



The Rivers
C.of E. Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

Parent / Carer Guide – January 2025

Introduction

The Rivers CofE Academy Trust is committed to promoting excellent attendance, which is seen as a fundamental part of a child's education. The Trust operates on the principle that regular school attendance is essential for academic success, personal growth, and future opportunities. The attendance policy is underpinned by an **Inclusive Attendance Professional Development Model** and a **recognition-based approach** that celebrates both individual and collective achievements. Schools within the trust implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to address attendance issues.

The Importance of School Attendance

Regular school attendance is critical for a child's development and future prospects. Consistent attendance is linked to the following:

- **Academic Achievement:** Regular attendance helps children keep up with the curriculum and reduces the likelihood of long-term academic struggles.
- **School Engagement:** Children who attend school regularly are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, sports, and other enriching experiences.
- **Legal and Parental Responsibility:** Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance, and failure to do so can have legal consequences.

Factors Influencing Attendance

Various factors can affect a child's attendance, including:

- **Health Issues:** Illness or medical conditions can lead to absences.
- **School Climate:** A negative or unwelcoming school environment can discourage attendance.
- **Engagement and Motivation:** Lack of engagement with school activities and curriculum can result in disinterest.
- **Academic Challenges:** Difficulties with coursework or feeling overwhelmed can lead to skipping school.
- **Family Circumstances:** Parental engagement, family issues, and religious observances can influence attendance.

Schools within the Trust implement various strategies, such as early intervention and support for vulnerable families, to address these factors.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents and carers play a crucial role in supporting their child's attendance. To do so, they should:

- **Establish a Routine:** Create a daily routine that includes regular and punctual school attendance.
- **Communicate with the School:** Inform the school promptly of any absences with a reason.
- **Promote a Healthy Lifestyle:** Ensure their child has proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep.
- **Foster a Positive Attitude:** Encourage a positive attitude toward education.
- **Set Expectations:** Clearly communicate the importance of regular attendance to the child.
- **Be Involved in Homework:** Support the child with homework and provide a quiet study space.
- **Attend Parents' Evenings:** Participate in meetings and discussions regarding their child's progress.
- **Monitor Progress:** Keep track of the child's progress and attendance patterns.
- **Stay Informed:** Be aware of school policies and attendance guidelines.
- **Seek Support:** Reach out to the school or other relevant agencies for help with any challenges affecting attendance.
- **Avoid taking holidays during term time** and arrange appointments outside of school hours.

School Support for Attendance

Schools within the Trust are dedicated to supporting children and families to ensure regular attendance. Some of the strategies used include:

- **Monitoring Systems:** Tracking attendance data to identify and address patterns of absence.
- **Communication:** Maintaining open lines of communication with parents and carers.
- **Attendance Information Displays:** Using visual displays to keep pupils aware of their attendance.
- **Recognition Systems:** Implementing systems that reward and celebrate good attendance.
- **Effective Interventions:** Providing support packages including mentoring, peer support, alternative education courses and liaison with external agencies.
- **Clear focus on core subjects** to allow pupil to catch up more quickly when returning from an absence.
- **Individualized support:** Working with families to address specific issues, which can include mentoring, referrals to external agencies, and creating individual action plans.
- **Multi-agency working:** Schools work with external partners to provide further support and remove barriers to attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities Various staff members play key roles in promoting and monitoring attendance:

- **Teachers:** Monitor daily attendance, maintain communication with parents, provide academic and emotional support, and implement school policies.
- **Teaching Assistants:** Monitor attendance, build positive relationships with pupils, and provide individualised support to children struggling with attendance.
- **Attendance Champion:** Sets a vision for improving attendance, monitors data, and works closely with families to provide guidance and strategies to promote regular attendance.
- **Senior Leadership Team:** Develops and implements attendance policies and promotes a positive culture where attendance is valued.

- **Trustees:** Oversee the school's attendance policies, ensure statutory compliance and monitor attendance data.

Attendance Procedures

- **Reporting Absences:** Parents are required to contact the school on the first day of their child's absence to provide the reason for the absence. Each school has its own process for reporting absences.
- **Coding of Attendance:** Attendance is recorded using the DfE's statutory attendance codes. (See Appendix 1 in the full policy for a comprehensive list).
- **Authorised Absences:** Absences for sickness, medical or dental appointments, religious observances, and family emergencies may be authorised by the school.
- **Unauthorised Absences:** Absences for truancy, shopping trips, birthdays, and unapproved term-time holidays are considered unauthorised.

Legal Consequences of Poor Attendance

- **Penalty Notices:** Parents can be issued penalty notices for unauthorised absences that meet a specific threshold. The national threshold is 10 sessions (usually 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. If two parents have responsibility for two children with irregular attendance, four penalty notices would be issued.
- **Prosecution:** Failure to secure regular attendance can lead to fines and/or imprisonment.
- **Attendance Contracts:** These are formal written agreements between a parent and the school or local authority to address irregular attendance.
- **Education Supervision Order:** A legally binding order through the Family Court if an attendance contract is not adhered to.
- **Parenting Orders:** Courts can order parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions to improve their child's attendance.

Persistent and Severe Absence

- **Persistent Absence (PA):** A pupil is considered persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year. The school identifies 10 days or more as a risk of persistent absence.
- **Severe Absence:** A pupil is considered severely absent if they miss 50% or more of school. Schools provide additional support and may involve external agencies for severely absent children.

Additional Information

- The school has a duty to safeguard all pupils and will investigate any concerns about a child's attendance.
- The school will work closely with local authorities and other educational partners to share best practices and resources.
- The school will follow the statutory guidance document "Working Together to Improve School Attendance".
- The school will make use of the "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidance for monitoring and addressing attendance issues.
- The school has a clear attendance policy available on the school website, which all staff, pupils, and parents are expected to understand.

The school has day-to-day processes for managing attendance.

Conclusion

The Rivers CofE Academy Trust believes that by working together, the school, parents, and pupils can ensure that every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential through consistent and engaged attendance. The school is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive environment, but parents are ultimately responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly. By working together, the school can support pupils to attend regularly and benefit fully from their education.