

The Royal Liberty School

"Where boys are ambitious, where boys succeed"



ATTENDANCE POLICY

SCHOOL	
Reviewed by:	Mr D Hinnigan (AHT)
Review Date:	June 2019
Next Review:	August 2020

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

Regular attendance and excellent punctuality are the foundations for academic achievements and personal development. They establish a responsible attitude towards the opportunities available at school and underpin the basis for the world of work. Attendance and punctuality are strongly linked to students' well-being and safety. Regular attendance demonstrates a commitment to learning and the school community. Please ensure that you and your child/children support our school rules about attendance.

The policy must:-

- Adhere to national, local and institutional guidelines.
- Support students, parents/carers and staff to promote excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Be available on the school website to students, parents/carers and staff to access.
- Comply with legal requirements for recording and reporting attendance.

Guiding Principles

We are committed to ensuring that all students benefit from the opportunities available at Royal Liberty School. Our expectation is that students arrive on time and attend regularly, that is - every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so. We explain about different types of absence in this policy and we will actively promote this ethos throughout the school community and encourage students to achieve this. Where this expectation is not met, we will identify and address the barriers that prevent this.

Aims

- Encourage students to set high attendance and punctuality as priorities in their lives, recognising the importance to their future economic well-being.
- For students to attain high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To reduce levels of both authorised and unauthorised absences using appropriate interventions.
- To raise parental awareness and expectations with regard to regular attendance.
- Provide a stimulating, relevant educational experience to encourage high attendance.

Attendance

- We expect our students to attend school on time every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so for example - illness.
- We will celebrate and reward students who achieve our expectations of high level of attendance and those who have shown sustained improvement.
- We will share attendance information with parents and students focusing on

the link between attendance and achievement.

- We will promote high attendance and punctuality through assemblies, class discussion; always reinforcing the link between attendance and achievement.
- The school will communicate attendance matters to parents via text, telephone, email, letter and through the school website.

Absence from school

There are only two categories of absence from school:

Authorised - approved

Unauthorised - not approved

Only the Head teacher (or their delegate) can approve absence from school. That is the law. Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department for Education Guidance on School Attendance.

Requests for absence in term time must be submitted in writing in advance to the Head teacher who will treat every request on an individual basis and respond accordingly. The rules about what type of absence is acceptable is set out below.

Authorised (approved) absence - types of authorised absence that may be approved:-

- Leave of absence - for bereavement, funeral, wedding.
- Medical absence for appointments - at hospital or orthodontic appointments.

(Non-urgent, routine appointments should be made after school hours or during school holidays) Students are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day.

- Illness.
- Religious observance.
- If a student is excluded from school for a behaviour related incident, this is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised (not approved) absence - types of absence that will not be approved

- Absence due to a birthday, shopping for uniform, looking after family members.
- Holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed by the Head teacher - in line with the changes to the law implemented in 2013.
- Late arrival to school after the register has closed has to be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absence can lead to parents/carers being fined by the Local Authority

All absence - authorised and unauthorised - will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern and validity is acted upon swiftly to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

How our policy works in practice

Punctuality (Lates)

- Students who arrive late to registration are recorded a L (late before registration closes). Registration takes place at 8.45am - 9am. Students should be in school for the **start of Registration at 8.45am**.
- Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the school and letters sent to parents. Persistent late arrival will result in parents and students being asked to attend a meeting with the Head teacher/Education Welfare Officer/or delegate.
- If a student arrives after the registers have closed at 9.30am, in cases of persistent late arrival this will be recorded as a U (unauthorised late arrival) **Unauthorised sessions can result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.**

Medical appointments

- We monitor the amount of time missed due to medical appointments carefully.
- We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and ongoing dental treatment, may require a student having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek explanation from parents where a whole day is missed for this reason. Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school.
- Routine, non-urgent appointments must be made after school time and during the 12 week school holiday periods.

Illness

- Students are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some students will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We will support students in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on their education.
- Medical evidence will be requested by the school where a student is absent from school, due to illness for 5 or more days or when the absence is linked to a school holiday.
- When a student is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, medical evidence will be requested to support the absences and/or a meeting will be arranged to discuss with the Head Teacher/Education Welfare Officer/or delegate.

Holidays in term time

- If a parent feels there are exceptional circumstances that support a request for leave of absence in term time, they must put the request in writing to the Head teacher.
- Each case will be considered individually and the decision communicated to the parent(s).

Procedure

- 'First Day Calling' takes place as soon as the registers have been processed. This involves the attendance officer sending out an absence message and then calling the contacts on SIMS to speak with parents and ask where their child is if there is no response. Each child in the school has a minimum of two contacts on SIMS. Where a contact cannot be made the school may perform

a home visit if it is appropriate. The attendance officer will be in liaison with the HOYS and the Assistant Head of Pastoral Care.

- There will be weekly meetings with the EWO, Heads of Year, the Pupil Premium Coordinator and the Deputy Head teacher.
- The meetings will be documented and all professionals will follow through with any necessary actions.
- Parents / Carers will come in for meetings and action plans will be created.
- If persistent absence continues after pastoral intervention and parent's involvement, then the EWO will proceed to the appropriate legal arena.
- Governors regularly review and monitor attendance.
- The EWO (Jeanette Willis) and HOY (Head of Year) conduct home visits where appropriate to ensure that a student is safe and also to try and encourage a child back to school, where appropriate.
- The EWO conducts an assembly with every year group once per year so that the students fully understand her role.
- Attendance reports, certificates and badges are regularly provided to students in assemblies.
- The notice boards are regularly updated with attendance figures around the school.
- Every half term the students receive their attendance report in assemblies and this is discussed at length.
- Any student under 90% meets with their head of year regularly to track their attendance and aim for it to improve and move out of this zone.

Register Taking

- Teaching Staff are to take the register every form time at 8.45am.
- All registers taken on Sims unless it is assembly and then a hard copy is sent to the hall for staff to complete.
- Teaching Staff need to take the register in the first ten minutes of every lesson.
- If a student is missing from class without reason then the staff member needs to contact student services.
- Student Services will look to locate the student and if they are unsuccessful they will call home immediately to inform parents / carers.
- Staff are aware that no students should be taking the register at any time as it is a legal document.

Objectives and Strategies

- The school should have clear procedures which produce a consistent approach towards attendance and punctuality.
- The school should have effective methods of rewarding good attendance and punctuality.
- For the purposes of this school an absence will be authorised by the Head teacher or her nominee if the absence is caused by personal illness or is known in advance and has been sanctioned and deemed reasonable.
- Absence for the purpose of a family holiday will not normally be authorised except where there are clear compassionate reasons.
- A student is deemed late if he arrives in the registration form after 8.45am.
- All teachers will keep a register of attendance and punctuality for individual lessons and if a student is suspected to be truanting they will pass this information directly to the pastoral team and student services.

- Attendance officer must collect in notes of explanation following any absence from school. This must be signed by the person with parental responsibility. The school will authorise absence for work experience, attendance at college courses, study leave, attendance for interviews, and visits in connection with courses being undertaken at school.
- The school will work closely with the Education Welfare Service in following up cases of unauthorised or frequent absence from school with home visits and meetings with parents.
- The Education Welfare Officer (EWO), will work across all schools in the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and encourage collaborative working for the best outcomes.
- The school will observe procedures which will not jeopardise the successful outcome of any court proceedings for non-attendance which may be brought by officers of the Local Authority.

Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered students of school age attend school regularly and punctually and that they receive an education suitable for their aptitude and ability. The school have a legal responsibility for maintaining school registers and taking the register twice a day. The school also has a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority. We also have a safeguarding responsibility and duty of care to all our students. Student responsibilities - we encourage our students to become independent young people including taking responsibility for their attendance and punctuality when this is age appropriate.

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:

- 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](#)
- Parental responsibilities - regarding Penalty Notices (Fines) July 2016
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/parental-responsibility-measures>
- Working together to Safeguard Children July 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf
- Keeping children safe in education Mar 2015
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Educating Children with Health Needs May 2013
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions Sep 2014
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>
- Children missing education
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>
- School Attendance Nov 2013
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary.

Date of this policy: June 2019

Review date: August 2020

Reviewed by: David Hinnigan (Assistant Headteacher)

Signature of Head Teacher:



Date: 12.09.2019

Signature of Chair of Governors



Date 12.09.2019

June 2019

Attendance Policy (v3)

JW

