

# RMET

## Attendance Policy

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## Document Change History

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Version:</b>	<b>Description of Changes:</b>
29 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	2.0	Full review and approval

## 1. Aims

1.1. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

1.2. We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

2.1. This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

## 3. Statement of Equality

3.1. We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitments to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1. The Academy Trust and Academy Committees

#### 4.1.1. The Academy Trust and Academy Committees are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 4.2. The Headteacher

#### 4.2.1. The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Academy Committee
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 4.3. The designated lead responsible for attendance

#### 4.3.1. The designated lead in each school are responsible for:

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Maintaining a strategic oversight scrutinising and comparing data termly
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

### 4.4. The school attendance officer

#### 4.4.1. The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Completing attendance checks on any students in Alternative Provisions or on a Managed Move and update the School's attendance register accordingly
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data weekly (see section 8)
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated lead responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Advising the Headteacher when to request that the Local Authority issue fixed-penalty notices
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

#### 4.5. Class teachers/form tutors

- 4.5.1. Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, directly in to the electronic register, at the registration times detailed in the appendices attached.

#### 4.6. School office staff

##### 4.6.1. School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record the absence calls on the electronic registers
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

#### 4.7. Parents/carers

##### 4.7.1. Parents/carers are expected to fully support the school's attendance policy and:

- Make sure their child attends every day/session on time
- Contact the school 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

#### 4.8. Pupils

##### 4.8.1. Pupils are expected to:

- Primary schools - Attend school every day on time and aim for 100% attendance
- Secondary schools - Attend every timetabled session on time and aim for 100% attendance

## 5. Recording attendance

### 5.1. Attendance register

5.1.1. We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

5.1.2. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Details of the times the registers are taken are in the attached appendices.

5.1.3. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

5.1.4. See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

5.1.5. We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

5.1.6. We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

5.1.7. Pupils must arrive in school on time on each school day – details of times for each school are in the attached appendices.

## 5.2. Unplanned absence

- 5.2.1. The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school office.
- 5.2.2. We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- 5.2.3. 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.
- 5.2.4. The school may also seek medical evidence where there has been a previous pattern of low attendance. The school will write to parents/carers to advise where this is the case. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- 5.2.5. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.
- 5.2.6. If your child is unwell but able to attend school we can support your child by issuing any medications you send into school. Please refer to the school's relevant medicines/students with medical conditions policy for further guidance.

## 5.3. Planned absence

- 5.3.1. Attending a medical or dental appointment will usually be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school office in advance of the appointment.
- 5.3.2. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- 5.3.3. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 5.4. Lateness and punctuality

- 5.4.1. A pupil who arrives late:
  - Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
  - After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- 5.4.2. Where the school has concerns regarding punctuality these will be brought to the parent's attention by way of a 'face to face' or telephone conversation. Further

instances of late arrivals will be challenged by letter and if the timekeeping issues are still not resolved following this correspondence, the school will then invite parents in to a meeting with the school attendance officer to identify what may be causing the problem and discuss solutions.

#### 5.5. Following up unexplained absence

5.5.1. Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may reach out to other parties working with the family e.g. early help/social workers
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues without any contact from parent/carer, the school will carry out a home visit on the third day of absence. The school will then consider involving the local authority if absence continues without explanation.

#### 5.6. Reporting to parents/carers

5.6.1. The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. We will have this information available to parents/carers at each parent/teacher meeting and with your child's end of year report.

5.6.2. If we have concerns and reason to write to you regarding your child's attendance, a report of their attendance will be included in the correspondence.

5.6.3. You may request a copy of your child's attendance record at any time by contacting the school office. This will be provided to you no later than 5 working days following receipt of the request.

## 6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 6.1. Approval for term-time absence

6.1.1. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.



- 6.1.2. Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance. What is classed as exceptional circumstances is entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.
- 6.1.3. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- 6.1.4. Any request should be submitted to the school office in writing, as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
- 6.1.5. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:
- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail)
  - Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
  - Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending an educational provision.

## 6.2. Legal sanctions

- 6.2.1. The school or Local Authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
- 6.2.2. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.
- 6.2.3. Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, Local Authority officer or the police.
- 6.2.4. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
  - One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

6.2.5. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 7. Strategies for promoting attendance

7.1. Rainham Mark Education Trust is committed to supporting our pupils to attend school. Our ethos is to engage rather than penalise families wherever possible and we strive for a positive approach to uncovering and resolving issues impacting attendance.

7.2. All good attendance is celebrated in our schools.

7.3. RMET Primaries

- Assemblies are held each week and the top attendance classes are named and celebrated
- An attendance board is maintained in each school showing the three classes with highest attendance each week
- Attendance is referenced in the first newsletter shared each term
- The School Council feed into reward ideas each term.

7.4. RMET Secondaries

- Good attendance is recognised and celebrated with postcards home and with reward points
- Attendance is referenced in newsletters to parents
- Attendance is focused upon in assemblies

## 8. Attendance monitoring

8.1. Monitoring attendance

8.1.1. The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Report attendance to the attendance lead every week and meet with them each fortnight to discuss areas and pupils of concern
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

8.1.2. Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Academy Committee and Academy Trust.

## 8.2. Analysing attendance

### 8.2.1. The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## 8.3. Using data to improve attendance

### 8.3.1. The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Provide regular attendance reports to Trust leaders to inform Trust strategy.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## 8.4. Reducing persistent and severe absence

8.4.1. 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.

### 8.4.2. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Help families to access wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Share good practice across trust member schools and work together where siblings attend more than one of our trust schools
- Refer for Local Authority action where school interventions are unsuccessful

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

9.1. This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the Director of Education. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board or their designated committee.

## 10. Links with other policies

10.1. This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy (RMET)
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies (SCHOOL)
- Medicines policies (SCHOOL)
- Students with medical conditions policy (SCHOOL)

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after 5 days)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: RMET Secondary Schools

### Registration and punctuality procedures

- Legally the register must be taken twice a day: once at the start of the school day and once during the afternoon session.
- The registers will remain open for **30** minutes at AM registration.
- AM registration is from 8.35am-8.45am and PM registration is from 12.20pm-12.30pm.
- Students arriving in school after 8.35am but before 8.45am should go straight to their form room where their form tutor will mark them with an L code meaning late before registration closed. This counts as a present mark.
- Students who arrive after 8.45am but before **9.05am** must sign in at main school office and will be coded L. This counts as a present mark.
- Students arriving after **9.05am** must sign in at the main school office where they will be coded “U” meaning late after registers closed. This counts as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.
- The school will use its behaviour system to deal with persistent lateness to registration.
- Unauthorised absences and a failure to improve may lead to the local authority issuing a penalty notice on behalf of the school per section 6.2 of this policy.



### Appendix 3: RMET Primary Schools

#### Registration and punctuality procedures

- Legally the register must be taken twice a day: once at the start of the school day and once during the afternoon session.
- The registers will remain open for 20 minutes at AM registration.
- AM registration is from 8.35am-8.45am and PM registration is from 12.20pm-12.30pm.
- Students arriving in school after 8.45am but before 9.30am must sign in at main school office and will be coded L. This counts as a present mark.
- Students arriving after 9.30am must sign in at the main school office where they will be coded “U” meaning late after registers closed. This counts as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.
- Unauthorised absences and a failure to improve may lead to the local authority issuing a penalty notice on behalf of the school per section 6.2 of this policy.