

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of last review:	September 2021
Date of next review:	September 2022
Approved by:	Rabia Education Trust

Introduction

At Rabia Education Trust we believe that full and regular attendance at school is a vital factor in achieving a successful education. We believe that our policy on attendance will help parents support our attempts to provide the best possible education for the children. The reinforcement of punctuality and full attendance has a powerful impact on educational progress. Parents/carers have a moral, social and legal obligation to ensure their child(ren) attend(s) school punctually on a daily basis.

This document explains the school's policy on:

- information about Authorised and Unauthorised holidays;
- requesting leave of absences;
- holidays during term time;
- punctuality procedures;
- lateness/absences actions; and
- recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Parents/carers are required to inform the school if their child is absent, keep the school informed and up-to-date, always state their child's FULL name, class and the reason for their absence and intended date of return. They should NOT say sick, not well or ill as we need more information than this. Without this, parents will be contacted by phone, email or a letter home.

How can I tell the school about my child's absence?

- **Email:** Rabia_gs@yahoo.co.uk
- **Text:** 07517074598
- **Ring:** 01582-493-239
- **Visit:** The school to tell us in person (try to use this option as a last resort)

At Rabia Girls' and Boys' School, we believe:

- Regular school attendance and punctuality is essential if our pupils are to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them.
- Time is a very valuable and important concept which we need to nurture and develop within our pupils.
- The importance of regular attendance and being punctual needs to be impressed on our pupils as part of their preparation to be successful in their adult life.

We acknowledge that irregular and late attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment, cause pupils to suffer a loss of experiences that cannot be entirely regained and impede the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy seeks to ensure that all staff and parents are aware of attendance and punctuality matters in school.

This policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality; and
- ensuring that attendance/punctuality is monitored effectively and reasons for absences/lateness are recorded promptly and consistently.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have the prime and legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered.

Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually:

This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

Parents will:

- provide up to date contact numbers and change of address;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time, after having breakfast and being appropriately dressed, with their planner and in a fit condition to learn and benefit from the education offered to them;
- give a reason for any lateness;
- offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence;
- keep requests for absence to a minimum;
- work closely with the school to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance; and
- not take holidays during term-time and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special/exceptional circumstances.

School Responsibility

Our school has a responsibility to provide an education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children.

The Attendance and Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority is responsible for pupil absence. As well as providing guidance and support through its officers, they may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996.

The school will:

- give high priority and positively support punctuality and regular attendance;
- as a statutory responsibility, record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions in the register of attendance;
- carry out registration once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session;
- record in the register whether a pupil is present or absent (and if absent, record whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised);
- follow up absences which are not notified by parents by a phone call from the school and if parents are unable to be contacted a letter will be sent home requesting the reason for the absence;
- develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absences, patterns of absences with effective monitoring and intervention;
- develop effective strategies to promote and maintain attendance and punctuality;
- encourage open communication channels between home and school;

- encourage children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life; and
- adequately provide for pupils with difficulties.

Strategies to encourage and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality:

- New parents are introduced and made aware of our attendance and punctuality policy
- Letters concerning poor attendance and punctuality are sent out.
- Individual parents will be called into school to meet with the headteacher/SMT along with the attendance officer if there are more than three late arrivals within a six-week period.
- Attendance certificates are awarded to children for full attendance in each term.
- Punctuality is promoted through class rules.
- A record of attendance and punctuality is also given on the written school report.

Recording

The class teacher will take the pupil register in the main hall.

Any late pupils arriving in class after 8.30am must report to the school office. All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

The register is again taken at the start of the afternoon session.

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone but must be followed by either a letter or email on the child's return to school. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence.

This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education Act which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence:

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance.

Examples of Authorised Absences	Examples of Unauthorised Absences
Illness, medical or dental appointment. Provided the school is satisfied the illness and appointments are genuine and supported with appropriate evidence such as appointment letters, doctors prescriptions, letters etc.	Where a student arrives at school when registration has closed.
Special occasions as agreed with the school as an authorised absence.*	Additional days taken for special occasions or days other than those specified by the school.
	Shopping during school hours.
	Going to the airport to meet or say goodbye to relatives.
	Looking after brothers or sisters.
An agreed period for family bereavement.*	Absence for more than the agreed period.
Off-site activities e.g. participation in educational festivals, representative sporting events during school time.*	Attendance at any event without prior agreement with the school.
Term time leave, as agreed by the school in accordance with the guidance given in this document.*	Term time leave without prior authorisation by the school.

Several medical related absences unsupported by a medical note and where attendance is below 97%.

- The child is absent 'with leave' i.e. leave being granted by the school, only in exceptional circumstances.
- A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason.

Monitoring

The attendance officer will review the attendance of all the pupils on a termly basis and any pupils will be identified as a cause for concern if they have less than **97% attendance** on a regular basis. A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending.

The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and, if after a two-week period there appears to be no improvement, the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the headteacher to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending. If the parent/s does not attend the meeting or if after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve, a home visit by the attendance officer/SMT will be arranged and if required a formal referral to the EWO will be made.

Examples of Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time

Guidance Notes for Parents/Carers

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 has been amended and came into force from 1st September 2013. headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Requests for leave of absence should not normally be granted for the purpose of a holiday during term time. headteachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and it is only for the headteacher to determine what is truly exceptional.

APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Requests must be made in advance or the leave cannot be authorised. All requests should normally be made at least two weeks in advance, to the headteacher, by completing the 'Leave of Absence During Term Time' form which can be requested from the school office or a printable version is available on the school's website. The form must be fully completed and you will receive a written response confirming if the request has been confirmed or not.

If you are travelling abroad, you will need to supply us with confirmation of your booking including date booked and return flight tickets for the school to copy.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

If you take your child out of school without the schools' prior authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (which is illegal) and noted in your child's school records. This may lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

Where a parent/carer has taken their child on leave of absence during the term time for five consecutive school days or more, without the headteachers' authorisation, you will receive a Penalty Notice. In these circumstances a warning WILL NOT be given. Penalty Notices will need to be paid within 21 days at £100 or £150 within 28 days and part payments will not be accepted. There is no appeal process for a penalty notice. Unpaid Penalty Notices will result in prosecution for the absence in the magistrate court. Please note that all adults with care of the child are usually liable. Penalty Notices are an alternative to prosecution for failing to ensure a child's regular attendance and will be only used once per pupil in an academic year before prosecution takes place.

FAILURE TO RETURN TO SCHOOL ON THE DATE EXPECTED

If there is a reason which delays the pupil from returning to school then the parent/guardian must inform the school immediately. The school will require evidence of this issue and will then decide whether the absence will be authorised. For any travel arrangements outside of the UK we require proof of return flights prior to the leave being taken-this may protect you from receiving an unauthorised absence for your child and a fine if they are unable to return on the date expected.

Each case will be assessed individually and medical evidence from abroad IS NOT routinely accepted. Please note that a prolonged unauthorised absence from school will also result in your child's name being removed from the school roll and on return you would need to re-apply for another school place.

- No leave of absence will be granted if it coincides with important dates on the school calendar (e.g. exams, parent consultation evenings). Please feel free to ring the school to check important calendar dates prior to completing the request form.
- No leave of absence will be granted during Year 11 and very rarely in Year 10 and Year 9 as the GCSE Curriculum is taught.

Punctuality Procedures

- Students should be on the school site by 8.15am every day. The school gates are locked at 8.20am. All students should be seated in their classrooms by 8.25am.
- Pupils arriving after 8.20am are recorded as late with code (L) and need to sign in with the school office.
- Registers close at 8.30am. A pupil arriving after the register has closed will be marked absent with code (U) or with another absence code if that is more appropriate (in accordance with the DfE school attendance guidance).
- Afternoon registration is after lunch break and at the start of their afternoon lesson which is 12.45pm for Secondary.

Lateness Actions

Lateness (after 8.30am) is the equivalent to an unauthorised absence and will be monitored by the EWO in addition to the school attendance officer.

Various sanctions will be used to address lateness in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality. Sanctions will be used from the school's published list of Disciplinary Penalties but are likely to include:

- calls & Letter to parents, removal of privileges/free time;
- after school detention which will be issued for each late (parents will receive 24hr notice prior to the detention);
- the attendance officer passing student details to the headteacher if your child is late 3 times during each half-term; and
- forwarding your child's details to the Education Welfare Officer, at the discretion of the headteacher.

Absences Actions

- The RGS attendance officer will refer the names of students who have taken unauthorised absences to the headteacher immediately.
- Unauthorised absences will directly be forwarded to the Education Welfare Officer at the discretion of the headteacher.
- Parents should be contacted immediately about the consequences of unauthorised absences.
- Parents should provide satisfactory evidence (e.g. prescription or appointment letter), if your child's medical leave extends the 3 days period.
- If a child becomes absent due to medical reasons for more than 5 days anytime during each term then the attendance officer will call a meeting with the parents to discuss this.

Covid-19 Attendance Update

Attendance Expectations

From the start of autumn term 2021 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- the parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil;
- the schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absences; and
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

New for 2021 to 2022 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there may be some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations governing school attendance registers by adding a new category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021 to 2022 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to or attendance at school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC); and
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Attendance Codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak (set out on page 9 of the attendance guidance), in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

- Pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X.
- Schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak.

Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply:

In line with current legislation and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows:

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19).

Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test:

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.

If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case.

Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.

Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.

If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school.

Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.

If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.

In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Local Lockdown:

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of a local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote Education:

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Authorised Personnel:

Attendance Officer: Shabnam Khan

Headteacher: Hafsa Bilquees

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<u>Approved by the Proprietor/ Chair of Governors/ Governing Body:</u>	
 <u>Name:</u>	
 <u>Position:</u>	
 <u>Signature:</u>	