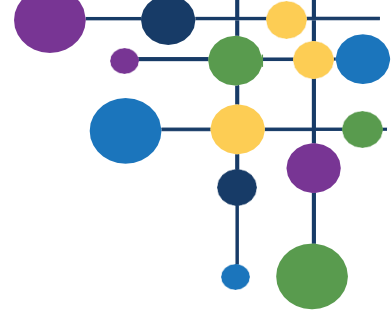
For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you, but consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

Rewards and Consequences

Students who meet and exceed the school's attendance targets will be rewarded for this through various types of reward within their school.

Students who arrive late to registration and teaching periods will be given late marks and these may accrue to consequences within each school linked to the schools own reward and consequence schemes, in line with the school Behaviour Policy.





Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Faz Khan– Attendance Officer

Mr Dan Hall – Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour & Attitudes

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every student achieves their potential.

