Richard Taylor Church of England Primary School.

Pupil Attendance Policy

History of document: To be reviewed annually and re-approved by the Trust Board every three years, or sooner if deemed necessary.

Version	Author	Date written	Approved	Note of Revisions
V1	L.Claringbold	08 Feb. 2022	11 May 2022	

Our school is a place where all know that they are safe and loved as children of God.

Contents

1. Introduction

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. At Richard Taylor Church of England Primary School, we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful.

Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital your child is punctual and at school every day. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Maximising attendance rates by encouraging, recognising and rewarding good attendance and ensuring that attendance at school is viewed positively.
- Investigating individual absences and ensuring that pupils and parents are clear that unauthorised absences are not acceptable.
- Working closely with pupils and parents, to help them overcome problems, which may prevent pupils from attending regularly.
- Providing parents with support and advice in order to maintain and improve attendance.
- Recognising and celebrating improvements in attendance and punctuality of individuals and families.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold, and it complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Responsibilities

Our Attendance Officer/Lead is Andrew Symonds

Our Safeguarding Lead is Andrew Symonds

Parents/Carers are legally responsible for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. We ask them to familiarise themselves with our attendance expectations and to work closely with the school to overcome any problems which may affect a pupil's attendance and welfare.

At, Richard Taylor Church of England Primary School, we encourage and value high attendance rates. However, the school will recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parents/carers, the Attendance Officer and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The school will take a proactive approach in the promotion of good attendance, by defining expectations with pupils and their parents/carers, and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with the legal requirements.

4.1. Trust Board responsibilities

The Trust Board has an overall responsibility to hold individual schools to account, and to provide support and challenge on their attendance management and improvement.

Regular communication and the monitoring of reports through network groups will enable good practice to be shared across schools.

4.2. Local governing body responsibilities

Acknowledging that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to the pupil's educational progress, the local governing body is responsible for:

- Setting attendance targets for the school annually

- Ensuring the promotion of good attendance is covered in improvement strategies throughout the schools, including SEND, safeguarding and raising attainment

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school, on at least a termly basis

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.3. Headteacher responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils, including making appropriate training on the importance of good attendance readily available

- Issuing fixed penalty notices, where necessary

4.4. Attendance lead responsibilities

The attendance lead:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and at an individual pupil level. Any unexplained absences noticed will be followed up immediately and parent/carers contacted

- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Communicate effectively with parents to discuss attendance and wellbeing issues

4.5. Parent/carer responsibilities

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full-time education. Until the age of 18, a pupil must stay in full-time education, for example at a school or college, start an apprenticeship or traineeship. As a parent/carer you are responsible for making sure that this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education. Once your child is registered at a school you are responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly – even if they miss school without you knowing – the Local Authority may take legal action against you.

Parents/carers:

- Must ensure that their child arrives in school in time for the start of the school day at 9am.

- Must ensure that, if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason, such as sickness, they must contact the school as soon as possible, on the

first morning of absence by phone or by email. **The school should continue to be made aware on a daily basis of any absence**.

- Cannot authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this, on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents/carers. (*Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence; the school will record such absence as unauthorised.*)

- Must avoid booking family holidays during term time. Taking holidays during term time means that pupils miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It is difficult for them to catch up on work at a later date. If this is absolutely unavoidable, parents/carers should complete a Request for Absence form, available from school office or on the website and return this to the school office, at least two weeks in advance of the period for which leave is to be requested. (Leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances – as outlined in Section 5.1).

- Should notify the school immediately of any changes to address or contact number(s)

- Should communicate as early as possible any circumstances which may affect absence or require support

4.6. Whole school's responsibilities

- All members of the school community should promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and that their presence is valued.

- The school staff will record and monitor attendance.

  - o Registers will be taken at 9am, pupils arriving after this time, without good reason, will be recorded as late.

  - o Registers will be completed in accordance with the DfE register codes and procedures. See APPENDIX TWO

- All staff know and understand their responsibilities in relation to attendance. The school employs a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance. It must be emphasised that constant vigilance over a continuous period of time is essential.

5. Types of absence

5.1. Authorised absence

The school appreciates that there may be times when the pupil has to miss school. **Authorised Absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be away, or where an explanation, offered afterwards, has been accepted as a justification for absence. <u>Only schools can authorise absence</u>. Should the school staff have reason to

doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine or acceptable; the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

Examples of reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness

- medical or dental appointments (*we do ask parents/carers try to organise routine appointments outside the school day)*

- Days of religious observance

- Study leave

- Exclusion

- Traveller child travelling

- Family bereavement

- Involvement in a public performance / sporting event

- Service personnel returning from active deployment

- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company

- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.

- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

- Lateness (when the pupil arrives after the register has closed)

Any absence is damaging to the continuity of learning; we therefore only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances after careful consideration, where pupils have a history of regular attendance.

5.2. Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised Absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered, by the school, not to fall in the authorised category.

Longer periods of absence (e.g. consisting of 5 school days or more) will require medical evidence.

5.3. Absence in term time

Parents/Carers must get permission from the headteacher if they want to take their child out of school during term time and this must be for no more than ten school days.

A Request for Absence form must be completed at least two weeks in advance of the requested absence and there must be exceptional circumstances.

The headteacher will make the final decision regarding the authorisation of the absence.

A parent/carer can be fined for taking a child on holiday during term time without the school's permission.

If the request is declined, and the child is absent from school during that period, the household could receive a warning letter or be issued with a fixed penalty notice (by North Yorkshire County Council) for each child taken out of school.

North Yorkshire County Council will be issuing all Penalty Notices requested by schools in the area which meet the criteria of ten or more unauthorised sessions leave (in a block or accumulatively over a four-month period) taken without the permission of the school, and where the reason given does not meet any criteria for exceptional circumstances.

6. Promoting attendance

6.1. Celebrating success

- The school offers praise to individual pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality improves.

6.2. Supporting pupils

- We recognise that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk. All issues which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties are promptly investigated by the Safeguarding Lead and appropriate action will be taken.
- Support is available and put in place for those pupils who are unable to attend school and links are made via the Safeguarding Lead and headteacher. We also work with the relevant outside agencies and NYCC to support the pupil.
- Pupils who have been absent for any extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a discussion with their teacher/headteacher followed by a structured and individually tailored programme, as a short-term measure to ease the transition.
- The school has a nominated Attendance Lead and Safeguarding Lead who work closely with the teachers on attendance and punctuality. The Safeguarding Lead will contact parents/carers, make home visits and support both parents/carers and pupils on attendance and punctuality matters.

6.3. Keeping parents/carers informed

If a child is absent from school:

- Parents/Carers are informed by the school office if a pupil has not been registered for the AM or PM session and there has been no word of explanation from home or if the child absents himself or herself without permission.

- The Safeguarding Lead liaises with the headteacher and the Attendance Lead if there is an attendance concern. Parents/Carers are regularly and fully informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality via a phone call, email or letter.

- Teachers, the headteacher, Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Lead communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters.

- Attendance information is given to parents/carers via the school website or the school prospectus.

- Letters and emails are sent to parents/carers if there are concerns. More serious concerns are discussed with parents/carers at meetings.

- Any issues of internal truancy are reported to parents/carers and dealt with seriously by the headteacher and followed up with appropriate action according to the School's Behaviour Management Policy.

7. Monitoring attendance

7.1. Arrangements

- The school keeps a range of attendance data which is collected and analysed on a weekly, termly and annual basis.

- The school focuses on and monitors those pupils who fall below the 96% attendance mark and takes further action should attendance fall below the 90% mark.

- Regular, structured progress review meetings are held with the headteacher and Safeguarding Lead in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance and punctuality are a source of concern. The importance of early identification and intervention cannot be overemphasised.

- As part of this process, persistent absentees are monitored. The Safeguarding Lead is informed and a pupil who gives cause for serious concern is moved onto the School Attendance Support Pathway (see below).

7.2. Persistent absenteeism

The DfE sets the persistent absence threshold at 10%, meaning any pupil with an attendance level of 90% or below will be deemed a persistent absentee.

We understand that there are often complex factors in play but it is our aim to reduce the likelihood of occasional non-attenders becoming persistent non-attenders, using the strategies within this policy. Where the school has serious concerns about a pupil's attendance, the parent/carer will be informed by letter of those concerns and a period of two weeks' detailed monitoring established.

If there is no improvement or the attendance rate is 90% or less at the end of a two-week monitoring programme, the school may elect to begin the School Attendance Support Pathway. This procedure has been set up by North Yorkshire County Council and replaces Fast Track to Attendance.

7.3. School Attendance Support Pathway

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┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                      │
│         Initial Warning Letter       │
│                                      │
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10 school day monitoring period

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┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                      │
│       Attendance Panel Meeting       │
│                                      │
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20 school day monitoring period
(Review Meeting – Optional)

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┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│  (P)olice (A)nd (C)riminal (E)vidence Act │
│  (1984) Formal Caution Interview/LA Panel │
│   Meeting (Chaired by the Local Authority) │
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│  LA/Panel Decision:                          │
│                                              │
│    o  No Further Action/Review Meeting       │
│    o  Penalty Notice Warning Letter          │
│    o  Education Supervision Order            │
│    o  Prosecution Education Act 1996 s444 (1,1A) │
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If at any stage in the above procedure your child's attendance improves significantly, the school will not proceed to the following stage. (Normally 95% (school target) and above during the monitoring period).

However, your child's attendance will continue to be monitored by the school and should there, at any time in the future, be any further concerns, the Pathways procedure will be re-visited.

8. Attendance expectations

Our school strives to achieve excellent attendance for all our pupils.

99 - 100%	Excellent
96 – 98.9%	Good
95 – 95.9%	Satisfactory
93 – 94.9%	Requires improvement
90 – 92.9%	At risk of persistent absence
Below 90%	Persistent absentee

90% attendance is the equivalent to 19 days absence in a year. These pupils are missing four weeks of school a year, making it very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best.

Pupils with 80% attendance are missing a day for *every week* of school.

By promoting these attendance expectations, we aim to help our pupils enjoy a fulfilling and successful education experience and establish a positive working ethos early in life.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy

APPENDIX ONE: 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
Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**
	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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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
Code	Definition	Scenario
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 TWO: Request for absence form

<u>Form to be returned to the school office with **a minimum of two weeks' notice**</u>.

Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised leave of absence and requests will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Pupil:……………………………….Class:…………………………

Date of Birth:…………………………………….

Please detail below the **exceptional circumstance** why you are requesting to take your child out of school. You may be invited into school to discuss your request with the headteacher. Where possible, we request you attach any supporting evidence.

Leave of absence dates: From: ………………… To: ……………………………

Number of school days your child will be absent from school: ……………………..

Signature: ……………………………………….   Date: ………………………….

Name of Parent/Carer: ……………………………………………………………….

Leave of absence which has not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised. These may be referred to North Yorkshire Council for consideration which could result in a Penalty Notice.

<u>FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY:</u>

Previous requests for leave of absence   Yes/No

Attendance for current academic year   ……%

Evidence provided for exceptional circumstance   Yes/No

Arrange to meet with Parent/Carer   Yes/No   Date & Time…….

Authorised ☐   Unauthorised ☐

By Headteacher

………………………………………………………

APPENDIX THREE: Recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021-22 academic year

UPDATED

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

From the start of the autumn term 2021 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child (of compulsory attendance school age) attends school regularly
- School's responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence immediately
- The ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices

CODES

As of 4 April 2022, the [DfE guidance](#) states that ***schools are no longer advised to record pupils who are not attending school for reasons related to coronavirus using Code X (not attending in circumstances related coronavirus).***

In line with the transition to living with COVID-19, DfE no longer advise schools to record pupils who do not attend for reasons related to COVID-19 using Code X. Pupils with symptoms of COVID-19 are no longer advised to get a test, and most of the scenarios that this category was brought in to record no longer apply.

Pupils who have symptoms or a positive test for COVID-19:

Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 should follow the latest government guidance about when they should stay at home.

Where a pupil is not attending because they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive test, schools should record this using Code I (illness) unless another more appropriate code applies.

Schools may continue to use the sub-code (I02) to record illness due to suspected COVID-19 although they are not required to.

REMOTE EDUCATION

Schools and colleges should continue to provide remote education to allow children and young people, who are well enough to learn, to keep pace with their education when in-person attendance in school or college is either not possible or contrary to government guidance.

Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with, this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.