

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy Appendix



## Richmond Primary School

<b><i>Review date</i></b>	<b><i>Autumn 2025</i></b>
<b><i>Reviewed by</i></b>	<b><i>Miss K Money Penny</i></b>
<b><i>Next review date</i></b>	<b><i>Autumn 2026</i></b>

## Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parent/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## Attendance Targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Headteacher and The School Office Team to ensure we are in line with the National Average. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

The school's attendance target for 2025 - 2026 is **to be in line with National attendance data for the academic year.**

## Why Attendance and Punctuality Matter?

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child reaches 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

## 1. Legislation and guidance

This appendix meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). This document is 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.

- ☐ Amendment to Southend City Council's Code of Conduct under the Provision of the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2004 (September 2024)

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1 The Academy Committee

The Academy Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 2.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this appendix at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 2.3 The School Office Team

The School Office Team:

- Takes calls / messages regarding absences and reports via the school attendance system
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## **2.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

## **3. School procedures**

All parent/carers on admission to the school sign a copy of the Home School Contract which states that 'parent/carers will ensure their children attend regularly and punctually'.

## **4 Attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance Registers**

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day (AM) and once during the second session. (PM) It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils at Richmond Avenue Primary School and Nursery must arrive in school by **8.45am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.45am** and will be kept open until **9.15am**. (Arrivals after this time will be recorded using the code U and will cause attendance to fall).

The register for the second session (pm) for Reception/KS1 is 1pm and for KS2 is 1.30pm

### **4.2 Unplanned Absence**

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health - from 8.00am that day.

The school can be informed of the absence by:

- Contacting the school office on 01702 292197 or email [office@richmond.secat.co.uk](mailto:office@richmond.secat.co.uk)

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents/carers 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.

**Please note:**

***Sickness & Diarrhea Bugs***

*The school has a 48-hour policy if your child has a sickness/diarrhea bug. This means your child can return to school 48 hours after the last episode and providing they are fully recovered. If your child has been sick due to, for example, eating too quickly or coughing, there is no reason for them to be absent from school.*

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as proof of the appointment is given and the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment, and it is not a regular occurrence.

Parents/carers can inform the school of an absence for a medical/dental appointment via the School Office.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and Punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (i.e. 9.15am) will be marked as **late (L)**.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will also be marked as **late (U)** and this will affect the pupil's overall attendance. Children regularly arriving at school late will be monitored by the School Office Team who will contact parents/carers as regular lateness has a detrimental effect on their attendance.

#### **4.5 Following Up Absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

- Parent/carers will be contacted on the day of the absence by the school by phone, text and email.
- Where no contact has been made with the parent/carer on the first day of absence the school will mark this as an unauthorised absence.
- If the school are **concerned about the child's absence** and are unable to contact the parent/carer, we may carry out a **home visit** and contact the children's emergency

contact and/or **other professionals** or **contacts of the family** who we may reasonably expect to be able to advise us of the child's whereabouts.

#### 4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are informed of pupil's attendance using the school app (MCAS). This is available to all parents/carers. Parents/Carers can check pupil attendance on a daily basis throughout the year. This includes information on overall attendance for the year and includes their absences/unauthorised absences that have been recorded.

#### 4.7 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carer writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parent/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, **not all absences supported by parent/carers will be classified as authorised.**

##### Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

An absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of parent/carer, such as a shopping trip or for a birthday.

An absence is unauthorised if a child has low attendance which is being monitored at Level 2 and medical proof is not provided by the parent/carer to evidence the absence. Medical evidence could be seeing the prescribed medicine, seeing the child's prescription, a doctor's or hospital letter or an appointment card etc.

#### 4.8 Approval for term-time absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 as well as in the guidance Working together to improve school attendance 2024.

Headteachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** can include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see section 4.2/4.3 for more details)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

**The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent or carer to 'fail to secure their child's regular attendance at the school.'**

If a parent/carers does need to request leave of absence for exceptional circumstances, they must complete a form available from the School Office.

## **5 Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

- Weekly celebratory assembly to reward pupils regarding attendance
- Attendance 'Super heroes'
- Half termly class attendance prizes
- Use of house points and Dojos on a daily basis
- Celebrations of attendance via school newsletters and social media

## **6 Attendance Monitoring**

The School Office Team monitors pupil absences daily and reports to the Headteacher on a weekly basis.

The School Office Team works closely with parents/carers to support regular attendance in school. If the school has concerns over a pupils' attendance, the School Office Team will contact parents/carers to discuss these concerns. If after contacting parents/carers, a pupil continues to have regular absences, we will invite the parent/carers to attend a meeting with the School Office Team in school.

**Level 1** - If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, or when attendance falls below a certain percentage, the parent/carers will be contacted by the School Office Team and the child's attendance will be monitored for a period of 4 weeks with the expectation of 100% attendance. If it does not improve, the case could escalate to Level 2 and the parent/carers will be made aware of this.

**Level 2** – When attendance falls below 90% or meetings at Level 1 fail in improving the child's attendance, a Level 2 meeting will be held with the School Office Team along with the parent/carers. The School Office Team will set targets and will be set and reviewed at 4 weekly intervals. At this stage, the parent/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence for any further absences.

Once attendance targets are met and the parent/carer understands the importance of children attending school regularly, the case will return to Level 1 and be monitored in school by the School Office Team. If after 2 reviews, the child's attendance does not improve and targets are not met, the case could escalate to Level 3.

**Level 3** - If the attendance targets are repeatedly not met at Level 2, the child's case will escalate to Level 3. The Local Authority Attendance Service then take the lead role and commence home visiting and seek to ensure that the parent/carer understands the seriousness of the situation. The Local Authority will make it very clear that if the child does not begin to attend school regularly, the family are likely to face a fine or court proceedings.

## **6.2 Persistent Absence**

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with the Academy Committee members.

The School Office Team reports termly to the Headteacher through an Attendance Report including information on attendance of the whole school, individuals and key groups of children.

## **7 Legal sanctions**

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. A second offence within three years results in a £160 fine and further offences may lead to court prosecution. The outcome of this can lead to a £2500 fine per parent, a community order or a custodial sentence.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.