



# The Ryleys

Girls & Boys Preparatory School

## The Ryleys School Attendance Policy and Procedures

<b>Monitoring:</b>	Headteacher
<b>Named responsible people:</b>	Mrs J Langford
<b>Reviewed:</b>	September 2024
<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	September 2025

### Principles and Aims

High levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are extremely important for all children. Our aim is to ensure that every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and which enables them to benefit from the provision in place.

Regular or unnecessarily prolonged absenteeism puts those pupils at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers and is hugely detrimental to their education. Pupils who register attendance of below 93% are deemed a cause for concern.

### Related Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Working together to improve school attendance outlined by the Department for Education (DfE).

It is also based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (with subsequent amendments)
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Part 7)
- The Education Act 2002 (Part 3)
- The Education Act 1996 (Part 6)

When applying this policy, our school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

## **Legal Requirements**

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable fulltime education. The law requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools should follow up on absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised

The Government expects Parents/carers to:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive at school on time

Schools to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence

## **Protocols and Procedures**

### *Recording attendance*

In line with statutory requirements, we will keep a register of school attendance and ensure that the name of every pupil is entered onto the register, irrespective of whether they are of statutory school age or not.

The school will add pupils to the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which it has agreed with (or been notified by) the parent that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend school on the agreed starting day, the school will follow this up and establish the reason for absence.

Once a pupil is added to the admissions register, their attendance or absence will be recorded for each session. The register will take place at the start of the school day and also once during the second session.

Codes recorded in the register will be in line with the guidelines set out in Section 8 of Working together to improve school attendance.

The school will also record:

- whether the absence is authorised or not (if the pupil is of compulsory school age);
- the nature of any off-site activity;
- any exceptional circumstances that have resulted in an absence.

### *Amendments to the attendance register*

Clear and accurate records of amendments made to the attendance register will be kept. These will note:

- the original entry;
- the amendment that is being made;
- the reason for this amendment;
- the date that the amendment is being made;
- the name and position of the individual making the amendment.

In accordance with regulation 13(1) to (3), a school must make a return to the local authority within 5 days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register (a New Pupil Return) and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's most junior year (for example, pupils who are registered at secondary school at the start of Year 7) unless the local authority has requested such information.

In accordance with regulation 13(4) to (6), a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register (a Deletion Return). This does not apply where the pupil's name is deleted at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the school's most senior class (for example, pupils who leave primary school at the end of Year 6), unless the local authority has requested such information.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Attendance is the responsibility of all members of the school community. However, we have allocated specific roles and responsibilities to named individuals to ensure that we are meeting statutory requirements.

#### **Governors**

Those responsible for governance at the school will:

- ensure that the school fulfils statutory attendance requirements;
- work with leaders to establish policies, protocols and expectations relating to attendance;
- reinforce the importance of attendance in documentation and communications as appropriate;
- ensure that key staff receive relevant training relating to attendance;
- review and analyse attendance data and support leaders to address any issues that become apparent;
- offer appropriate challenge regarding attendance data;
- keep up to date with changes in guidance and legislation and ensure that leaders are aware of any changes;

- hold the headteacher to account for the effective implementation of this policy.

### **Headteacher**

The headteacher will:

- take responsibility for the implementation of this policy;
- monitor school-level attendance and absence data and communicate key information and data to those responsible for governance;
- monitor the impact of any attendance strategies and systems that are in place, identifying new approaches where relevant;
- ensure that there are systems in place so that when a pupil has a social worker, they are informed about any unexplained absences;
- liaise with attendance staff to identify when it would be appropriate to issue fixed penalty notices;
- decide whether requests for leave should be granted in exceptional circumstances.

### **Designated senior leader for attendance**

It is expected that schools will have a designated senior leader for attendance. At our school, this person is the Headteacher. The Headteacher will:

- oversee attendance across the school;
- retain an oversight of attendance data across the school;
- foster a clear vision and expectations throughout the school community;
- identify and/or devise systems and interventions to improve attendance;
- arrange meetings with parents/carers to address attendance issues;

### **Class teachers**

Class teachers/form tutors will:

- complete attendance registers at the times specified by the school using the school's agreed systems;
- use accurate attendance and absence codes as set out in [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

### **Office staff**

Office or school administration staff will:

- answer and record attendance-related phone calls from parents/carers;
- ensure that any safeguarding concerns are reported using the school's agreed safeguarding systems and protocols. monitor individual and group attendance on a day-to-day basis;
- gather information and produce reports relating to attendance (as required by leaders);

### **Parents and carers**

Parents and carers will:

- ensure that their child is in school each day, except for when a statutory reason applies;
- notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible using the school's agreed systems;

- ensure that leave of absence is only requested in exceptional circumstances and, where possible, advance notice is given;
- book any non-emergency medical and dental appointments outside of the school day, where possible;
- engage with any support offered to address any barriers to their child's attendance.

### **Promoting Good Attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The school will:

- Offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration
- Engender a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/carers, governors and pupils value attendance and punctuality
- Comply with legal requirements
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality is noted and monitored and appropriate action taken
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures
- Support governors in taking an active role in promoting good attendance
- Work in partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies

### **Expectations**

The school expects its pupils to:

- Attend regularly and on time
- Be prepared adequately for the school day
- Comply with the school policies and procedures

The school expects its parents/carers to:

- Ensure their children attend school every day on time
- Contact the school on the first day of absence
- Arrange holidays and medical appointments outside school hours
- Regularly update emergency contact details

### **Notification of Absences**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Parents/carers should notify the school before 8.30am on the first school day of their child's absence from school. If the reason for absence is sickness and it continues, or is likely to continue, for more than a week, medical evidence should be obtained and submitted to the school.

If any child is absent and the school has not been notified, the receptionist will phone the child's parent/carer. In the event that contact cannot be made, the receptionist will record this on the register. If there are any child welfare/safety concerns, then the matter may be referred to the local authority and/or Social Services. The reception staff will share this information more widely with the attendance officer and class teacher.

### **Registration and Lateness**

The school uses an electronic system of registration. The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law (e.g. to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a precise day). The registers are marked at the beginning of each session, morning and afternoon. Registers are marked in the first 10 minutes of the start of the school day. Registers are submitted to the office by 9.00am.

The afternoon registration period ends at 1.30pm.

School begins at 8.30am prompt and finishes at 3.30pm

Pupils arriving after the start of the school day must enter the school via the main entrance at the front of the building, where they will be met by the reception staff. Pupils attendance is recorded on the electronic registers. It is vital that any pupil arriving late is signed in in order to comply with Health and Safety procedures. Pupils arriving after 8.40am will be marked with a late (L) mark. It is imperative that children arrive at school on time to ensure that education is not missed.

### **Categorisation of Absence**

**Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.**

#### **1. Authorised Absence**

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make contact to alert the school on each day of absence.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card, or a

prescription paper. If these are not provided on request it may result in the absence continuing to be classed as unauthorised.

- Religious observance in accordance with Local Authority guidelines
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Where possible, parents/carers should try to arrange these appointments for out of school hours
- Educational experiences
- Special circumstances (authorised by the Headteacher)
- Permanent or fixed-term exclusions.

## **2. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site.

## **3. Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Unexplained absences
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips or holidays in term time not authorised by the school

### **Family holidays and extended leave**

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the Head in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration. The Head may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the Head's decision is final on whether the request is approved, and the length of absence approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the Head's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time.

### **Absence due to mental or physical ill health or their SEND**

In developing support for children whose absence is due to mental or physical ill health or their SEND, the following processes relevant to any attendance case apply: -

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with other the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed and available.
- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but they are expected to work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil. They will:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, the School will:

- Work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Work in partnership with families to help support routines and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.



- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time limited phased return to school would be appropriate.
- The School will support a pupil with the appropriate assistance of a range of other relevant agencies.

### **Patterns of Absence**

First day of absence:

If a child is absent from school, the parent/carer should contact the school on 01625 583241, or can email the school. If a parent/carer does not inform the school, the reception staff will ring the parental home on the first day of absence or send an email to ascertain why the child is absent.

The school is aiming to achieve an attendance target of 95% or above. If a pupil's attendance falls below 93% and a parent/carer fails to inform school, this will be addressed with parents.

### **Escalation of Intervention**

- 1) The Attendance Officer will review all absences and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 93% in any half term. In most cases, the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child's attendance and the school's concerns.
- 2) If a child's attendance level has not improved or has fallen further, at the end of the next half term, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carer to arrange a meeting. The Attendance Officer will liaise with the class teacher and, when necessary, other professionals if the need for support is identified.
- 3) In the event that the child's attendance levels still do not improve, then the school will refer the matter to the local authority access to education team.