



Ravenshall

all different | all equal | all important

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2013

Reviewed February 2016

Reviewed October 2019

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 Ravenshall School regards regular attendance as essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all children and that regular attendance at the school is necessary to promote better life chances. The school's ethos encourages children to feel that their presence is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late.

There is a clear link between good attendance and high standards. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

There is now more Government pressure on schools than ever before to ensure the regular attendance of children in their school. There is a legal requirement for schools to set targets for improving school attendance.

This policy sets out the principles and guidelines by which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality, to raise levels of achievement and to maximise opportunities both in school and in later life.

1.2 WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines, and this may also affect the learning of others in the same class. It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. If the child is regularly absent from school without good reason this can result in prosecution of the parents/carers in the Magistrates Court.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on attendance, the school will:

- Give parents details on attendance in our regular newsletters.
- Report to parents/carers at least termly on their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and prizes.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

2.0 UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

2.1 Every half day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

These include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences for day trips/holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.

This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

2.2 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absenteeism mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

Persistent absenteeism pupils are closely tracked and monitored. All of our persistent absenteeism pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and which may offer support and will set clear targets and expectations. All persistent absenteeism pupils are automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service

4.0 ABSENCE PROCEDURES

4.1 If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
via
Email office.ravenshall@ravenshall.org
SMS 07860003355
Telephone 01924 325234 (answerphone after hours)
- Parents/carers can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them.
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence - parents/carers should do this even if they have already telephoned us

4.2 If a child is absent school will:

- Contact parents/carers by the most viable option e.g. SMS, Telephone, Letter on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Invite parents/carers in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Panel if a child is persistently absent.
- Inform the Attendance and Pupil Support Service if attendance falls below 85%

5.0 TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have up to date contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

6.0 LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they not only miss work but also miss out on vital information and news for the day. Pupils that arrive late can also disrupt lessons and disrupt the learning of others.

Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by the end of registration.

All children arriving after registration period will receive an **unauthorised** absence mark.

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers may be asked to meet with the Attendance Panel and/or the Head Teacher to resolve the problem. Parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

7.0 HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Previous legislation allowed Head Teachers to grant a leave of absence of up to ten days per year during term time for the purpose of a family holiday in "special circumstances". The legislation has now been changed and so absences cannot be granted apart from "exceptional" circumstances - and family holidays are not classed as "exceptional" circumstances.

Exceptional Circumstances Leave Request form must be completed if Parents/Carers need to take their child out of school. The Head Teacher will then consider whether leave will or will not be authorised.

Penalty Notices may be issued in the following circumstances:

- Parents have not sought permission from the Head Teacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time
- If the Head Teacher has refused but the absence occurs anyway
- If a pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation
- And
- Where the individual absence has been recorded by the school as an unauthorized holiday in the attendance register on at least 10 sessions (5 school days)

The new amendments also reduce the timescale for fixed penalty notices. Fixed penalty notices are, in effect, charges for absence that has not been approved and, from September, will include family holidays. The penalty charge is £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within £28 days. These charges apply whether the absence is one day or 10 days. Previous regulation allowed 42 days for payment. Penalty Notices may be issued to each parent of the child.

Where parents continue to take unauthorized holidays in term time, despite having previously been issued with a Penalty Notice, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution under S444 of the Education Act 1996.

Parents/carers must understand that by taking children out of school they are making a choice to miss out on part of their child's education.

The Department of Education amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 with effect from 1/9/2013.

The Head Teacher is not allowed to grant any leave of absence, including term time holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's learning as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Parents/carers must understand that by taking children out of school they are making a choice to miss out on part of their child's education. Additionally there is a possibility that their child's place at Ravenshall could be at risk.

The Local Authority has the powers to issue Penalty Notices which can amount to £120.00

8.0 ATTENDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICE

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance problems. This will usually resolve the attendance problem, but if difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service. Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the Attendance and Pupil Support Service themselves to ask for help or advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

The Attendance and Pupil Support Service will try to work with the parents/carers and school to resolve the attendance problems, but if this is unsuccessful the Service may use legal action, such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the legal options are available from the school or the Local Authority.

9.0 SUMMARY

All staff at the school are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure that their children attend school regularly.

The school has a duty to identify pupils who are not attending regularly and, with the support of the Local Authority, take necessary action.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly and on time.

The following pages detail template letter which will be sent to parents as required.

Whole School Letter

FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to **all** parents and carers of pupils at Ravenshall School to focus on the importance of regular school attendance. We feel sure that you want your son/daughter to reach their full potential whilst at school. A pupil with 80% attendance misses the equivalent of one day schooling each week. Over five years of their secondary school education this would equate to a whole year.

Research shows that children who are not in school regularly and on time can become vulnerable, academically disadvantaged and easily disaffected.

The Attendance and Pupil Support Service meets regularly with school staff to discuss ways of improving the attendance and achievement of pupils. With your help we aim to make good attendance a priority for all pupils.

We expect your son/daughter to achieve at least 95% overall attendance target throughout their school life. In line with government guidance; this year we are working in a different way. This involves setting targets for improved attendance. Where targets are not met, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting or attendance panel to discuss these attendance difficulties and find ways of working together with school and the Attendance & Pupil Support Service to overcome them.

Our aim is to work in partnership with parents to resolve any problem relating to attendance, we do have the powers to bring cases before the Magistrates Court or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if unauthorised absence persists.

If you would like to discuss this initiative further or would like support from the Attendance and Pupil Support Service to help you improve your child's school attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Fast Track Letter

FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

Dear Parent/Carer

Re:

As you would expect, at Ravenshall School we aim to support all children and their families/carers to improve school attendance. Improving attendance has a big impact on your child's achievements in school. With your help we aim to make good attendance a priority for all pupils. In line with Government expectations, we are aiming for your child to achieve at least 95% overall attendance target throughout their time at school

With this in mind, we are sure that you would wish to know that during a recent register inspection it was noticed that your child's attendance has fallen below a satisfactory level. Please find enclosed a copy of **(his/her)** Attendance Summary for your information.

We are sure that as a caring and responsible parent/carers, you will share the school the importance of regular and punctual school attendance for your child. This is essential to ensure your **(he/she)** receives the full benefit of the education to which he is entitled.

We will now be monitoring **(name)** school attendance over the next 4 school weeks and expect **(him/her)** to meet his target of 95% attendance. Should you require support in this matter please do not hesitate to contact us at school.

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you to ensure that your **(son/daughter)** achieves as high a level as possible and experiences academic and personal success.

Yours sincerely

Fast Track Letter

FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

Dear **(parent/carer)**

Re:

We wrote to you on **(date)** regarding our concerns about your **(son/daughter's)** attendance at Ravenshall School.

We have now reviewed your child's attendance over the past four weeks and unfortunately it has not increased to a satisfactory level. The staff at Ravenshall School and the Attendance & Pupil Support Service are committed to raising the attendance and attainment of all students. We need your help to achieve the best for your child.

This letter is to invite you to an Attendance Panel on **(date)** at **(school)**

Our aim will be to identify reasons for your child's non attendance, resolve any problems and reset a target for a further four week period. Failure to reach this target could result in a Penalty Notice being issued or prosecution under the 1996 Education Act.

It is of vital importance that you attend this appointment. Your child will be expected to attend school. It may be appropriate to include your child at some point at the panel, in which case they will be contacted by a member of school staff.

If this date or time is not convenient please contact the school to arrange an alternative.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Fast Track Letter

FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

Dear **(parent/carer)**

Re:

We wrote to you on **(date)** explaining our concerns about your child's attendance at Ravenshall School. We have now reviewed your child's attendance over the last four weeks. We are very pleased to note that **(pupil's name)** has greatly improved.

School will continue to monitor **(name)** attendance; it is expected that this will continue to improve. Should you require any further help in this matter please do not hesitate to contact school on the above number.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Fast Track Letter

FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

Dear **(parent/carer)**

Re:

You may remember that you were invited to a meeting at Ravenshall School on **(date)** which you failed to attend. This meeting was to enable us to discuss concerns in regard to **(pupil's name)** school attendance.

In your absence a further 4 week monitoring period was set **(dates)**

It is expected that your child will achieve a minimum of 95% attendance over this period.

I must emphasise to you that you have a legal responsibility to ensure that **(name)** attends regular education; failure to do so can lead to a Penalty Notice Fine being issued which could be as much as £120 per child, per parent. You could also face court proceedings if you fail to pay the fine. If your child is absent from school for a valid reason you must contact the school immediately to let them know why they are absent and how long they will be absent from school.

Yours sincerely

Review and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed/amended as appropriately annually or as local and national directives dictate.

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