



# RUSHDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY

## Attendance Policy

### Review Process

Reviewed	September 2023
Review date	September 2024

## Introduction

The Academy recognises the importance of good attendance in enabling pupils to achieve their maximum educational potential and to have optimal life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

The Academy is committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies to support good attendance for all pupils.

Parents have a responsibility by law for ensuring their child attends the Academy regularly and punctually.

The government recognises that a good level of attendance is at least 95 %. This is equivalent to a half day absence per fortnight. Half a day's absence a week or a day a fortnight would equate to 90% attendance. A day's absence per week would drop attendance to 80%.



## 2 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve 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 1995](#)
- 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.

## The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Emma Larbey and can be contacted via [admin@rushdenprimaryacademy.org](mailto:admin@rushdenprimaryacademy.org)

### **The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Advising the Assistant Principal (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Caroline Wright and can be contacted via [admin@rushdenprimaryacademy.org](mailto:admin@rushdenprimaryacademy.org)

### **The pastoral team**

The pastoral team is responsible for:

- Working with parents/cares and education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Reporting children missing from education

### **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:50 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **Attendance register**

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

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:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 on each school day.

## **Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:50 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

### **Notification**

The Academy expects that all parents communicate with them, either in writing or by telephone, giving a reason for a child's absence from school:

1. Writing - In advance of any planned absence, using the appropriate leave of absence request form on the school website.
2. Telephone - On the first day of any unplanned absence.
3. Telephone - Daily during any absence expected to last more than three days.

The Academy will decide as to whether the absence should be authorised.

The Academy will operate a First Day Contact system whereby the parents of pupils who are absent and no notification has been received will be contacted and asked for the reason for absence.

On day 3 of absence and no contact (by midday) regarding the absence then a Welfare call will be made by a member of the Safeguarding Team. If we are still unable to make contact, then a Welfare Call request will be made to the Police.

### **The Academy Safeguarding Team reserve the right to make a home visit at any point during a child's absence.**

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence using the Pupil Leave of Absence request form, on our website.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

Being punctual for school is vital for pupils to be ready for learning, settle into class routines and make good progress.

The gates to the academy open for pupils and parents at **8:35am**, the doors to the classrooms open at **8:40am** and registers taken at **8:50am**.

**Any child arriving after 8:50am will be marked as late and should enter school via the main reception and not the pupil entrance.**

This is to ensure the pupil is marked as present in school for health and safety reasons. The registers remain 'open' for 10 minutes. **Therefore, any child arriving after 9:00am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for ½ day. This will affect a child's overall attendance figures.**

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Individual pupil's attendance will be regularly monitored by the school and the Local Authority and concerns promptly discussed with parents and carers. Letters will be sent out at the end of each half term (5 times a year). A first letter will be sent to parents when the level of attendance goes below the school expectation of 95% and offering pastoral support. If attendance continues to be of concern, then a second letter will be sent setting a target for attendance over a period of 5 weeks and offering pastoral support. During this period of 5 weeks, absence will be monitored and if the target remains unmet, parents will be invited into school for a meeting with the Principal where an attendance *contract* will be formulated.

Letters will be sent out at the beginning of each half term (5 times a year) advising on 3 or more late arrivals in the previous term. Please note that late arrivals will reflect in a child's attendance (please see the section on punctuality).

School staff will work with pupils, parents and other agencies to resolve school related issues which are impacting on a pupil's attendance.

If, after school-based initiatives, the level of attendance continues to be unsatisfactory the school will request the involvement of the local authority's Educational and Inclusion Partnership Team.

### **Leave of Absence from School**

Following the governments guidelines, the Academy is not able to authorise any absence from school unless in exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave being authorised by the school. No authorisation will be given to any absences greater than 10 days per school year.

In exceptional circumstances the school may agree to authorise leave in term time. A decision to authorise will be taken following consideration to:

- the amount of time requested and frequency of requests
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record, inc. overall percentage and patterns of attendance (no authorisation will be given if a child's attendance is below 95%)

- proximity of SATs and public examinations
- pupil's ability to catch up the work
- pupil's educational needs
- general welfare of the pupil
- circumstances of the request and purpose of the leave

If a parent mis-informs the school of the reason for the absence to support the case for 'exceptional circumstances', then the absence will be unauthorised, and a penalty notice may be issued.

Parents are required to put any request for leave of absence in writing using the appropriate form on our website.

The Academy may authorise all or part of the Leave of Absence request. Please note that under no circumstances will the Academy authorise a holiday.

Penalty notices will be issued by Educational and Inclusion Partnership Team (EIPT), North Northamptonshire Council, for unauthorised absence under the following criteria:

- When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions (5 days consecutive) recorded as unauthorised in a 6-school week period; a school day is two sessions AM and PM.
  - This includes any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- An absence in term time which has not been authorised by the Principal. The Government has directed Head Teachers may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances.
- PNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.