

Attendance Policy



Redbridge Community School

Person responsible -	Alex Hoyle (Assistant Headteacher)
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Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance.....	4
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	6
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	7
7. Attendance monitoring	7
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	8
9. Links with other policies	8
Appendix 1: attendance codes	8

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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 parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher

Are responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors and/ or Trust Boards
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Lead Attendance Manager

The schools Lead Attendance Manager;

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Year group tutors

Year group tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence, check the attendance emails and record the details on the school system.

3.6 Parent/ Carers

Under the Education Act 1996 parents and carers are legally required to send their child to school and can only miss school for two reasons:

- They are too ill to attend (the school may choose to record this as authorized or unauthorized at their discretion)
- Permission has been granted in advance by the school

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 requires parents to ensure children attend regularly with rules prescribed by the school. Further, Section 444 if a child is absent without authorisation, the parent is guilty of an offence and sanctions, including fines of up to £1000 can be issued. Section 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 can be fined of up to £2500 and up to 3 months in prison where the parent knew about the absence but failed to act.

If a child could not attend due to illness or an unavoidable cause this could be used in mitigation. However, case law has stated that stress from bullying, behavioural or mental health difficulties or a chaotic lifestyle should not be considered an unavoidable cause.

Under no circumstances should a parent or carer remove a child from the school during the school day unless for an emergency.

Under no circumstances should a parent keep a child off school as an implied threat against the school to further their grievance or concern.

In all cases absences will be unauthorised and with potential referrals to educational welfare; possibly leading to prosecution.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 11.20am and will be kept open until 12.20pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers must contact the school via telephone on 023 8077 1381, selecting option 2 and provide details of the absence. Alternatively, this information can be sent to the attendance@redbridgeschool.co.uk email, putting the students name and year group in the subject line.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's 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 parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Information and evidence of medical and dental appointments can be sent to attendance@redbridgeschool.co.uk, putting the students name and year group in the subject line. Details can also be provided via telephone by calling 023 8077 1381.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Pupils who arrive at school after 8.40 will wait in the outside playground and will discuss their punctuality with the member of staff on duty. Should a student's absence become persistent, they will be subject to certain sanctions such as time-limited access to the canteen and break/lunch detentions. The school may choose to impose different sanctions depending on the circumstances of the individual.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers will be able to see the pupil's attendance on a termly written report. In addition, parents may use the Arbor App/web browser to view a pupil's attendance at any time.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Should a pupil be classed as persistently absent, parent/carers will be notified in writing. Should their attendance fail to improve the following actions may take place:

- Illness absences may only be authorised when accompanied by medical evidence;
- Further letters may be sent;
- Tutors/ Assistant Heads of Year may follow up the absences with phone calls.
- Parents/carers may be invited in for meetings;
- Action plans and targets may be put in place;
- Students may be placed on an attendance report;
- The school's attendance bus may visit the pupil at home.
- The school may seek advice from the Education Welfare Service and refer the pupil on to their service.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice 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 pupil 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 or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is regularly discussed within tutor sessions with the importance of regular attendance being highlighted, along with the social and academic benefits being explored.

- Tutor groups can earn group rewards for continued good attendance and/or improving attendance.
- Individual “Attendance Champions” are announced each week, who receive benefits such as “jumping the lunch queue”.
- Year groups provide a variety of rewards throughout the year, such as non-school uniform days and other themed rewards.
- The school also holds major whole-school reward events, such as Party in the Park.

The school reserves the right to adjust and adapt the rewards in accordance with the needs of the cohort.

Where a student is not attending school for reasons of stress due to bullying, mental health or behavioural difficulties this is not defined as an ‘avoidable cause’. At Redbridge Community School a non-attender who cites one of these reasons will be placed under the care and responsibility of our Edu-K8 in house inclusion team.

The school will not allow for excuses to be made to avoid attending school as rewards and evidence shows that by missing school regularly results in underperformance in GCSEs and at higher risk of NEET (Not in Education or Training).

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil’s parent/carer is required to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

A text message/ email will be sent after an absence is recorded in session 1.

If a pupil’s absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this

If a pupil’s absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil’s individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

School attendance data is used to;

- Track the attendance of individual pupils.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Alex Hoyle, Assistant Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's

		absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day