



## **Attendance Policy**

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**

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. 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.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. 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 A\* to C GCSEs including English and Maths
- Of students who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve 5 A\* to C GCSEs including English and Maths
- Of students who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve 5 A\* to C GCSEs 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.

**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

### **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
- 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 or text on the first and subsequent days 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.

### **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.

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 to secondary school open at 8.15am and we expect your child to be in class for the start of lessons at 8.30am. Registers are marked by 8.30am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

The doors to primary schools open at 8.40am and we expect your child to be in class for the start of lessons at 8.50am. Registers are marked by 8.50am 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, the Deputy Heads at Primary 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 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.
- Royds Hall, Luck Lane & Beech schools have a new free school app [www.myedschoolapp.com/get](http://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 46 33 66 option 1.
- 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.

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 (RHCS) Deputy Headteacher (Luck Lane & Beech) to discuss/action plan all students under 96% attendance. 2) 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 (RHCS) and the lowest attending 40 students (Beech & Luck Lane). These meetings are called the Focus 100 and Focus 40, respectively.

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers & 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 number – 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 doing 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 Mark Aspin, 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.

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 for £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.

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:

- Availability of cheaper flights
- Availability of desired/cheaper accommodation
- Poor weather in school holidays
- Overlap with the beginning of the end of term

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 or the Attendance Office. The form should be received by the Headteacher 4 weeks in advance of the proposed date.

### **Religious Observance:**

Royds Hall, Luck Lane & Beech schools believe in respecting, promoting and celebrating the cultural and religious diversity of its pupils, parents and the community. Given the rich diversity of our schools, 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 46 33 66 option 1 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% attendance 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 senior school your child will bring home a school planner each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

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, Luck Lane & Beech schools have a free school app [www.myedschoolapp.com/get](http://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.

**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Melanie Williams, Executive Headteacher

Jeremy Haigh, Associate Headteacher, Head of Secondary Phase

Jo Jenkinson, Head of Primary Phase

Andi Gilroy-Sinclair, Deputy Headteacher, Luck Lane Primary

Andrew Quinn, Deputy Headteacher, Beech Primary

Mark Aspin, Attendance Officer

Nikki Wood, Assistant Headteacher

**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.

**Date of Policy: This policy was adopted by the Governing Body on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

**Date of Review: July 2019**