Redhill Primary Academy

Attendance policy

Signed

[signature]

Ms F Seddon, Chair of Local Governing Board

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Contents

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 child 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 children have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governing Board

The Local 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 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 children
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 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/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Claire Whiting and can be contacted via the school office.

3.4 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 Headteacher
- Working with the school Office Manager to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer is Sam Jones and can be contacted via the school office.

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Class registers must be marked morning and afternoon: Morning registers must be marked by 8.55am, 8.50am for reception, and afternoon registers by 1pm.

3.6 School Admin Staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis, log the call on the attendance board and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Office Manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.55am 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

3.8 Children

Children are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every child 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 child is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a child 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.

Children must arrive in school by 8.50am for reception children and 8.55am for KS1 and KS2 children on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am for reception children and 8.55am for KS1 and KS2 children and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The child's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.55am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

Parents/carers should notify the school as soon as possible on the day of their child's absence. This can be done by leaving an answerphone message, sending an email to the school email, by messaging using the Arbor App or by speaking to a member of staff in the school office from 8.30am. If leaving a message, parents/carers must leave details of their child's name and the full reason for their absence. We do not accept messages to say that a child is poorly or unwell, we will always ring a parent/carer back to find out the full reason for their child's absence.

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 child'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. Home visits will also be carried out and notes left if there is nobody at home asking for contact on return.

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 and home visits may also be made.

4.3 Planned Absence

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

A leave of absence form must be completed for any leave of absence from school. A copy of the appointment letter or any other supporting paperwork must be attached.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The child'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 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A child 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

Parents/Carers of children who regularly attend school late, (5 sessions or more) will be spoken and written to and asked if there are any problems with their child attending school. There are many different strategies that we can put in place to encourage a child's punctuality. These will be discussed on an individual basis with the parent/carer.

4.5 Following up Unexplained Absence

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

> Call the child'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 child's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police
> 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, the school will consider involving Family Connect

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are able to access their child's attendance information via the Arbor Portal/Arbor App. All parents/carers have their own personal account to access their child's attendance log.

If the school is concerned about a child's attendance, the parent/carer will be contacted and informed of their child's attendance level. This may be by letter or by telephone call.

End of every year reports are sent to all parents/carers and include attendance reports.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-time Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a child 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 child 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 four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. This is accessible via the school office. Parents/carers are strongly advised not to finalise any planned absence before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. The Headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> 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 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 children 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 child is attending educational provision

> Close Family Funerals

> ½ day for Year 6 Grammar school tests

5.2 Legal Sanctions

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.

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 the 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We build relationships with parents/carers to help improve their child's attendance by inviting them in for meetings.

We support parents/carers by requesting school nurse involvement if a child's attendance is affected by illness. This is primarily to offer support to the family and to give them strategies to improve their child's attendance.

Staff members model personal punctuality.

The Headteacher or a senior leader greet children on the small playground or at the front of the school each morning, to give pupils a warm welcome.

We use parents/carers meetings and our newsletter to get all parents/carers on board with the school's expectation for high attendance.

The Friends of Redhill hold school uniform sales and they have a stock from school donations, to help parents/carers who can't afford to purchase new items.

Children who are low-attenders may be given a task or responsibility each day, such as tidying the book corner or looking after younger pupils on the playground.

Free school meal children will be offered a breakfast club place, if they are persistently late, to ensure that they are at school on time and have eaten breakfast.

We offer safe spaces around school (the Pastoral Care room) and make sure children know who they can talk to if they're experiencing any issues from challenges with their peers, to their mental health.

We reward very good and excellent attendance by issuing out attendance certificates in assemblies.

Every fourtnight the Headteacher promotes class attendance through assembly

7. Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors and analyses attendance daily. Patterns/reasons for absences are recorded and sent to the Headteacher. The Headteacher decides on appropriate action which may include home visits and school nurse referrals.

Attendance is a priority for all children, but specific groups will be monitored and analysed termly. These groups include free school meal children, children in care and children who are EAL.

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data daily, monthly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual child 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, and share this with the Local Governing Board.

7.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to the office manager, teachers and school leaders, to facilitate discussions with children 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

7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child 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/carers of children who the school 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

> Closely monitor absences of children who are close to persistent absence levels and engage with parents/carers as to reasons why.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum one year by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. 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 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 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