



## POLICY INFORMATION

Name of Policy/Procedure: Attendance Policy

Original date drawn up: September 2015  
Original date adopted: 3 December 2015  
Current version date: November 2018  
Review cycle: As and when required

Next review date: November 2019

**Adopted by the Governing Body of Ruskin Community High School**

Signed (Chair of Governors):

*J. Rhodes*

| <b>Reviewed by</b>                       | <b>Date</b>   | <b>Approved</b>                   |
|--|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| POS/VIT/HOL                              | November 2016 | 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2016 FGB |
| M Vitalis/D Postlethwaite                | November 2017 | November 2017 - TLA               |
| M Vitalis/D Postlethwaite –<br>no change | November 2018 | December 2018 - FGB               |
|  |               |                                   |
|  |               |                                   |

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Aim

The aim of this policy is to encourage students to attend school every day (190 days per year) and to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential in order for students to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent GCSE results and excellent school attendance.

## Key Personnel

The Headteacher is the only person who can authorise leave in 'exceptional circumstances'

**Attendance Lead** is Mr Michael Vitalis. (A member of SLT oversees attendance)

**Attendance Administrator** is Mrs Holland

## Duties

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education. Parents/carers are responsible for their child's school attendance and punctuality.

Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson.

## Responsibilities

The school will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Attendance targets are set for individual students and year groups.
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and be registered punctually.
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.

The Parents or Carers will:

- Ensure good attendance (95% and above).
- Inform the school on **each day** of absence and give a specific reason. Discuss planned absences with the school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time.

## School Day

The school day for students begins at 8.40am – by this time all students should be on the school premises.

- The first session begins at 8.40am when the "Registration Bell" is sounded.
- Students entering the school premises after the "Registration Bell" are late for school.

- Afternoon registration takes place at 1.50pm Monday to Thursday and 1.30pm Friday. The school day ends at 3.15pm Monday to Thursday and 2.35pm Friday.

### **Form Tutors**

- Form Tutors have the responsibility of registering students' attendance at the beginning of the morning session.
- Form Tutors will ensure that the registers are completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations.
- Form Tutors have a major role to play in encouraging students to be punctual and to attend school each day.
- Absence notes from parents will be checked by Form Tutors for their authenticity and will be passed to the Attendance Coordinator for filing. Form Tutors will bring to the attention of the Attendance Coordinator those students who are either late for registration or who are absent.

### **Attendance Coordinator**

- Will liaise closely with Form Tutors in checking that registers are completed accurately and that they are kept in a safe place.
- Will ensure that the registers are available for scrutiny and for emergencies e.g. for fire drills.
- Will ensure that all absence notes are stored in a secure place.
- Are responsible for notifying parents of unauthorised absences on those occasions when a student has been absent for three days when no reason has been received from the parents.
- Are responsible for notifying the Attendance Lead of attendance problems.
- Are responsible for discussing with Form Tutors problems relating to student attendance and the accurate record keeping of registers.

### **Punctuality**

- All students are expected to be punctual to school (8.40am) and to lessons.
- Any student who is late to school must attend a ten minute break and ten minute after school detention in room 12 and room 4 respectively. Parents are notified by Groupcall text message. Failure to attend both detentions will lead to a half hour after- school detention.
- Students arriving after the registration bell at 8.40am will be marked as late using an L code.
- Students arriving after register close at 9.15am will be marked as an unauthorised absence and the absence will be coded as a U.
- Letters home after 5 lates.

### **Attendance procedures**

- Parents are asked to telephone school before 10.00am to notify us of a child's absence.
- Authorised absence, e.g. illness, must be supported by a letter or note in the planner from the parents explaining the reason for the absence
- Students who wish to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents notifying the Form Tutor of the reason. All students must be collected.
- Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at the Student Office and should sign out if leaving the premises before the end of the school day.
- Where parents fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the Attendance Coordinator will endeavour to contact them by text initially with a follow up telephone call.

## Unauthorised Absences

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- School has not given approval in advance for a student to be absent. School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence.
- Medical evidence requested by school is not forthcoming.
- No explanation of absence is received within two weeks.

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents may not authorise any absence. In cases where parents seem to condone unauthorised absence, school may involve the Education Welfare Officer.

The Governing Body have agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and persistent lateness to Registration.

Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and will have 15 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and / or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Education Welfare Officer to the family home. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £60 per parent, per child. Non-payment of the Penalty within the 28 day time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

| <b>Timeline</b>                  | <b>One child</b>  | <b>Two children</b>   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Paid within 21 days              | £60 per parent  | £60 per child + £120 per parent   |
| After 21 days and before 28 days | £120 per parent   | £120 per child = £240 per parent  |
| After 28 days                    | You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance | You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance |

In circumstances where a PN has been served with no impact or attendance patterns show chronic poor attendance the school may request a prosecution through Section 444 (1) of the 1996 Education Act. This will result in prosecution through the courts if there is no improvement in attendance.

## Leave of Absence

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Applications should be requested before any expenses are committed.

Costs already incurred are not considered when a leave for absence request is reviewed.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent. Parents who wish to apply for a leave of absence must complete the official request form. This can be collected from reception. Completed forms should be returned to the school's Attendance Coordinator at least 3 months before the proposed absence (where possible). Leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

A request for a leave of absence involving a student missing 3 or more days of school will not be authorised without a formal discussion between a parent/carer and a member of the school's behaviour/attendance/welfareTeam.

If the school have not received any contact from a parent were the student has not attended school for a period of 5 days, then a Child Missing in Education (CME) referral will be processed.

In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request
- When a student is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Students should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. GCSE or any other public examinations.
- Where a students attendance rate is already below 95% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- The student has a serious work deficit other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year a leave of absence will not be authorised retrospectively.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence is shown on reports and ultimately school references. Unauthorised absence of ten or more school sessions in a half term can lead to the authority issuing a penalty notice. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £120 per parent per child.

| <b>Timeline</b>                  | <b>One child</b>  | <b>Two children</b>   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Paid within 21 days              | £60 per parent  | £60 per child + £120 per parent   |
| After 21 days and before 28 days | £120 per parent   | £120 per child = £240 per parent  |
| After 28 days                    | You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance | You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance |

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the student does not return to school on the agreed return date. Re-admission cannot be guaranteed.

The specific circumstances which outline when a student can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

### **Monitoring attendance**

The Attendance Coordinator and YAMS. Families of these students will be contacted as early as possible on the first day of absence by Groupcall text and a follow up telephone call.

The Attendance Coordinator will provide analyses of attendance on request.

The Attendance Lead will meet with YAMS regularly to discuss attendance issues and to highlight individual students. Students with attendance below 90% will be contacted by The Attendance Coordinator and/or The Attendance Lead and discussed at regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer.

The Attendance Lead and YAMS will have a formal termly meeting to review individual cases. At this meeting, future strategies will be developed.

Students will be rewarded for excellent attendance via the school's rewards system.

Governors Student Welfare Committee will receive reports on attendance. The Headteacher/Attendance Lead will inform all Governors of the school's response to its attendance target on a termly basis at the Full Governors meeting.