



# Royal Grammar School

## Attendance Policy

### 1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential.

- RGS believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults. This will enable boys to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community and workplace. We will therefore work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all boys.
- RGS values all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents the imperative of exemplary attendance and punctuality.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Home School Agreement**, the **Sixth Form Agreement** the **Behaviour Policy** and the **Child Protection Policy**. This policy can be found on the Staff T Drive, the VLE for students and on the School website.

### 2. Legal Framework

- Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that students of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- A student ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for students of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register, taken on SIMS, must record whether the student was:
  - present
  - absent
  - present at approved educational activity; or
  - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

### 3. Categorising absence

- Where students are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school (not by parents) and will be treated as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been received.

- Parents should advise Matron by telephone (01494 551442) or email [matron@rgshw.com](mailto:matron@rgshw.com) on the first and subsequent days of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note or email from the parent/carer to the form tutor, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Absence will be categorised as follows:
  - Illness: In most cases a telephone call or an email from the parent informing the school that their son is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, doctor's letter, prescription etc.
  - Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day and provide their form tutor with a letter.
  - Excluded (no alternative provision made): A fixed-term exclusion is counted as an authorised absence. The Student Development Administrator will make arrangements for work to be sent home to be completed by the student.

A formal electronic register will be taken daily at the start of the morning session Years 7-9 (after assembly at 9:00 - 9:10), Years 10 - 13 (8:40 - 8:50 before assembly). Attendance will also be recorded every lesson. It is a legal requirement to register students and teachers must ensure that registers are taken accurately.

Students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as absent "U" code. This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session until a parent/carer provides a valid reason for the late arrival.

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to Matron to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. (Code M) The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late after the registers close without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late, missed the bus etc. (Code U)

Students are not allowed to leave the school site during the school day without permission. Arrangements are in place for Sixth Formers. These are set by the Director of Sixth Form and must be adhered to.

#### **4. Authorised absence**

- Genuine illness
- Genuine emergencies such as fire, flooding, burglary, transport strikes and extreme weather affected transport
- To attend a wedding of a first-degree relative (day of event only, not travel).
- Requests for Leave of Absence will be considered on an individual basis and will take into account the proximity of examinations. Parents should write to the Head of Year.
- Events which demonstrably cannot take place at other times (music exam, for example)
- Students in Entertainment – Students performing may require a licence and the Production Company is responsible for completing and submitting the licence to Buckinghamshire County Council. The Head of Year will ask to see a copy of the Performance Licence as part of the absence request.
- Students in non-school sport - Absence for non-school sport will be considered when students are competing or training at an independently recognised standard (i.e. top end of County or more likely Regional or National competition level); be associated with a professional body (e.g. LTA , Professional

Club e.g. WASPs etc) or a programme which incorporates academic studies and works with the school (e.g. football and rugby club academies) All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response. Where a request has been granted, the letter or email should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student is absent, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice.

## **5. Unauthorised absence**

- Holidays during term time will not be authorised.
- Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted as such by the school.
- Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:
  - A student's/family member's birthday
  - Shopping for uniforms, Christmas shopping, haircuts
  - Looking after siblings
  - Couldn't get up"; Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
  - Holidays taken in term time

## **6. Religious Observance**

RGS acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holiday periods or weekends and that this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance (code R).

It is reasonable for parents to allow their son not to attend school on a day of religious observance if recognised by the parents' religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Absence in excess of this will be categorised as unauthorised.

## **7. Examination Leave**

Examination leave may be granted for students approaching public examinations or examinations organised by the school.

## **8. Monitoring**

Matters relating to attendance are delegated by the Headmaster to the Student Development Team, moderated by the appropriate Assistant Head. The Assistant Head will report all related matters to the Headmaster and Education Committee of the governing body, including figures for attendance, authorised and unauthorised absence.

## **9. Removal from the school roll**

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will be removed from the school roll only when one of the specific, recognised circumstances apply including:

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and the hearing/appeals procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Student attending another school through moving house, preference or managed move
- When a parent informs the school in writing that the student is to be withdrawn to be educated at home

- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age

## 10. Roles and Responsibilities

RGS believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community.

### **The school will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with students and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Follow Local Authority Guidance e.g. Guidance for Students on a Reduced Timetable
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated

### **Request that Parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Confirm in writing
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child away from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.

## **11. Using Attendance Data**

- All students' attendance will be monitored and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.
- The Attendance Officer will, on a daily basis, check attendance data and email the Heads of Year and Student Development Team names where there is cause for concern. This list will trigger school action as required.
- The Assistant Head (Student Development) and the Attendance Officer, will review the half term attendance, focusing on students where attendance has fallen below 90%. The circumstances related to these students will be reviewed and this will trigger school action as required.
- Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.
- RGS will share attendance data with the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **12. Support for families**

- RGS recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a student's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their son's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.
- We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs and those with physical or mental health needs.
- RGS will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.