

Attendance Policy

Reviewed:

October 2022



Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning.
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure attendance remains at or above Government and Local Authority targets.

At Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School we believe that school education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. Ryhill will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. It is the parents' /carers' responsibility to ensure that their children arrive on time and return home safely.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils to be in school every day.

- **Everybody, Everyday Ethos**

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact school daily to report the child's absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is going to be unable to attend the school.
- Contact the school office promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school before 8.30am.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.

We expect that we will:

- Maintain daily accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality on an at least a weekly basis.
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence at the close of register.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, a plan will be drawn up to maximise attendance

- Make a home visit if parents/carers are unresponsive by phone or email or if there is concern for the welfare of the child. A letter must be left if parents/carers do not answer the door to explain that they must contact school as a matter of urgency. The EWO will be notified if parents continue to be unresponsive.
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- Celebrate good attendance and punctuality weekly and identify the class with the highest attendance. Attendance for each class to be on display.
- Class attendance will be shared with parents via class dojo.
- Provide termly attendance reports for all children to parents/carers.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent/carer's concerns.
- Meet half termly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support attendance and punctuality.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare Officer. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.
- Will notify the Local Authority (LA) after 15 days sickness.
- Will notify EWO after 10 days continuous unexplained absence. This can be reduced if there is concern for the welfare of the child.
- Children with attendance below 90% are classed as a persistent absentee (PA). PA figures are reported to the government.
- Will put a copy of the policy on the school website and in the front reception.
- Will report key facts and figures to governors at each full board meeting.

Examples of absences:

Authorised absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil.
- Hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil with proof of appointment.
- Major religious observances.
- External exams or educational assessments.

Unauthorised absences:

- Holidays.
- Shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park.
- Birthday treat.
- Oversleeping due to a late night.
- Looking after other children / other family member.
- Appointments for other family members.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality is crucial. Lateness causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time. The school doors are open from **8.45am**. A breakfast club is also available from **7.45am** at a small cost.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.

School starts at **8.50am**. School doors will remain open between 8.45am and 8.50am.

If a child arrives after 8.50am they must report to the main reception entrance.

If they arrive after 8.50am they are recorded as late.

A child will continue to be recorded as late up until 9.15am.

After 9.15am they will be recorded as an unauthorised absent.

Morning registers close in class at **10 minutes after the start of the session (9.00am)**.

If a child arrives after the start of school (**9.00am**) but before the register officially closes in the main school office (**9.15am**) they will be recorded as L and the minutes late recorded on *Integris*.

After this time (**9.15am**) lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

Afternoon registration is taken at **1.10pm (KS2) and 12.30pm (KS1)**. Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

8.45am – 8.50am – children recorded as /

8.51am – 9.15am – children recorded as L

After 9.15am children are recorded as Unauthorised if they attend late without a valid reason.

Children with persistent lateness will be requested to meet with a senior member of staff to discuss reducing lateness.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally responsible for the children in their care and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are only allowed to leave the site with an identified adult.
- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving and be signed back in on their return with the time of exit and entry.
- Where a pupil is being collected during the school day, parents/carers are to report to the office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves without permission their parents/carers will be contacted. Should contact be unsuccessful it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.

Term Time Holidays

Holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence will not be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these, but may be subject to change.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will **NOT** be authorised. The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- In exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for a maximum of ten days of holiday.
- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, a letter outlining the reasons must be submitted for consideration by the Head Teacher on behalf of the school governors.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified. Letters received retrospectively will not be considered.
- Holidays during term time will be referred to the EWO and a fine may be issued.

See Appendix A for Term time holiday flow chart.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School will attempt to support all pupils to achieve maximum possible attendance and will inform parents/ carers when attendance starts to fall. Where attendance is falling to a level causing concern parents/carers will be invited in to school to discuss ways to improve. Where attendance continues to fall then a further meeting may be held. Where attendance falls in to the persistent absentee category the school will refer to the EWO who will work in partnership with the school and parents/carers in support of pupils who are failing to attend the school on a regular basis. (See Appendix B)

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty notice is issued, parents/carers will be issued with a letter warning of their liability to receive such a notice.

Penalty Notices

Parents/carers and pupils are supported by the school and by the LA to overcome issues that prevent regular school attendance through a wide range of intervention strategies. Where this intervention fails, a penalty notice can be issued for unauthorised absence and where a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance. This policy is in line with the Wakefield Council Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices and falls under Sections 444a and 444b of the Education Act 1996. The Education (Penalty Notices: England) Regulations 2007 set the framework for the operation of the Penalty Notice Scheme.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice might be issued are:

- Irregular school attendance.
- Unauthorised holidays in term time.
- Overt Truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps).

- Parentally condoned absences which are not authorised by school.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Being in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion.
- Pupils on the “Fast Track to Attendance” scheme.

Payment of Penalty Notices

- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. The penalty is issued per parent/carer and may be issued to anyone who has parental responsibility.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Attendance at Nursery

Children do not become Statutory School Age until the term following their 5th birthday and as such are not bound by regulations regarding attendance at school. However Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School recognises the importance of regular attendance to ensure that good habits are formed and progress is maximised in preparation for the rigour ahead of them. As such we will monitor the attendance of all students and where patterns of non-attendance are identified we will support families in the following ways:

- Arrange to meet the parent/carer of the pupil as early as possible.
- Plan actions with the parent/carer to support attendance improvement.

Changing Schools

It is important that if a family decides to send their child to a different school, they inform Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- A new home address if appropriate.

The pupil's records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority for follow up.

Further information on school attendance and the Wakefield Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct can be found at:

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-children/supporting-families/education-welfare-service/school-attendance-matters>

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-children/supporting-families/education-welfare-service/legal-measures-to-support-school-attendance>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/401467/parental_responsibility_measures_for_school_attendance_and_behaviour.pdf.pdf

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/Documents/schools-children/education-welfare-service/penalty-notice-code-of-conduct.pdf>

Appendix A: Term Time Holidays

Holiday requests

When will we refer to the EWO for a potential fine?

Term of request		
Autumn	Spring	Summer
If a request is made in the autumn term school will look back at your child's previous attendance record from the year before.	If a request is made in the spring term school will look back at your child's previous attendance record from the autumn and spring term that year.	If a request is made in the summer term school will look back at your child's previous attendance record from the autumn, spring and summer term that year.
If this attendance figure is under 97% then <u>we will</u> refer to the EWO for a potential fine.		

Appendix A (continued): Term Time Holidays

A holiday form is completed by the parents outlining the nature of the holiday and any circumstances that need to be taken into account. At least 4 weeks before the intended holiday.



School acknowledges the receipt of the form, with a letter stating the schools' policy on term time holidays.



Will the holiday be referred for further action?

The head teacher will review the request for a holiday taking into account the following criteria:

- Are there special circumstances evidenced by the parents e.g. Work commitments, family wedding?
- Is the child's attendance currently outstanding (99 – 100%)? Is it under our target of 97%?
- Is the holiday no more than 5 days?
- Anyone taking more than 5 days holiday will be referred to the EWO service for a potential fine.
- Have the family taken any previous holidays this academic year?
- Was a request for a term time holiday form completed?

All term time holidays will be unauthorised. It is the head teacher's discretion if parents will be referred to the EWO for further action.

N
O

Parents will be informed by letter that no further action will be taken by the school for this holiday.
The holiday will be unauthorised in the register (G)

Y
E
S

Parents will be informed by letter that that they have been referred to the EWO for a potential fine.
The holiday will be unauthorised in the register (G)

