



RAVENSMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY PROCEDURES

Principles

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

This important policy has included recommended best practice from the 'Staffordshire Model School Attendance Policy (Entrust) May 2015 / V2 and the Staffordshire County Council Families First Targeted Services Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices. The Schools Education Welfare Worker has also been consulted.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. [February 22nd 2015 Department of Education](#)). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.

For example, at the end of the 2012/13 Academic year 94% of pupils who were present all the time achieved 5+ GCSE A* - C or equivalent. Where attendance dropped to between 85 and 90% only 75% of pupils achieved these results. This equates to an absence of around 1 week per year during Years 10 and 11 and clearly illustrates the impact of attendance on attainment.

The attendance and behaviour policy must include procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

- **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **truancy before or during the school day**
- **absences which have never been properly explained**
- **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWS) can take legal action against parents if they fail to make sure that their children go to school regularly and there is no legitimate reason for the absence. This action may take one of two forms:

- The Issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Prosecution in the local Magistrates Courts

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Absence

All registers must be filled in as outlines in the Staffordshire Behaviour & Attendance Strategy 2008 – 2010.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

As of 1 September 2013 there has been a change in **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**. Where there used to be the option for Headteachers to grant leave of absence during the term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten days in a year, this has been removed.

Headteachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for exceptional circumstance; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an "exceptional circumstance".

What should parents do if they wish to request a leave of absence?

Parents should contact the school to find out how to make a request for permission. We would strongly recommend that this is done before planning any leave of absence.

What happens if a child goes on holiday in term time or takes leave of absence for other reasons without permission from the school?

The absences will be marked in the school register as unauthorised absences and this may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120 after 21 days) per parent per child being issued by the Local Authority. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- A penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent or a pupil academic year.
- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one or the following criteria is met:

- There are at least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during the current and previous term. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- For unauthorised leave of absence, there must be a minimum of 2 sessions of unauthorised leave of absence (due to unauthorised leave in term or time been absent for longer than was agreed) within the total of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence required prior to issuing the penalty notice. These unauthorised absences do not need to be consecutive and should be calculated from the previous rolling calendar year.
- Persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed, in the current and previous term. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of late arrival. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Penalty Notice for persistent absence

- Parents whose child is repeatedly absent will now only receive one warning notice period to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no further formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

Medical Appointments

Parents of children attending a medical appointment during the school day need to produce an appointment card/letter or electronic notification prior to the appointment. Where possible all medical/dental appointments should be made outside of the school day.

We can then confirm lateness as a 'medical' absence and therefore authorised.

School Action on Repeated Absence

Where a child is persistently late or absent, even if the Head teacher has been informed, the following steps will be taken:

- ✓ A letter will be sent home informing parents of the number of late arrivals.
- ✓ If lateness persists then the parents will be contacted by the Educational Welfare

Worker

- ✓ Please note that any lateness or unexplained absence will be monitored by the EWW

as a matter of course.

- ✓ Schools and EWWs must now adhere to the 'Code of Conduct under the Provision of

the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2007 and Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003'.

Families must use the County forms to apply for authorised absence during term time for family holidays. These are available from the school office.

When a child is absent there should be some form of notification to the school as to the reason for absence:

- telephone call to school 296635 on the first day of absence before 9.20am – the reason to be recorded in the absence book;
- a letter should also be sent in to school upon the pupil's return, which may be kept for up to a term if necessary;
- a verbal reason given direct to the teacher by a parent or other adult (this **must** be recorded in the register).

Where no notification has been given for absence the child must be asked to bring a reason. If no reason is sent then there is an absence form in the school office which will

be completed by the Attendance Worker and sent home. The Governors have approved the monitoring of registers and the sending home of reminders about 'reasons for absence' being required which may be passed to the Education Welfare Worker (EWW).

All children not present for registration should be marked as (N).

Lateness

Reasons for lateness must be recorded in the late book. Both the late and absence books are kept in the school office.

Between 9.00 and 9.15am children arriving in school will have a present mark through the absent mark. Those arriving after 9.20 (without a medical reason) will have a (L) in the absent mark. This will be completed by clerical staff as the child arrives.

Should a pattern of absence or lateness appear the Attendance Officer responsible for attendance monitoring will alert the Headteacher who may seek a meeting with the parents. Should lateness or absence pattern still persist then the school will involve EWW and procedures outlined in the Staffs Behaviour & Attendance Strategies will be closely adhered to.

Rewards

Children who record 100% attendance will be rewarded with an attendance certificate at the end of the academic year. Each class in the school has their weekly attendance monitored and the class with the best attendance for the week is given a laminated certificate for their classroom and it is also posted on the entrance door of the school and, as a further reward for the children, they are given an additional playtime the following week, taken by the Headteacher.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, a referral to the EWW will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

For the academic year 2015/2016 the school has set a target of 96% attendance and is reviewed annually.

The Headteacher will report termly attendance percentages to the Governing Body and report against the number of children in the school who have less than 85% attendance at the time of the report.

The school considers itself to be proactive in addressing attendance issues and takes a number of measures to secure the best possible individual pupil and, therefore, whole school attendance figures

- the school has an Attendance Officer, Mrs Evans working in the office who, at the request of the Headteacher, regularly monitors the attendance of all pupils and informs class teachers and the Headteacher of any concerns
- the Headteacher himself monitors the attendance of pupils who are concerns and either personally or through the Attendance Officer will make contact with the parents of children in this group and he will also ensure that the Education Welfare Worker is fully informed.
- Where there are serious concerns over attendance the Headteacher and Education Welfare Worker will arrange to meet with parents
- The school has been involved in Behaviour and Attendance Workshops for the Local Authority where our Attendance Officer leads part of the training.
- The school will inform the parents three times a year, during Parents Evening and Summer reports, giving percentage attendance figures and what these groups represent.
- Attendance Clinics with EWW and school Nurse are regularly organised. Parents of pupils with 'persistent absence' (less than 90%) are invited to attend these meetings.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend, in terms of absence. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix

1. Letter to parents informing them of the schools new Attendance Policy.
2. a) Request for leave during term time b) Guidance notes for parents
3. School Letter Leave Agreed
4. School Letter Leave not Agreed
5. Flowchart – Unauthorised Leave of Absence
6. Staffordshire Local Authority – Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices

Adopted by Governing Body in February 2016.

Review Date: Annually

Education Welfare Worker Clare Butters approved this Policy January 2016.