



Ribston Hall High School

Attendance Policy

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| Date of Policy: | March 2023 |
| Persons Responsible: | Headteacher |
| Date of next review: | March 2025 |

Aims

At Ribston Hall High School, we are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the from the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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)
- [Gloucestershire local authority guidelines](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Recommending the issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Andy Barnard and can be contacted via email (ab@ribstonhall.gloucs.sch.uk)

The Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer is a member of the pastoral support team. They:

- Record calls and messages from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Produce regular reports for the pastoral team on attendance patterns and trends
- Reports concerns about attendance to the relevant Head of Year and, if necessary to the assistant Headteacher i/c Pastoral Care for KS3 & 4 or the Head of Sixth Form.
- Supports the assistant headteacher i/c pastoral care to implement the five-point attendance procedures, including arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues (see Appendix 2)

Form Tutors and Classroom Teachers

Form tutors (morning registration) and Classroom teachers (afternoon registration) are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information into Cloud School (the school's MIS system).

Recording attendance

Attendance Register

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

We will take our attendance register in registration with the tutor at the beginning of the day, and at the start of each lesson. A formal register will be taken in period 5 for the afternoon registration mark. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08.40 and will be kept open until 08.55. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.30 and will be kept open until 13.40.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also 'attendance monitoring'). The most effective method is using the school messaging service, through PS Connect and the My Ed app. Parents/carers can also telephone the school and leave a message on the absence line. This number is 01452 382249.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.

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.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment using the school's established communication methods.

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.

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. Read the section 'approval for term-time absence' to find out which term-time absences the school is able to authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

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

Ongoing punctuality issues will be addressed by the head of year in accordance with the school behaviour policy.

Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by daily phone calls, initially by the attendance officer.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

Reporting to parents

Parents will receive information on attendance alongside attainment data at each assessment point, which is four times a year. Parents can also access live attendance data through their Cloud School login.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A request for leave of absence form can be obtained from the pastoral support staff or respective head of year.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- One off events which are unavoidable, examples 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.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' 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 educational provision
- Study leave in the sixth form
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may grant term-time holiday.

Reducing persistent absence

Where persistent absence is recorded the school will work closely with parents/carers, and other external stakeholders that might be supporting the pupil.

The school will challenge persistent absence using the Five-Stage attendance procedure highlighted in Appendix 2.

Legal Sanctions

The local authority, on behalf of the school, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- 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

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

More information on the legal sanctions using in the county can be found [here](#).

Strategies for promoting attendance

The school reward both 100% attendance, and those students showing significant improvement in attendance through the pastoral system. Pastoral team will issue certificates and write letters home reflecting positive behavior patterns.

Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above three days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the local authority inclusion team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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 governing board, through the safeguarding and attendance report produced for each full governing body meeting.

Ribston Hall collects attendance data through the Cloud School MIS. This data is stored in this system and is used throughout the day to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support
- Understand attendance patterns, for example if a student is missing the same subject each week.

Analysing Attendance

Ribston Hall will:

- Monitor attendance and absence four times a year, across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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, using the FFT aspire attendance tracker and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

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

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the assistant Headteacher i/c of pastoral care. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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 |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 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 |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code 0 if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | 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 |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |

Appendix 2: 5 Stage Attendance Procedures

Ribston Hall High School Five Stage Attendance Procedure

Students will move to the next stage if their attendance does not improve:

Stage 1, Initial concern

- Attendance falls below 93%
- Letter to parents
- Review in 4 weeks, if there is no improvement the concern will be escalated to stage 2.

Stage 2

- Letter to parents
- A Student Attendance Agreement completed with student and Form Tutor/Head of Year
- Review in 4 weeks, if there is no improvement the concern will be escalated to stage 3.

Stage 3

- Letter to parents
- Arrange school meeting or home visit this will be by the Head of Year or a member of SLT.
- Written attendance agreement completed at stage two will now be agreed with parents
- Medical evidence will be required to authorise further absence due to illness
- Review in 4 weeks, if there is no improvement the concern will be escalated to stage 4.

Stage 4

- Letter to parents, warning of prosecution and invitation to attend a meeting
- Formal Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) to draw up a Parenting Contract.
- The focus of the meeting should be on how to improve attendance and prevent legal proceedings being initiated. We will focus on what has worked well or had a positive influence. This is an opportunity for everyone to share ideas about anything else that might help, including any new strategies or interventions that may be worth trying. At the end of the meeting, everyone will have a clear plan of the way forward.
- More information can be found on page 12 of the following document ([gcc-attendance-guidance-for-schools-november-2020-final-formatted-by-ginny-201120-2.pdf](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2103163/gcc-attendance-guidance-for-schools-november-2020-final-formatted-by-ginny-201120-2.pdf) ([gloucestershire.gov.uk](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk)))
- Review 4 weeks

Stage 5

- Attendance Improvement Meeting, Review 1 resulting in **either**:
- Improvement but targets not met, plan to continue, with Review 2 date **or**
- Targets not met, request for legal action to the local authority in line with their procedures (<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2103163/gcc-attendance-guidance-for-schools-november-2020-final-formatted-by-ginny-201120-2.pdf>)