

## Attendance Policy Local Procedures Redehall School and Caterham Education Centre

**Please refer to Main Policy A6 Attendance Policy**

### 1. Aims

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and be successful in their adult lives.

We value all pupils and their past experiences so we will work with families to support transitions and build up trusted relationships. Where we identify the reasons for poor attendance we try to resolve any difficulties together.

Attendance should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is an important aspect of safeguarding. This guidance takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

### 2. Legislation and statutory requirements

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. 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 parental responsibility measures. 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 (as amended).
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013
- DfE (2019) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children Missing Education'

- DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education' and 2020 updates version.

## 3. Scope

### Authorised

#### 2.1. Illness

There may be the exceptional occasion where a pupil is ill and there is no alternative but to stay at home to ensure a speedy recovery. We would expect parents to take their children to the doctor in such cases.

Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible and provide the school with an expected date of return. School may require medical evidence at any time to authorise any absence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

#### 2.2. Medical/dental appointments

Parents are advised where possible to make medical appointments outside of the school day (e.g. doctors, dentist). Where this is not possible, and appointments can only be made during the school day, pupils should attend school for part of the day. If the medical appointment is during the school day, evidence must be provided. Schools should not authorise a whole day's absence for a medical appointment that occurs in the morning; the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa. Parents should notify the school in advance of an appointment and bring in the hospital appointment letter or dentist / doctors' appointment card to reception. If (due to Taxi unavailability, transport issues or distance) it is not possible to return for part of the day students must be provided with work (paper based or via the VLE) and this will be noted as remote learning.

#### 2.3. Other authorised circumstances

These relate to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances.

#### 2.4. Excluded (No alternative provision made)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's Tutor will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

#### 2.5. Granting approval for term – time absence

**2.5.1.** According to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. (See 2sur.5.5 below)

**2.5.2.** The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teachers discretion. Absence during term time should be avoided because pupils can fall behind with their work and find it hard to reintegrate.

**2.5.3.** Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Head teacher in advance of the event, leaving enough time for the school to discuss the request with the parent. Retrospective requests, or

requests which leave no time for the school's consideration, will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

**2.5.4.** All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of any leave granted.

**2.5.5.** Exceptional circumstances for which Head teacher may grant leave include:

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness.
- Funeral of immediate family member.
- Religious observance.
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer).
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence.
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family member's graduation ceremony/passing out parade.

#### **2.5.6. Religious observance**

We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. This necessitates a consideration by written request by the parent/carer of the pupil before the period of absence. Requests cannot be made retrospectively and any such requests will be unauthorised.

**2.5.7.** Study leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

#### **2.5.8. Roma and Traveller absence**

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence in common with all other children, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1996, section 444(6), states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. We will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling for work or trade purposes and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school.

- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service.
- The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

**2.5.9.** If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place. See below on Children Missing Education.

**2.5.10.** If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may request the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrate's court. An application for leave must be made in writing to the school, detailing the exceptional circumstances. (Please collect Absence Request form from school reception).

### **2.5.11. Government Guidance Covid-19**

Changes to recording and reporting following any new government guidance (e.g. during a Covid-19 outbreak) the Head teacher has a responsibility to keep all interested parties e.g., Attendance administration up to date with all new information and guidance to ensure absences are recorded accurately. As a SEN school the SLT and other staff will encourage all SEN pupils to attend school and support any necessary adjustments need to keep all safe.

## **2.6. Late arrival**

**2.6.1.** Pupils who are repeatedly late to school miss out on their education. We follow Local Authority guidance regarding reporting of Lates.

The register closes at 9.30.

Registration begins at 9.00am and closes at 9.30. a late mark is issued between 9.00 and 9.30. Pupils arriving after the close of register at 9.30 will be recorded as late (code U). This is not authorised and a note of why a pupil is late will be made on file. If there is no satisfactory explanation as to why a Young Person is late then the lateness will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate.

**2.6.2.** Upon late arrival, pupils must immediately report to reception to sign in.

**2.6.3.** 'The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment with evidence or as most travel a long way by taxi lateness may be due to traffic issues which the driver will confirm.

**2.6.4.** The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

2.6.5. Communication with parents or carers will be made if there is a recurring lateness to see what actions can be put in place to prevent this from happening.

## 2.7. Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Headteacher.

2.7.1. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for clothes.
- Having their hair cut.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.
- Getting up late.
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school.
- Family holidays.

**Please note this list is not exhaustive and there may be other reasons which the Head teacher may not authorise if deemed unsatisfactory.**

## 2.8. What to do if a Child is absent

2.8.1. Parents / carers should:

- Ring the school as soon as possible after 8.30 and before 9.00am with an explanation of the absence, a voice mail can be left in no one is in reception.

2.8.2. The school will ring the parent between 9.00 and 9.30 if a pupil has not arrived to school to check on the reason for the absence or to check if the parent is aware that their child has not on site.

If the school are not satisfied with the reason for the absence the safeguarding lead may make a home visit. Multiple absence and illness reports without evidence may trigger a safeguarding concern and home visit.

2.8.3. School will mark the absence as unauthorized if no reason for the absence is given.

**The Head teacher reserves the right not to authorise absences if the reason is not deemed satisfactory.**

## Reporting

### 3. Parents receive attendance information on all education reports.

#### Using Attendance Data

3.1. Pupils' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and Department for Education and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

3.2. Close management and scrutiny of attendance records help us trigger action to support parents and pupils when attendance becomes a concern.

3.3 The school will make all reasonable steps to contact parents/carers to ascertain the whereabouts and wellbeing of the child, this could include:

- Daily phone calls home
- Calls to known contacts
- Letters/emails home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings are registered
- Home visits
- Police welfare check (after 5 days if no contact or sooner if concerns deem it necessary)

All activity will be recorded on Schoolpod and reported to the SEN worker. If the child cannot be located after 10 days a missing from education report will be submitted to the local Safeguarding Team from the authority the young person resides.

The school will work in partnership with parents/carers and the young person to support and maximise attendance. To that end we will work with each child's individual needs to review how we can support higher attendance at school as we know that good progress is linked directly to good attendance. However should this prove unsuccessful parents/carers will be issued with a final notice letter informing them that failure to comply will result in possible prosecution by the local authority and we will refer as such.

3.4. Where attendance cannot be improved through additional support e.g. clinical, educational support e.g. a 1:1 or by individualisation of a time table or a transition back in to school after a long period of absence with direct interventions then the placement may be deemed at risk and will be monitored. The SLT will work closely with the family and any other agencies including the local authority to look at what the next steps for the child will be, it may be decided that the school placement is not suitable and the school will support a transition to another alternative placement e.g. hospital, mental health facility etc.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

All members of the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed, attendance is accurately recorded and key leaders e.g. pastoral lead take action to address attendance concerns.

## 5. Implementation

All of the SLT are responsible for the policy implementation.