



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date Agreed by the Governing Body	November 2019
Date to be reviewed	November 2022
Date of last review	November 2019
Governors Committee accountable for review	Education
Senior Leadership Team member accountable for review	HMF

## 1. Introduction

- This policy accords with “School attendance: Guidance for maintained school, academies, independent schools and local authorities” (DfE, November 2016)
- All students are expected to attend school, on time, every day.
- The RGS recognises the strong link between attainment and attendance and the important role that parents play in ensuring that it is as high as possible; we are committed to maintaining the highest levels of attendance and punctuality and to reducing levels of absence. Attendance is pivotal to keeping children safe, to social inclusion and to equal opportunity.
- 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 SharePoint, CloudBase for students and on the School website.

RGSHW Attendance Definitions	
98-100%	Expected
90-97%	Cause for concern
Below 90%	Serious cause for concern

## 2. Legal framework

As stated in the **School attendance parental responsibility measures - Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police - January 2015 – DfE Context of the school attendance measures**

- Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).
- A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.
- A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen. From September 2013 all 16 year-olds were required to continue in education or training, until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From September 2015 they are be required to continue in full-time education or start an apprenticeship or traineeship or if in part-time education or training, spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, until their 18th birthday.

**School attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities - November 2016 DfE**

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session (a session is either the morning period – registration between 0845 and 0915 – or the afternoon period – registration at 1215). On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

### 3. Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll (registered as a pupil at this school) but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

#### i) **Unauthorised absence**

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

#### ii) **Authorised absence**

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities - November 2016 DfE

#### iii) **Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration (thus registered partly by us, and partly by another institute).

**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; we would expect this within three working days.**

Parents should advise the School Attendance Officer on each day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This can be done in the following ways:

- by telephone (01494 551466)
- by email [attendance@rgshw.com](mailto:attendance@rgshw.com)

### 4. School Procedures

## **Absence from school:**

### **Illness**

Parents should advise the School Attendance Officer by **8:00 am** on the first day of their son's absence, and **every day thereafter**, stating their son's name, his form, the reason for his absence (please give detail) and an expected date of return. This information will be recorded in the register.

Should a student be absent without contact from parents, this will be treated as a matter of concern for the child's welfare. Contact will be attempted by the school, and external agencies will be involved where necessary.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments and Music Exams**

For a medical/dental appointment or a music exam which cannot be arranged outside of school hours, parents should inform the school as far in advance as is possible. A student must show his appointment card/letter to the Attendance Officer when he signs in/out of school, and music exams must be verified with a letter from the exam board.

Please note that if students are absent for AM registration or Period 5 (PM registration) his attendance percentage will be affected. If a student has an **unavoidable** medical appointment during the school day, we would appreciate support in arranging this, where possible, at lunchtime (1.30pm-2.20pm) or after 3pm, to minimise the effect on his schooling.

### **Excluded (no alternative provision made)**

A fixed-term exclusion is counted as an authorised absence. The Deputy Headmaster's PA will make arrangements for work to be sent home to be completed by the student.

### **Leave of Absence (LOA)**

In exceptional circumstances, requests for Leave of Absence can be made to the Attendance Officer. This may include requests to attend a wedding or funeral of a first degree relative, a university visit, driving tests (not lessons), work experience, county level sport, and students in entertainment.

Any request for Leave of Absence should be made using the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form on the RGS website/app. The RGS ask for at least two weeks' notice, where possible, between the request and the actual date for which a parent has applied and for an explanation of why this leave of absence needs to be taken during term time.

Please note that the School cannot lawfully grant leave of absence for family holidays, except under clearly exceptional circumstances, and requests for LOA, in line with Government Guidelines, will normally not be authorised. Absence requests are not generally granted and almost never to those whose attendance is below 98%.

### **Late Arrival**

If a student arrives after 8.45am, without communication from a parent to the Attendance Officer by the end of the school day, he will automatically be given a Friday afternoon detention. Parents should use the phone number or email address above.

On arrival at school after 8:45am, students must immediately report to the Student Hub.

Students who take part in activities around the school (e.g. music lessons, rehearsals, sports activities/clubs) and miss their morning registration for that reason, must register themselves using the electronic registration pads located around the school before 8.45am.

If students attend a music lesson or music rehearsal during the school day and miss a lesson registration, they must register themselves using the electronic registration pads located around the school.

Students are not allowed to leave the school site during the school day without permission and advance notice must be given to the Attendance Officer. Students should sign out using the electronic registration pad in the Student Hub.

#### **5. Study Leave**

Study leave may be granted for students approaching public examinations.

#### **6. Monitoring**

Matters relating to attendance are delegated by the Headmaster to the Attendance Officer, 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.

#### **7. 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

#### **8. Roles and Responsibilities**

RGS believes 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 monitor and record attendance as well as supporting students whose attendance is of concern. We expect that parents will support the School's attendance policy by expecting full attendance at all times.

**The School will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their 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 School Attendance Guidance, November 2016 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 in line with the School's Data Protection Policy
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- RGS will 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 the 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 will 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.

**We request that Parents will:**

- 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 Attendance Officer if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences by making appointments for the doctor's, dentist's etc. outside school hours
- Inform the School of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing their 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

## 9. 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. All information shared will be done so in accordance in line with the [School's Data Protection Policy](#).
- The Attendance Officer will, on a daily basis, check attendance data and email the Heads of Year with the names of those where there is cause for concern. This list will trigger school action as required.
- The Assistant Head responsible for attendance 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.

## 10. RGS Guidance on Children Missing in Education

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. These may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risk of a child going missing in the future. Staff should be aware of the school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

From Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016

The RGSHW undertakes the following action with regard to absence:

- The AO will contact home/boarding for any unexplained absence on the first day of such absence
- The AO and/or class teachers will contact the HoY and FT/boarding when lessons are missed, particularly a pattern of lessons
- Day 5 of continuous absence, the AO will alert the HoY, FT, boarding and Matron. Depending on the reason for absence, a nominated person will contact parents.
- Day 10 of continuous absence, the AO will alert DSL, Matron and HoY, boarding and a nominated person will make weekly contact with parents and cc AO to log.
- Day 10 of continuous absence where it has not been possible to make contact with a parent/carer, the student will be reported as a Child Missing in Education (CME) using the **Buckinghamshire CME Protocol**.
- Day 15 of continuous absence, AO will alert DSL and team to make a request for home tutoring. AO to log and monitor progress via Vulnerable Students weekly meeting
- At the end of each term, the AO will send a letter home from the AH if attendance falls below 90%. The parents will be asked in for a meeting and outcome logged

- At the end of each term, the AO will alert the HoY and AH of any absences for holiday (3 or more days) and a letter from AH will be sent home and logged
- The AO/HoY/Matron/DSL/AH will meet to discuss any persistent low attendance cases and to manage these on an individual basis. This will be done with liaison with the AH in charge of Student Development, and all actions will be logged. In cases of high concern, advice will be sought from County.

#### Boarding Specific Guidance

- In terms of absence from school all boarders are under the same procedures and guidance as day students.
- In order to fully support these procedures it is important that in the case of any boarder being absent from school that boarding staff (Boarding Administrator/Matron or Boarding duty staff) liaise with the School Attendance Officer.
- In terms of outside the normal school day we need to ensure that we know where all our boarders are at any given time. Signing in and out procedures need to be followed and regular reminders given to all boarders. There is additional guidance for a boarder who is missing.

This document should be read in conjunction with the [DofE Guidance Children Missing in Education July 2016](#)

#### **What happens when a child is found to be missing during the school day?**

Students should not leave the school site without following the correct procedures:

*You must not leave the school site during the school day without permission. Prior notification/request for absence must be made to the Attendance Officer by e-mail [attendance@rqshw.com](mailto:attendance@rqshw.com), telephone 01494 551466 or via the RGS app. (School Rules).*

If a student is found to be missing during the school day the following actions will be taken:

- Matron and the Attendance Officer will be contacted to see if the child has been sent home because of illness or another circumstance.
- The FT and HOY will be contacted asap to see if they have information and for possible support in finding the student.
- Whoever has identified there is a missing student should seek the support of other members of the Student Development Team: Student Development Assistant, Head of Student Development, Assistant Head, SEN Manager etc.
- If there are known wellbeing concerns or safeguarding concerns contact a DSL immediately.
- If extra support is needed contact a member of the ST.
- An immediate search should be made of the school premises.
- When going into student toilets it is advisable to have 2 members of staff present if possible. Before entering staff need to knock loudly on the door, at least twice, and indicate that they will be entering the toilets shortly. Sufficient warning time should be allowed and ideally any student using the facilities will be allowed time to depart before staff enter the toilets. It is advisable to clearly indicate that staff are looking



for a missing student. If a senior student is nearby it is a good idea to ask them to go into the toilets first to check that there are no students using the facilities before staff enter.

- If the student is not found within 20 minutes then the parents/carers should be contacted.
- Mobile phone contact should be attempted to be made with the student by the school or parents/carers.
- Friends of the missing student can be asked if they have any information.
- Parents/carers will be advised to use many of the approaches in the section below.
- The school will ask parents/carers to contact the school if they become aware of the whereabouts of the student.
- If the school nor the parents/carers can locate the student, the police should be contacted.

### **What happens when a student has not arrived home at the end of the school day?**

- The school recognises the anxiety that this can cause in parents/carers, particularly where this is out of character for the student or where students usually have travelled with parents/carers.
- The school will ask parents/carers if they have tried the student's mobile phone number and what was the result.
- The school office will check with the FT and HOY to see if whereabouts known.
- The school will also explain to parents/carers that students could still be on site, chatting with friends, waiting for them outside a room or engaged in an after-school activity. It is a large site with over a hundred rooms and other areas.
- The school will advise parents/carers to check friends or family to ensure they have not called in there. Where friends' names at school are known, the office can ring these contacts to see if the student is there. [For confidentiality reasons, friends' contact details will not be given to other student's parents/carers]
- The school will ask parents/carers to let the school know once the student is found.
- The school will advise parents/carers to ring police if they are concerned. Parents/carers can ring the police immediately if they have serious concerns about the safety of their child.

### **What happens if parents/carers advise that a student has been missing for a sustained period of time? (e.g. since the previous evening)**

- The school will check that the police have been informed (parents/carers should have a crime reference number).
- The school will contact the police, confirm they are aware and ask if any information needs to be provided from the school (e.g. friends' contact details, or speaking to friends to see if they know where they may be).

- The school will keep in contact with parents/carers about progress of any search, and ask that they are told as soon as the student is safely returned.

**When will the school inform the police of a missing child/student:**

- When a student is known to be vulnerable or at additional risk such that any absence should be treated as having serious implications for their safety.
- Where circumstances are such that there is reason to fear for the immediate safety of the student e.g. report of crime or possible abduction.
- When a child has been missing for a sustained period (e.g. overnight) and parents/carers have not informed the police.

The school will also notify any social workers allocated to the family or student.

The designated person/people responsible for referrals about children missing in education is Mrs Dawn Booth, Mr Jon Scourfield, Mr David Durning and Mrs Stefanie Herath.

**APPENDICES**

**Authorised absence**

- Genuine illness with notification from parents.
- Genuine emergencies such as fire, flooding, burglary, transport strikes and extreme weather affected transport with notification from parents.

**Requests for Leave of Absence** will be considered on an individual basis and will take into account the proximity of examinations. Requests for Leave of Absence should be made with sufficient notice, in writing to the Attendance Officer by completing a 'request for leave of absence' form on the RGS website/app.

- To attend a wedding or funeral of a first-degree relative
- 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, 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.

- Work experience that could not reasonably take place outside school time.
- University visits for Year 12 and 13 students only (a maximum of two will be authorised within school time prior to any university offers being made).

### **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. Parents may apply for Leave of Absence in writing to the Attendance Officer by completing a 'request for leave an absence' form on the RGS website/app
- 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

### **Religious Observance**

RGS acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside 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 Attendance Officer, [attendance@rgshw.com](mailto:attendance@rgshw.com) 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.

### **Children Missing in Education**

School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities July 2019

Children at Risk of Missing Education School governing bodies, academy trusts, and other school proprietors must have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions. Where reasonably practicable (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment)

Regulations 2011 under section 458(4) and (5) of the Education Act 1996) for every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. This goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. Doing so provides schools with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated. Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education. All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided. Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

All schools (including academies) must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.