Royal Alexandra & Albert School

Attendance Policy

Policy applies to	School staff and students
Governing Body approval required	No
Accountable Executive	Deputy Head - Achievement, Standards & Inclusion
Status & Review Cycle	Non statutory 3 yearly
Last approval	05.03.24
Next approval	September 2024

1.   Aims

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 student 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 students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

2.   <u>Legislation and guidance</u>

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 (Student 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 student's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3.   Roles and responsibilities

3.1.   The Governing Board

The governing board is 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

3.2.   The School will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide an understanding response to any student's or parent's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality
- Monitor individual students' attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a student fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of recognition
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all students via our half termly reports and the Go 4 Schools Parent App.
- Make initial enquiries regarding students who are not attending regularly
- Meet regularly with the Inclusion Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Inclusion Team. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Inclusion Team may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order

3.3.   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 students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-Penalty Notices, where necessary

3.4.   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
- Building relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Joe Gale, Deputy Headteacher: Achievement, Standards & Inclusion

3.5. The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher - Achievement, Standards & Inclusion when to issue fixed-Penalty Notices
- The Attendance Officer be contacted via attendanceofficer@gatton-park.org.uk

3.6. Year Leaders and Director of Standards

The Year Leaders and Directors of Standards are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the year group or key stage
- Share and implement a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes for the year group or key stage
- Complete regular analyse of attendance and punctuality data for the year group or key staff
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families
- To lead and manage Tutor teams in delivering interventions and strategies to raise attendance levels

3.7. Head of House

The Head of House is responsible for:

- Support child in their House to attend school promptly and regularly
- Work in collaboration with Health Centre staff and parents to ensure that any students who are ill are supported appropriately
- To notify the Attendance Officer of any illness for students in their House
- To work in collaboration with colleagues and parents to improve attendance where there are concerns

3.8. Tutor

The Tutor is responsible for:

- Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via Go4Schools.
- Tutors will also be responsible for supporting the Year Leader in addressing attendance concerns swiftly and working with students and families to improve attendance.

3.9. Student Services

Student Services staff will:

- Take calls from parents [and students] about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents [and students] to the [Year leader/pastoral lead] in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.10. Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before [time, e.g. 9am] on the day of the absence ([add if your school expects this] 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 and ensure that the school are updated of any changes to contact details.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.11. Students

Students are responsible for:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Sixth Formers are expected to call school to report their absence before before school starts on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

4. <u>Recording attendance</u>

4.1. Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- ➢ The original entry
- ➢ The amended entry
- ➢ The reason for the amendment
- ➢ The date on which the amendment was made
- ➢ The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

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

Students must arrive in school by 8.20am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.50pm and will be kept open until 2.20pm.

4.2. Unplanned absence

The student's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on 01737649106 or attendanceofficer@gatton-park.org.uk

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.

Where the absence is longer than five days or 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. 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 will be notified of this in advance.

4.3. Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's Parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides supporting evidence where required.

If an appointment in school time is unavoidable, please advise the Attendance Officer by contacting via email on attendanceofficer@gatton-park.org.uk or calling 01737649106

On arrival at school, following an appointment, all students must sign in at Student Services and sign out if they are to leave for an appointment during the school day.

We encourage Parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

If a whole day of absence is required due to a medical appointment, Parents are required to inform the Attendance Officer with a copy of the appointment letter and an explanation of why a full day of absence is required, to support authorisation of a whole day.

The student's Parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence by completing the online form 'Leave of Absence'' which is available on the School's website. Further information is in Section 6.

4.4. Lateness and Punctuality

Registration is at 8.30am during a student's Period 1 lesson. Students who arrive after 8.30am will be marked on the register as late with an L code.

Students will receive a consequence for failure to attend school on time this will be issued by their Year Leader.

4.5. Following up explained absences

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

- Follow up on their absence with their Parent to ascertain the reason by issuing an absence text or phone call on each day of absence. This may also be followed further by the relevant Head of Year.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken, where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

4.6. Reporting to parents

Parents are able to access live information about their child's attendance via the Go4Schools platform. Attendance information will also be included in the progress tracking reports sent home to parents at regular intervals.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absences

5.1. Approval for term-time absences

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student 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 student is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least seven days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via THIS FORM. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- ➢ Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- ➢ Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- ➢ Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision
- ➢ Study leave as specified by the school in the lead up to external examinations.
- ➢ Compassionate leave in the event of immediate family members falling ill or close family members passing away.

5.2. Legal sanctions

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

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- Where a child is taken out of school for a leave of absence during term time for five days or more within a three-month period (this need not be consecutive) without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised
- For further unauthorised absences during the 15 school days following a warning letter issued for poor attendance in a period of time.
- If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the three subsequent weeks following a warning letter.
- The Inclusion Service may also issue a Penalty Notice to parents who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Inclusion Officers.
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

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.

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

6. Promoting attendance

The Royal Alexandra and Albert School encourages regular attendance in the following ways;

- ➢ By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
- ➢ By responding promptly to a child's or parent concerns about the school or other students.

- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration periods. If a student arrives at school after the close of registration without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics.
- By requiring students to regularly review and consider their own attendance and punctuality.
- By celebrating good and improved attendance.
- By monitoring students, informing parents in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to Surrey County Council if the irregular attendance continues.

7. <u>Attendance monitoring</u>

7.1. Monitoring & Analysing attendance

At Royal Alexandra & Albert School we:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Student-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. We will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2. Using data to improve attendance

At Royal Alexandra & Albert School we:

- Provide regular attendance reports to school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students 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

7.3. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

At Royal Alexandra & Albert School we:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

- Send letters to parents to outline concerns and provide advice and guidance on how to improve attendance for their child.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Use a system of meetings in which Attendance Pledges and Attendance Agreements are made to improve attendance for key students.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

8. <u>Monitoring</u>

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by Deputy Head: Achievement, Standards & Inclusion. At every review, the policy will be approved by the SLT.

9. <u>Links with other policies</u>

- Rewards and Behaviour Management Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

<u>Appendix</u>

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 a reasonable amount of time)

O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day