



# Redby Academy Attendance Policy



## **Rationale**

School Attendance is subject to various Education laws and the Redby Academy attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Redby Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As an academy we are committed to using electronic registration systems to aid monitoring and to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed promptly.

At Redby Academy we celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful education. Our academy will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Redby Academy conveys to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

We recognise the particular vulnerability of certain groups of pupils, including those pupils; with Special and/or Special Educational Needs, in receipt of Free School Meals, subject to child protection or child in need or who are in the care of the Local Authority. We will endeavour to safeguard these groups and indeed all pupils through this policy, with a first day response and monitoring procedures.

## **Principles**

Redby Academy will ensure staff:

- Are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration legislation and regulation
- Complete registers accurately at the beginning of every am/pm session.
- Identify those pupils who are most vulnerable within their teaching or tutor groups
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting the academy early on the first day of absence
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued sending a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, he/she will be missed
- Promote positive and welcoming attitudes to pupils returning after absence

- Have in place procedures which allow absentees to reintegrate and catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of others
- Inform parents/pupils of weekly attendance rates around the academy and reward good and improved attendance in assemblies
- Consult with all members of the school community in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance procedures
- Regularly monitor patterns of absence and provide early intervention strategies to avoid escalation
- Regularly report, with a full analysis and evaluation, attendance data for consideration by senior leaders and academy governors.

### **Additional Support**

We recognise the particular vulnerability of certain groups of pupils, including those pupils; with Special and/or Additional Education Needs, disadvantaged pupils, vulnerable pupils including those subject to child protection or child in need or who are in the care of the Local Authority. We will endeavour to safeguard all pupils through this policy, however, will prioritise vulnerable pupils with first day response and monitoring procedures.

- Record attendance for those pupils educated off site
- identify those pupils who are migratory, missing or removed from education and refer to appropriate authorities
- Ensure, whenever possible, that work is prepared, delivered and marked for pupils who are absent for long periods.

### **Statutory Framework**

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a pupil is required to attend regularly at school, should a pupil fail to attend regularly legal action may be taken. A parent(s)/carer(s) may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice or could be fined up to £2,500 face three months in prison and receive a parenting order. An Education Supervision Order could be sought.

- The school is legally required to complete a register twice during the school day. This is once at the start of the school day and again for the afternoon session.
- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence. It is for the school to determine if an absence is to be authorised (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).
- It is important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the pupil that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community including pupils, parents, staff and governors.

#### **The Academy will:**

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence in order to act early to address patterns of absence.

- keep parents/carers fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record and follow up unexplained absences by text, phone calls, letters and home visits as necessary
- contact parents on the first day when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason, via the school's electronic messaging system or by phone call.
- take timely action on any problem notified to us and involve appropriate outside agencies in order to support pupils and their families. This may include a 'home visit' or a request to the police to undertake a 'safe and well' welfare visit.

#### **Pupils will:**

- aim to achieve 100% attendance each academic year
- attend school daily
- will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day
- will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school

#### **Parents/carers will:**

- support the school and their child in aiming for 100% attendance each academic year
- ensure their child attends school daily and on time ie by 9.00am each morning
- ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, dressed in accordance with the school uniform policy, fully equipped with a positive attitude to learn
- notify the school before 8.50am of any absence
- avoid taking their child out for school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance
- ensure the school has updated contact numbers and email addresses
- actively work with school staff and relevant multi-agency staff, to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur.

#### **Registration**

Class Teachers will take an electronic register at the beginning of every am/pm session, using the SIMS system. It is the teacher's responsibility to complete the registers promptly and accurately using the designated codes. Any changes in teaching groups must be reported immediately to the office/SIMS Manager, ensuring that attendance data can be accurate and kept up to date. Any teacher who has arranged for a pupil to be engaged in an activity other than indicated on their timetable must inform the office manager.

The Office Manager will monitor the attendance of those pupils educated off-site, including those on Managed Moves to other schools, attending the Pupil Referral Unit or following an alternative curriculum with a provider registered with Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board. They will liaise closely with the named contact within the alternative provision.

#### **Recording, Analysing and Reporting Attendance**

The Office Manager is responsible for co-ordinating: the whole school approach to the recording, monitoring and reporting of attendance, the identification of absence, including persistent absentees, liaison with external services, the reporting of attendance for those pupils educated off-site, strategies for minimising absence and the reporting of absence to the SLT, Governing Body, Local Authority and DFE.

The Office Manager will review attendance data on a half-termly basis. Along with the Headteacher, the attendance data will be analysed with patterns and trends being reported to the Governing body. Parents/carers will be contacted in writing if an attendance concern arises. The Headteacher prepares half-termly Safeguarding reports to the Governing Body. Included in this, is Attendance figures to enable them to review progress and set attendance targets.

The Governing Body will review attendance reports termly and set targets annually. Governor panels for attendance will meet termly only if there is a need to review progress of identified individuals or to consider formal non-attendance procedures.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will identify and analyse if low attendance has impacted on progress and attainment. This will be discussed with class teachers who will then initiate and review appropriate intervention strategies to address any issues arising from such analysis.

### **Regular, Efficient and Accurate Recording of Attendance**

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

- 1. Unauthorised absence**

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

- 2. Authorised absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

- 3. Approved Educational Activity**

Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This covers types of supervised educational activities undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include for example field trips and educational visits, sporting activities or approved education off site.

### **Procedures**

#### **First Day Response**

Under the 1996 Education Act parents commit an offence if their child does not attend school regularly. If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the school on the first day of absence by 8.50am to provide a reason for the absence and the likely duration of the absence. The Office Manager will contact, by text, all parents/carers of absent pupils who have failed to notify academy by mid-morning on the first day of any absence where a live mobile telephone contact number exists. All vulnerable pupils will be telephoned by 9.30 a.m. It is therefore essential that the school is kept informed of changes to contact details such as telephone numbers and addresses. Where contact is not made a further text/phone call will be issued. Where no communication has been made with parents/carers of vulnerable pupils SLT and/or the Office Manager may make a 'home visit' or request the police to undertake a 'safe and well' welfare visit. A standard letter will be posted out to all other parents/carers.

#### **Authorising absence**

The academy will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. If a parent rings the school to confirm the pupil is unwell we may request supporting evidence: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from professional, doctors note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescriptions, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence.

The academy may choose not to authorise absence without this supporting evidence as it is for the academy to determine if an absence is to be authorised (Regulation 7 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the academy in advance and submit a copy of the appointment card. The absence will be marked unauthorised if the parent fails to submit the appointment card.

### **Persistent Absentees**

Persistent absentees are those pupils who are at risk of, or who have less than, 90% attendance. They will be identified at the earliest opportunity and parents/carers notified in writing in the first instance. Where improvements in attendance are not evident a parental meeting will be requested. An Individual Action Plan will be drafted in conjunction with parents if appropriate. If attendance rates fail to improve a referral will be made to the Local Authority attendance service who will assess the case to determine the appropriateness of use of statutory enforcement procedures ie Fixed Penalty Notices, Magistrates Court or seek and Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment, a parenting order can also be imposed.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

The 2013 amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 makes clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. The Headteacher has the discretion, in exceptional circumstances to authorise short periods off school.

Applications for leave of absence where dates can be known ahead, must be made at least three weeks in advance of the requested date. Parents/Carers will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team and consideration will be given to each request prior to a decision being taken by Headteacher on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its individual circumstances.

Any leave of absence that has been declined or the parents/carers has not sought approval for will recorded as unauthorised. These cases will be referred to the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued to each parent for each student.

*This policy was updated in November 2017 and will be reviewed every two years or earlier if necessary.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher                      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ *Chair of Governors* Date \_\_\_\_\_