

Education Policy

Trust Attendance Policy

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1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 We intend to work in partnership with the Local Authority and parents/carers to support pupils in attending their education within the Raleigh Education Trust. We intend to support and encourage pupils to attend their education across all academies within the Raleigh Education Trust or at one or more of our approved Alternative Providers by providing a relevant curriculum and pastoral care. We recognise that it is our responsibility to do everything possible to raise parent/carers' awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality and that it is a legal requirement to attend school regularly.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. The Department of Education states that any pupil with 90% attendance or below is a persistent absentee from education. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.
- 2.2 Parents of compulsory school-age (5 to 16 years old) children have a legal duty to ensure their children receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at school (this includes home education). If a child is registered at school, parents have the responsibility of ensuring that their child attends regularly.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 To continue to raise levels of achievement and participation by maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- 3.2 To build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have support in place to attend school.
- 3.3 To keep an accurate and up-to-date record of attendance.
- 3.4 To inform parents/carers of punctuality and attendance issues.
- 3.5 To identify the cause of non-attendance and reduce absence including persistent and severe absence by early identification and appropriate intervention.
- 3.6 To ensure all pupils have access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- 3.7 To ensure all staff understand their roles in the monitoring and recording of attendance.
- 3.8 To maintain and improve attendance across the Raleigh Education Trust and associated academies and alternative providers and ensure clear expectations are shared.
- 3.9 To monitor and evaluate the processes regularly.

4. Attendance Legislation

- 4.1 Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring any child of compulsory school age receives full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability, and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or education otherwise.
- 4.2 If a child who is of compulsory school age (5-16 years old) who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 and may be prosecuted.
- 4.3 These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
- a) Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
 - b) Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
 - c) Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
 - d) The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2012, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
 - e) The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Governing Board

- 5.1.1 The Governing Board are responsible for;
- a) Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
 - b) Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
 - c) Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
 - d) Monitoring attendance figures for each school.
 - e) Making sure staff receive adequate training.
 - f) Holding the Principals to account for the implementation of this policy.

5.2 The Principal

5.2.1 The Principal is responsible for:

- a) Implementation of this policy.
- b) Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Governors.
- c) Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- d) Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- e) Issuing fixed penalty notices, where necessary.

5.3 Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead

5.3.1 The Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead is responsible for:

- a) Leading attendance across the trust.
- b) Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- c) Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- d) Having oversight of data analysis.
- e) Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- f) Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- g) Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

5.3.2 The Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead is Sarah Astle, who can be contacted on 07957200273 or via email, sarah.astle@raleightrust.org

5.4 Attendance Officer

5.4.1 The Attendance officer is responsible for:

- a) Monitoring and analysing attendance data. (see section 7)
- b) Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- c) Providing regular attendance reports to school staff.
- d) Working with Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) to tackle persistent absence.
- e) Conducting home visits/safe and well checks.
- f) Arranging meetings with parents and other agencies to address attendance concerns.
- g) Referring to Education Welfare Services.
- h) Referring to other relevant services.

5.4.2 Each academy has an officer that oversees their attendance. (See Section 14 for the Trust Attendance Team)

5.5 Class Teacher

5.5.1 Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information into the trust MIS system, Arbor. Regarding our pupils educated offsite at an alternative provider, marks are submitted twice daily to the Trust Attendance Admin who will input and amend any marks accordingly.

5.6 Parents

5.6.1 Parents are expected to:

- a) Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- b) Call the academy to report their absence before 9:30am on the day of the absence and every subsequent day of absence. Parents should advise the academy when they expect their child to return.
- c) Provide the academy with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- d) Ensure where possible that appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

6. Recording Attendance

6.1 Attendance register

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

6.1.2 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:

- a) Present.
- b) Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- c) Absent.
- d) Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

6.1.3 Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- a) The original entry.
- b) The amended entry.
- c) The reason for the amendment.
- d) The date on which the amendment was made.
- e) The name and position of the person who made the amendment. (Please see Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.)

6.1.4 We will also record:

- a) Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- b) The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending and approved educational activity.
- c) The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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

6.1.6 Due to the nature of our settings start times for pupils will vary across the trust. Therefore, it is important that parents familiarise themselves with each academy's start time. Pupils must arrive at school before the registers close on each school day.

- a) Registers for **Ambleside Academy** will open at **8:50am for all compulsory school age children and will remain open until 9:20am.** Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.
- b) Registers for **Denewood Academy** will open at **9am and remain open until 9:30am.** Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.
- c) Registers for **Unity Academy** will open at **9am and remain open until 9:30am.** Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.
- d) Registers for **Westbury Academy** will open at **8.50am and remain open until 9:20am.** Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.
- e) Registers for **Woodlands Academy** will open at **8.55am and remain open until 9:25am.** Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.

6.1.7 Parents of pupils who are repeatedly late, especially after the registers close, will be invited to meet with the Trust Attendance Officer to discuss what barriers are preventing them from attending on time and what support can be implanted to help reduce the amount of lates they accrue.

7. Reporting Pupil Absense

7.1 Pupil absence must be reported by 9:30 am on each day of absence to your child's school. This can be done via telephone and select the attendance line when prompted. Parents/carers whose child attends an alternative provision must contact the provider to inform them of any absences. Due to the difference in start times for some providers, parents must familiarise themselves with the attendance procedures for each provision. Reporting absences can be done either by telephone or email. Failure to report absence will result in the Trust Attendance Team or a member of staff at the alternative provider your child attends, following up with telephone calls, texts, and home visits.

7.2 If there has been no contact made concerning the absence, a member of the Trust Attendance Team will conduct a Safe and Well visit. This will be triggered on day 3 of absence.

8. Reporting to Parents

- 8.1 Parents will receive half termly updates regarding their child’s attendance and absence levels. Pupils with good and improved attendance will receive certificates. Any attendance concerns will be communicated via letter or telephone call. Parents/carers may also be invited in for meetings with a member of the attendance team.

9. Attendance Monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

- 9.1.1 Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and early across each school and at an individual level.
- 9.1.2 Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a concern.
- 9.1.3 Pupil level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels 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 body.

9.2 Analysing attendance

- 9.2.1 Analyse data and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- 9.2.2 Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

9.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

- 9.3.1 Provide half termly attendance reports to parents/carers and school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- 9.3.2 Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

10. Sickness

- 10.1 If your child has sickness and/or diarrhoea, we advise that they remain off school for 48 hours. If your child has had no further bouts of sickness/diarrhoea during the 48 hours and you feel that your child is well enough to return, please send them back to school. If at any time your child becomes ill we will monitor them and contact parents to gain permission to send them home if necessary. If we cannot contact parents, the pupil will be monitored by staff until such time contact and permission are obtained.

11. First day Contact

- 11.1 Raleigh Education Trust operates a “first-day contact” system. This means that if your child is absent and we have not been informed, a text/telephone call will be made to ascertain the reason for absence on the first day and the subsequent days' absence.
- 11.2 If we have attempted to make contact but received no reply and absence continues, further action will be taken by either the Attendance Team or the Attendance Officer at your child's provision.
- 11.3 This will include:
- a) Home visits
 - b) Contacting any agencies involved
 - c) Following the 10-Day Rule.

12. The 10-Day Rule

- 12.1 If a pupil is absent for 10 days and there has been no contact made with parent/ carer and home visits have been unsuccessful a referral to Child Missing in Education will be made and further welfare services may become involved.

13. Attendance Registration

- 13.1 Attendance at our academies is recorded using Arbor- MIS system, using the approved DfE attendance codes. Each academy/alternative provider is responsible for completing registrations each day, in line with statutory guidance. The Trust Attendance & Welfare Administrator will monitor all registration sessions, as well as update with any known pupil absence and contact parent/carers for any unknown absence. The Trust Attendance & Welfare Administrator will make daily contact with all alternative providers to check on absence and any other issues that may have been raised regarding attendance.

14. Raleigh Education Trust Attendance & Welfare Team

- 14.1 The Attendance & Welfare Team consists of six staff members. If you require any information or support, please contact the following members of staff on the contact details listed:
- a) Mrs Sarah Astle – Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead sarah.astle@raleightrust.org
 - b) Mr Tim Astle – Trust Attendance and Welfare Deputy tim.astle@raleightrust.org
 - c) Mrs Dawn Mansbridge – Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer dawn.mansbridge@raleightrust.org
 - d) Mrs Sue Matthews - Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer sue.matthews@raleightrust.org
 - e) Mrs Selina Martinsons – Trust Attendance Administrator selina.martinson@raleightrust.org
 - f) Miss Sarah King - Trust Attendance Administrator sarah.king@raleightrust.org
 - g) Ms Vicki Askew – Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer victoria.askew@raleightrust.org

15. Persistence Absence

- 15.1 All pupils are expected to achieve 95% attendance in line with the government's national expectations.
- 15.2 If a pupil's attendance falls to 90% or below, they are at risk of becoming a potential persistent absentee. Any pupil whose attendance falls to 50% and below is classed as a severe persistent absentee. In cases of persistent absence, the following procedure will be followed:
- a) Letter sent to inform parent/carer of the concern and stating improvement must be made.
 - b) If no improvement in attendance is made a meeting with the parent/carer will be arranged to address any concerns or reasons for poor attendance. During this meeting, a PEAP (Personalised Education and Attendance Plan) will be completed in agreement with the school, parents, and pupil.
 - c) Targets are set for the pupil to achieve within an agreed timeline.
 - d) If there has been no significant improvement within an agreed time and all offers of support and intervention fail, a referral to Education Welfare will be made.
- 15.3 To identify pupils at risk of falling into this category, weekly meetings will be held with the Trust Attendance Lead, Senior Leaders, and the DSL of each academy. This core team of staff will use the attendance data from the whole school to look for trends within the cohorts to identify those at risk early and implement the appropriate level of intervention.

16. Home Visits

- 16.1 Home visits will be conducted for many reasons:
- a) Unable to contact parent/carers.
 - b) Safe and well checks – any pupil that we have not managed to see or who has not attended the academy or provision for 3 days, will receive a home visit to establish contact and to confirm a visual sighting of the child. If this is unsuccessful the process will be repeated until a visual sighting is made. If a pupil has not been seen for 10 days, we will follow the procedure for Children Missing in Education. We work collaboratively with providers, and they also conduct home visits to establish contact.
 - c) Check addresses and contact details.

17. Leave of Absence

- 17.1 If you require a leave of absence, you must do so in writing either by letter, email, or by completing a leave of absence request form. These can be requested from the main reception of each academy and addressed to the attention of the Academy Principal. The Principal will make the overall decision as to whether to authorise any leave of absence requested during term time and/or to initiate a penalty notice for the holiday taken. All holidays should be taken during the school's allocated holidays or there is the possibility of a penalty notice being requested by the Local Authority.
- 17.2 Leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the Principal's discretion and will be decided on an individual basis taking account of any contextual information provided by the parent/carer. The Principal's decision will be final and communicated in writing to the parent. Parents are invited to contact the Academy Principal should they feel that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the requested leave.
- 17.3 Parents have the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Local Governing Body (LGB) Chair within 5 days of the decision. Any appeal must outline reasons for reconsideration. LGB appeals will be heard within 15 days of receipt.

18. Vulnerable pupils

- 18.1 Social workers, as well as parents/carers, will be contacted in the event of an absence. This primarily applies to children on an active Child Protection Plan or Child in Need plan and will be triggered on the first day of absence. Any failure to make contact will also result in a home visit.

19. Request for Service

- 19.1 We will request intervention from Education Welfare Service for pupils whose unauthorised absence is above 10%. The Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead will identify those pupils who need Education Welfare involvement. A referral will then be made, we will gather the evidence, and this will be sent to the Education Welfare Service, all letters and correspondence from alternative providers regarding attendance at the named provisions will also be used as evidence to support the referral.
- 19.2 Prior to the Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead requesting legal action, parents/carers will receive at least one warning letter and will also be invited in for an attendance meeting to discuss the concerns we have regarding attendance. We aim to resolve attendance issues by being as flexible and supportive as possible with pupils' various needs and concerns.
- 19.3 The Attendance Team will provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

20. Authorised and Unauthorised absences

20.1 Authorised Absences

- 20.1.1 The Trust Attendance Team and associated academies will authorise absences, but this will depend on the circumstances of the absence. Authorised absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence. All periods of authorised absence will be determined by the Academy after sufficient reason and explanation have been established.

20.2 Family holidays during term time

20.2.1 Parents should not normally take their child on holiday during term time. Any leave of absence should be requested by filling out a holiday request form addressed to the Principal. Holidays will only be authorised due to exceptional circumstances. Any holidays taken during term time, recorded as unauthorised, may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

20.3 Illness, medical and dental appointments

20.3.1 Any absences due to medical appointments will be authorised on the production of a medical appointment card/letter.

20.3.2 If a child presents as ill whilst at their academy or their provision and is sent home due to illness, their absence will be authorised. If the child fails to return to the academy or provision the following day due to the illness presented on the previous day, that day will also be authorised. Any further days of absence, that run concurrently, will need to be confirmed by a doctor and a medical note/ appointment card/ prescription slip will be required as proof.

20.4 Days of religious observance

20.4.1 This absence is set aside for any day exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. This includes religious festivals. The academy will be sensitive to requests and parents are encouraged to give advanced notice.

20.5 Exclusions

20.5.1 Any pupils that have received a suspension will remain on roll, with the absence authorised. If for any reason a child attending a provision, loses their placement or the placement breaks down, the period of absence will be authorised until a suitable alternative placement can be established.

20.6 Family bereavements

20.6.1 In the case of a family bereavement, the academy will be sensitive and look at each case on an individual basis and have discretion when authorising such absences.

21. Note to parents

21.1 The Education Welfare Service work to raise achievement levels by working with pupils, parents, schools, other agencies, and the community, to improve the attendance of city pupils. They also work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

21.2 Your child's school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the LEA. Most local authorities employ Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) to monitor school attendance and to help parents meet their responsibility. If your child is not attending school regularly, an Education Welfare Officer may visit or write to you. EWOs work with parents to address difficulties with their child's attendance.

21.3 As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to ensure your child attends school regularly, this includes your child missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being taken to court.

22. Linked Policies & Procedures

- a) Trust Safeguarding Policy
- b) SEND Policy
- c) Relationships & Positive Behaviour Policy
- d) RET Attendance Procedures

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
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
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

Appendix 2

Research suggests that when speaking with parents, it is important to ensure they understand the information being shared and are comfortable with it. The below points are listed as a guide to help support when communicating with parents regarding their child's absences:

Absences will be tailored to each individual child ensuring it is relevant and appropriate to the parent.

Ensuring that absences are related to lessons missed rather than days/weeks, will help parents understand the amount of lost learning their child has accrued. This can help parents better understand that missed lessons cannot be easily caught up as the subject moves at pace.

Absence impacts not only the child's academic progression but also their social and emotional wellbeing. Emphasising this may lead parents to reconsider any further absences.

Making clear expectations around illness and absences by referring to the policy and NHS guidelines, can remove barriers surrounding what is acceptable for parents. In turn, this will support parents to understand the importance of good school attendance and the legal implications that can occur should school attendance become a concern.

Discussions should be factual and personalised to the child. It is important not to make parents feel they are not concerned about their child's attendance. Showing understanding of the family and their circumstances can ensure that the most appropriate support is implemented.

Personalising our approach when speaking with parents helps to establish good working relationships. Showing an understanding of each individual case allows parents to express their views. By avoiding generalising children as "all have the same needs and experiences" we can ensure that parents are not alienated especially parents with SEND children, leaving them dismissive.