



River View Primary & Nursery School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy will be monitored regularly and evaluated so that it remains responsive to current issues.

Reviewed: September 2025

Adopted:

To be reviewed: September 2026

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Attendance Policy

Principles and Rationale

At River View Primary & Nursery School we consider that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

We believe promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out 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. It is always best to come and speak to school so that any concerns can be resolved.

The class attendance register is a legal document and a statutory requirement. The attendance register is taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session and shows whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents of a child of compulsory school age have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives sufficient and suitable full-time education. The Local Education Authority has a legal duty to see that these statutory obligations are met. Nursery education is non-compulsory, but we still have a responsibility to ensure good attendance.

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures.

Our school Attendance Policy underpins other school policies related to the wellbeing of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.

Key Objectives

1. Our aim is for pupil's attendance to be at least 97% in each academic year (September to July).
2. All absences should be notified and authorised if reasons are justifiable.
3. To provide advice and support to pupils and parents to promote the school's policy.
4. To encourage pupils to have a positive attitude to school and recognise the importance of attending school in good time, with the equipment they need for school, so that they are prepared and ready to learn.
5. We will continually improve pupil attendance by:
 - (a) promoting and rewarding regular attendance
 - (b) Raising parental awareness of legal requirements relating to attendance and also the crucial link between attendance and raising pupil achievement
 - (c) Enabling the school governors to fulfil legal requirements regarding admission, registration and required data
 - (d) Consistently monitoring and reporting to governors on pupil attendance and where appropriate take agreed actions

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
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The link Governor who oversees attendance is Mr Colin Bamford.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance

- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs D Buckingham and can be contacted via telephone on 01283 260157 or via email at office@riverview.staffs.sch.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

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

3.6 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Make calls to parents to seek reasons for absence where they are unknown
- Advise the attendance champion when a pupils absence is causing a concern

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Inform the school office via telephone/text/email to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs D Buckingham or Mrs M Hutchinson, who can be contacted via telephone on 01283 260157

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

School Procedures

Completion of Class Registers

The school gates open each morning at 8.35am and close at 8.50am. Class Teachers or support staff will complete the electronic registers daily during this window. The register closes at 8.50am. The afternoon register is then taken at 12.30pm (Reception) or at 1.00pm (Year 1 to 6). School then closes for all at 3.20pm.

Staff complete an electronic register using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024.

Late Pupils

Pupils arriving at school after 8.50am when the gates are closed, will need to be registered through the main office.

If late, parents will need to accompany their child to the main office and support them in signing in through our electronic entry system.

If a child arrives between 8.50am and 9.00am then they will be marked as Late (L) however, if a child arrives after 9.00am then they will be marked as Unauthorised Late (U).

Monitoring of regular lateness is conducted by the Senior Attendance Champion.

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

If a child is absent from school then the parent or carer must inform school by 9.00am (close of registration) on the first day of absence by phone, text or e-mail. We do not accept verbal messages from children.

If school is not informed of an absence and a child is absent from school for an unknown reason, then the school office will contact parents or emergency contacts to seek a reason. If a parent/emergency contact cannot be reached, then a 'Health and Wellbeing Check' may be conducted by school staff – this will involve visiting the address at which the child resides. If school is not informed of an absence, then this will automatically be an unauthorised absence.

Repeated absences, particularly sporadic absences, will be monitored carefully to ensure absences are justifiable. Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

Requesting Leave of absence: As from the 1st September 2013, following a change of regulations issued by the Government, the Headteacher may no longer grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, these circumstances will then determine the number of days granted for leave. All other leave of absence will be unauthorised and following 20 consecutive days of absence the child will be removed from the attendance register and lose their place in the school. These regulations state: "the regulations make clear that Headteachers' may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are

exceptional circumstances. Headteachers' should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

If you require a leave of absence, then please complete a leave of absence request form – available from the school office. To be considered, leave of absence requests must have been completed in advance (and giving the attendance champion enough time to respond) by a parent/carer who the pupil normally lives with.

Holiday requests: Holidays in term time are not permitted. If you choose to take your child on holiday, then a holiday request form should be completed – these are available from the school office. This information allows school to know that your child is safe when off for an extended period.

End of Day

School closes at 3.20pm and the school gates close at 3.30pm. If a child has not been collected when the gates have been closed, then they will need to be collected from the main office. Children who are collected late from school will be recorded in the school 'Late Collection Book'. Parents of children who are regularly late being collected will be contacted by the school Attendance Champion. If a child has not been collected by 3.45pm, then they will be placed into our Richer Rainbow After School Club and charged an emergency childcare fee of £10. In line with recommendations, if your child is not collected after one hour and you have not informed us you will be late then we will contact First Response for Advice.

Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the Local Authority may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences

- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996

- Details of the support provided so far

- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Reporting to Parents

The school will regularly inform parents on their child's attendance record through termly attendance letters. In addition to this, to maintain good communication with parents regarding poor attendance (or a fall in attendance) then the following stages will be adopted:

- Below 95% - when an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 95% then parents will be sent a letter highlighting the school's concern.

- Below 93% - when an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 93% then parents will be sent a letter highlighting the school's concern and an attendance clinic will be held via the phone with the Senior Attendance Champion.

- Below 90% - when an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% then parents will be sent a letter highlighting the school's concern and an attendance clinic will be held in school with the Senior Attendance Champion and Family Support Manager.

If attendance problems are not resolved, families refuse to work with the school or school continues to have doubts about the validity of absence, then future absence will be unauthorised, and the unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice. Parents will be informed of this via a letter prior to the referral taking place.

Pupils who have difficulties: Maximising attendance is a priority. The school promotes positive behaviour and good attendance through its curriculum and pastoral systems. However, children are sometimes reluctant to attend school for a variety of reasons. Parents are encouraged to inform school at an early stage if this becomes a concern. The school will work closely and sensitively with parents in resolving such difficulties.

Rewarding Good Attendance

To promote and celebrate good attendance, we actively reward children via two attendance initiatives.

Initiative 1 – Whole Class Attendance

For every day that a class is in full attendance, they will receive a letter from the word 'ATTENDANCE'. When the class have had 10 full days attendance (these do not have to be consecutive) then the following day they will be rewarded with a class non uniform day.

Initiative 2 – Individual Attendance

Individual attendance will be rewarded with 'River View Pounds' that will earn money off a reward trip. The % of attendance will be calculated between June 5th 2023 and May 24th 2024 and the price paid for the trip will depend on the attendance % of individual children at the end of this period.

97% - 100% - Free trip worth at least £25

96.9% - 95% - Pay £5

94.9% - 93% - Pay £10

92.9% - 91% - Pay £15

90.9 - 90% - Pay £20

Below 90% (over 20 days off) - Still able to attend trip but will need to pay the full price of £25.

Initiative 3

Little Heroes Assemble

Little Heroes is a Staffordshire County Council initiative to support attendance.

Here
Every day
Ready
On time

This campaign comprises of certificates and stickers which are used to reward and celebrate children that demonstrate good school attendance or who have been making an improvement.

The second part of the campaign is called Helpful Heroes and provides resources for children that are struggling with their emotional health or anxiety about coming to school.

Attendance Monitoring

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the Local Authority / DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be 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.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

