

# Pupil Attendance And Punctuality Policy



RIDGEWOOD  
SCHOOL



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## **Rationale**

Richmond Hill Primary Academy, in conjunction with all schools in The Rose Learning Trust and the Ridgewood Pyramid, believes that good attendance is essential if children are to gain the maximum benefit from school in acquiring the educational and social skills to equip them for life.

We aim to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which school staff, parents, the Educational Welfare Service and all other appropriate agencies can work together in partnership.

## **Introduction**

Richmond Hill Primary Academy is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We are committed to providing a quality education for all our pupils. This can only be achieved with full attendance and the school will do its best to ensure maximum possible attendance, so that any problems that interfere with good attendance are identified and remedied as soon as possible.

For your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, on time and every day that the school is open. Pupils should only be absent if it is completely unavoidable.

## **Why Regular Attendance is so important**

**Learning:** Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence seriously affects their learning. Any pupils' absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at the school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from the school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your children encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## **Expectations**

### **We expect the following from all of our pupils:**

- That they will attend the school every day it is open, achieving a minimum of 97% or above attendance, unless they are genuinely ill
- That they will be appropriately prepared for the day

### **We expect the following from parents/carers in supporting the Home/School agreement with regards to attendance and punctuality**

- To ensure all pupils attend the school regularly and on time.
- To ensure they contact the school immediately whenever their child is unable to attend, using the dedicated attendance telephone number [01302 782421](tel:01302782421) (selecting option 1) or use the [school app](#) which will send an email to the school – or by text to [07763783684](tel:07763783684).
- To ensure that their child is appropriately prepared for the day.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever they have a problem concerning attendance or punctuality.
- Not to arrange a holiday in term time.
- To respond to any attendance letters of concern immediately.
- To make every effort to arrange dental and medical appointments out of the school day.
- That telephone contact numbers are available and if changed, the school is informed immediately.

## **Parents can expect the following from Richmond Hill Primary Academy**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- The Academy staff will note all registration marks in SIMS by 9.05.am.
- Voicemails must be listened to and acted upon by 9.30.am Emails will also be checked.
- Any child whose whereabouts are unknown must be followed up by 9.45.am. All adults on the child's contact list must be called. If the child's whereabouts cannot be ascertained from any contact, then a home visit will be undertaken by Inclusion staff by lunchtime.
- If the home visit does not provide satisfactory evidence of the child's whereabouts then a member of the Senior Leadership Team will telephone the EWO.
- Immediate response to problems notified to us.
- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Support when there is a problem of long term illness.
- School will send a letter out to all families at the start of each year clearly outlining the school's expectations for attendance. It will include a copy of the Attendance Thermometer.
- A copy of the Attendance Thermometer will be visible in every classroom and used by the class teacher to promote the importance of good attendance.

## **The Law relating to attendance**

*Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent\* of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and*
- (b) To any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

*Furthermore, the Education Act 1996 and subsequent amendments to legislation give schools and local authorities the powers to take legal action against parents to enforce attendance at the school they are registered to attend.*

## **The Law relating to safeguarding**

*Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and pupils under the age of 18.*

## **Medical**

### **Illness**

- If your child feels ill in the morning please provide them with appropriate pain relief/medication and send them to school. Any medication should be handed in to the Academy Office (alongside signed consent), medicines will be administered by the Academy Office staff, in accordance with the Administering Medicines policy, when required. Your child should be in school if they have a minor illness such as a headache, cold or sore throat.
- If your child is too ill to attend, then please contact us as detailed previously to notify us of any absence. Please ensure that your child returns to the school as soon as possible.

### **Medical Appointments**

A full day's absence will not be authorised for a medical appointment. Please arrange all appointments outside the school day. If the appointment is unavoidable, your child must come to school before and after the appointment.

### **Absence requests**

#### **Requests for absence during term-time**

Due to Government legislation the school is no longer able to authorise **any** holiday during school time. This absence will therefore be recorded as unauthorised absence on your child's attendance record unless this is deemed to be an 'exceptional circumstance' which would need to be agreed by the Principal.

Where a family is known to have siblings at any other school in The Rose Learning Trust and the Ridgewood Pyramid, a discussion will take place between the two or more schools and an agreed decision will be made.

A Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority following your child's absence. Penalty Notices are issued at £60 per parent\* (if paid within 21 days) and £120 (if paid within 28 days) for each child. An 'Exceptional Circumstances' application form is available from the Academy Office or our website.

If you do not notify us, but we have evidence that your child has been on holiday, a Penalty Notice may still be issued.

## **Celebrating and rewarding good attendance**

Good and improved attendance is rewarded by the school with various incentives for individual pupils, classes and whole school. These include; Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates, celebration activities.

## **Absence procedures for parents/carers**

### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and each subsequent day by contacting the school on 01302782421 or use the [school app](#) which will send an email to the school – or by text to [07763783684](#).

## **Personal Details**

It is vital that parental details are correct. There are times when we need to contact parents/carers to discuss absence or more importantly to contact a parent in the event of an emergency. Personal information check sheets are distributed at the start of the year and it is the expectation that parents notify the school of any changes in personal contact details.

## **Responding to non-attendance**

Where we have had no contact from a parent/carer the school will respond in the following manner:-

- First day telephone contact will be implemented for all pupils by 9:45am, further attempts at communication may also be made. On different days throughout the week, members of staff may visit any child who is absent from school.
- With continued non-attendance the case will be brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team. Further action may include participation in attendance improvement initiatives, home visits and/or meetings between the school, parents/carers and pupils and, if appropriate, other agencies in an attempt to identify and solve the problems which are preventing the pupil from attending school.
- Re-integration – the return of a pupil to the school after long term absence requires special planning. The school will work closely with parents/carers to integrate pupils back into school after a long term illness/absence.

## Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of an absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the school for a good reason like genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school and or the local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular non-attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, excusing them from attending makes the situation worse as it gives the impression that attendance does not matter.

## Persistent absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages a child's educational prospects.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.



## **Moving to a different school**

It is important that if parents/carers decide to send their child/children to a different school they must inform Richmond Hill as soon as possible. **Your child/children must continue their education with us** until their start date at the new school. Schools may be reluctant to take a child onto roll where attendance is low and so it is imperative that they continue to attend.

A pupil will not be removed from the school's roll until we have received confirmation that they have started at the new school and the following information has been received and investigated.

- The date the pupil is leaving this school and starting a new school.
- The address of the new school, and confirmation from that school that the pupil has been admitted.
- The new home address.

The pupils' school record will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the case of movement abroad, records will be provided for the pupil to take with them.

In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority as a 'Child Missing Education'.

The School will complete a 'Common Transfer File' (CTF) for all pupils leaving the school for another school.

## **New pupils**

Any parent wishing to apply for a place at the school may do so following our admissions policy.

