

September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Attendance at the RGS – Years 7-13

Whilst 2020/21 has been a challenging year for us all, we hope for more stability in 2021/22. With this aim, we will, as pre-pandemic, strive to achieve 100 % attendance and we hope to work with you to get as near to this target as possible. Should the pandemic continue to affect our environment, we will work with parents to ensure the safety of our community as our priority. In such a scenario, we will support parents in upholding Government Guidance re self-isolation; the wellbeing of our boys is of utmost importance to us, and thus boys must not feel under pressure to attend when poorly.

So, with the hope of a more normal year, this is a reminder about the school's policy on attendance, which is based on the DfE Guidelines. We carry out a full academic programme throughout the year and have an expectation that pupils will commit to full attendance. Low attendance severely hampers a student's progress. To illustrate this in real terms, an attendance rate of 90 % over 5 years is equivalent to half of a school year missed. The final paragraph of this document requests your full cooperation in encouraging your son to adhere to this policy.

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

Expected attendance:

Years 7-11 0840-1530 daily
Year 12 0840-1330 daily (unless timetabled lessons Period 7 or 8, including Private Study)
Year 13 0840-1330 daily (unless timetabled lessons period 7/8)

Pupil Absence

Please notify the Attendance Officer of an absence in the following ways:

- By email attendance@rgshw.com
- By telephone 01494 551466

Illness

If your son is extremely unwell and unable to attend school, please advise the School Attendance Officer by **8:40am** on the first day of your son's absence, and **every day thereafter**, stating your 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

If your son has a medical/dental appointment or music exam which cannot be arranged outside of school hours, please inform the Attendance Officer by e-mail as far in advance as is possible. Your son must show his appointment confirmation to the Attendance Officer when he signs in/out of school, and music exams must be verified with a letter from the exam board.

If your son needs to sign in or out of School during the day, please ask him to report to the Student Hub before he leaves and/or when he arrives on site. Please use the intercom facility and drive in the main vehicular entrance to collect or drop off your son during the day (not the Quad entrance or Uplyme car park).

Please note that if your son is absent for AM registration or Period 5 (PM registration) his attendance percentage will be affected. If your son has an **unavoidable** medical appointment during the school day, we would appreciate your support in arranging this, where possible, at lunchtime or after 3pm, to minimise the effect on his schooling. A student attending a medical appointment during the school day is expected to attend school for a significant part of the school day.

Leave of Absence

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 (a maximum of three Open Days in school time), 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. Where possible, please allow at least two weeks' notice between the request and the actual date for which you have applied. Please include an explanation of why this leave of absence needs to be taken during term time.

Once your request has been considered, a reply will be sent to the parental email(s) registered with the school. 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 %.

Lates

We are doing our very best to prepare your sons for the working world. A key requirement is the ability to be punctual, please can we draw your attention to our policy re. lateness. If your son arrives after 8.40am, without communication from a parent to the Attendance Officer by 9:15am the following day, he will automatically be given an after-school detention. Please use the phone number or email address above.

Personal responsibility of boys

If your son needs to sign out or in at any point in the school day, for a valid reason, he should use the finger scanner in the Student Hub. He is also responsible for using the finger scanners when registering his attendance for additional music and sports activities during the school day.

Thank you for your support in helping us ensure that your son receives the best education possible. We recognise the important role that parents play and whilst we will provide support and guidance, it is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance of their child.

We will be monitoring your son's attendance over the year and will be in contact should this fall below 90%. If his attendance continues to fall, we will invite you for a meeting with his Head of Year to work with you to support your son further.

Yours faithfully

Mr I Wilson
Deputy Headmaster |