



Learning Together, Learning for Life

Pupil Attendance Policy

Agreed by FGB: 10.11.2021

Date of Review: November 2022

Headteacher:.....Date:.....

Chair of Governors:.....Date:.....

At Reed First School, we expect the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. Regular and punctual attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law.

The Law states that all children between 5 and 18 should receive a full-time education and it is parents / carers duty to ensure that this happens. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind in their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related expectations. Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers who are registered at our school on our website.

This attendance policy aims to:

- ensure that all members of our school community are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.
- demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- keep whole school attendance above 96%
- support pupils and families whose attendance falls below 96%

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

The Leadership and Management of the School will be expected to:

- offer a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by all staff, pupils and families.
- make sure all staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that all pupils understand its importance.
- convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement.
- make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.

- ensure the Headteacher has clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan.
- governors should have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- the implementation of the policy.
- all staff knowing and understanding their responsibilities for attendance.
- agreeing whether an absence should be authorised. The power to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher or delegated person within the school, and not with parents or the local authority – see Appendix A for circumstances under which an absence will be authorised;
- working actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
- having clear policies in place to address persistent absence.
- ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- monitoring trends.
- implementing a system for all parents to report a child's absence.
- compiling attendance data for the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO).
- reporting to the Governing Body the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- reminding all parents of their commitment to this policy.
- building respectful relationships with all staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- communicating openly and honestly with all staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for all staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.
- monitoring whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions.
- ensuring parents are aware when their child's attendance falls below 96%.
- arranging meetings with parents to ensure clear channels of communication are in place and offer support/intervention where necessary.

- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.

The escalation of procedures to address absence needs to be:

- understood by parents and carers
- implemented consistently
- reviewed regularly
- ensuring that the Local Authority is notified of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly via a 10 Day Absence Form. See guidance on HCC Grid for form – <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-toschool/attendance/attendance-guidance-and-statutoryresponsibilities>
- establishing, implementing and monitoring robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME)
See guidance on HCC Grid regarding Children Missing Education <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-traveltoschool/attendance/children-missing-from-education>
- developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND).
- engaging all pupils in consultation on attendance policy, practice and rewards.
- Ensuring that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education. See guidance on HCC Grid when a parent is considering EHE <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-toschool/attendance/elective-home-education>

The School Office Manager is expected to:

- contact parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 9.30 am.
- Inform the Headteacher immediately if no contact is made after the initial contact by 9.30am.
- ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date.
- keeping the Head and all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of all pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

All staff members are expected to:

- treat all pupils with dignity building relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries.
- take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence handling confidential information sensitively understanding the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity.

- communicate effectively with all families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being.
- deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events.
- use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure.
- regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through your regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents.

Teaching Staff are expected to:

- set an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- implement the policy;
- ensure that the registers are taken at 9am and 1pm and are accurate and up to-date;
- monitor class and individual attendance patterns;
- inform the school office of any concerns;
- emphasise with children and parents the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- provide tailored praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time.
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy.
- build respectful relationships with all staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating openly and honestly with all staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Model respectful relationships and appropriate communication for all staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.

The role of parents and carers:

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.15 am at the latest. For illness lasting more than 3 days, school may request a doctor's letter as proof of illness.
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- not booking holidays during term-time.
- treating staff with respect.
- actively supporting the work of the school.
- calling on staff for help when they need it.
- communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support.

Encouraging Good Attendance

At Reed First School, we use clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance. We ensure these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils.

This is achieved through:

- publicising good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body.
- awarding good attendance badges and certificates to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance.
- actively praise pupils who show an active improvement to attendance through certificates.

- supporting families when needed to improve their ability to attend above 96% and arrive on time.

Dealing with Lateness

The office manager will monitor lateness and inform the Headteacher of patterns of lateness.

If required, the Headteacher will contact the parents with the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed.

At 8.45am the outside gate will be opened. Pupils should not enter the school buildings before this time unless they attend Early Birds club or by prior arrangement. Early Birds children will be brought outside at 8.45am and will be supervised until they are passed to their teacher. Pupils should come onto the playground area next to their class.

At 8.50am the bell will be rung by which point all pupils are expected to be on the playground. Pupils will line up outside their classroom with their teacher and walk into school together. Parents and carers will leave the playground as the bell goes.

The outside gate will be locked at 9.00am. Any pupils arriving after this time must report to the school office through the main entrance.

Pupils who arrive between 9.00 am and 9.05 am will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session (Code L). Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9.05 am and parent provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.

Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).

These late marks whether authorised or not are included in overall absences.

As a school, we will never impose sanctions on pupils directly for low attendance or lateness unless this is directly their fault. The school will work with the parents or carers to address the issues and support the child.

Absence at other times of the school day

As previously stated in the policy under 'The role of parents and carers', appointments should be avoided during the school day. If a pupil misses a register either at 9.00am or 1.00pm, the session is included as an absence. Parents should contact the school office prior to any appointment to enable the Headteacher to authorise or unauthorise the request. Absences due to medical appointments will count as an absence.

Requests for time off for any other reason must be requested in writing to the Headteacher in good time. Parents or Carers will be informed in writing by the Headteacher to inform them whether their request is authorised or not. A meeting

may be requested to discuss matters further.
<https://reed.herts.sch.uk/download/leave-of-absence-form/>

Holidays during term time – changes to legislation which came into force in September 2013 made clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If there are exceptional circumstances behind a request these should be discussed with the Headteacher.
<https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/holidays-in-term-time>

Religious Observance – a maximum of 2 days absence is allowed for recognised religious observance.

Pupils who are persistently absent

Where a pupil is persistently absent despite previous support from school, the school will use effective service level agreements with external partners to support pupils with persistent absence, including:

- local authority attendance services
- school nursing and mental health professionals
- children's social care staff where appropriate

Fixed Penalty Notices

As a school, we follow Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures:

- We expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems.
- If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.
- If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.

We will follow the guidance when needed at: <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absenceholiday>

Part time timetables

As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to

maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable. The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday) All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part -time timetable. <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-part-time-students>

Appendix A

Absences will be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Headteacher.
- The pupil is ill and has not been asked to provide proof of absence.

- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision.
- There is a close family bereavement.
- Leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

Further resources

Statutory guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Guidance and resources

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/online-science-pe-wellbeing-and-send-resources-for-home-education#mental-wellbeing>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approaches-to-preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

http://qna.files.parliament.uk/qna-attachments/1056480/original/HL13531_Respectful_schools_signposting_tool.pdf

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Learning-development/social-work/covid-19/COVID-19-updates-for-social-work.aspx>

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/texting-parents/>

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-pupil-absence>