**RIVINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Attendance Policy**

 September 2024

**The Mission Statement**

With the intention of enabling all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, Rivington Primary School aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

**Statutory Framework**

A pupil is required by law to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the school’s acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter/message authorises the absence.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

**School**

Rivington Primary School expects all pupils to attend regularly and to arrive on time in a fit condition to learn.

Staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality with all pupils and will lead through personal example.

The school employs a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and works closely with parents when attendance/punctuality gives cause for concern.

Parents will be informed promptly by school or the schools Education Welfare Officer of any concerns which may arise over a child’s attendance.

The Headteacher will report to the school’s governing body termly on attendance matters.

**Pupils**

Pupils are expected to attend regularly and arrive on time.

Pupils will be encouraged to achieve and maintain a good attendance through assemblies, incentives and reward certificates.

**Parents**

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time, in school uniform, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

Parents are responsible for informing the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence of the reason why their child is absent. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to support absences.

Parents should avoid medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours unless it is a specialist appointment that cannot be arranged outside school hours. Parents should inform school before an appointment and a copy of any documentation should be shown to the school office so that the absence can be authorised.

Parents are expected to attend meetings on request if concerns arise about their child’s attendance.

**Registration**

The attendance register is a legal requirement and must be taken twice daily. The register is taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. School must distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences.

Registration is an important time when children are welcomed by the class teacher and learning begins. Children who arrive late miss out on this crucial time.

Registers are recorded electronically and coded in accordance with current government advice. Pupil absence will be recorded as ‘N’ (reason not known) until school accept a reason for the absence. This will then be changed to either an authorised or unauthorised code. School will make the decision whether an absence will be authorised.

If the computer system fails a paper register will be taken by the class teacher. This will be entered on to the system at the first opportunity.

**The school day**

Children are expected to arrive at school between 8.40am – 8:50am.

Morning registration begins at 8.50am.

Morning registration ends at 9.00am, at this time the school doors are closed, and the gates are locked.

Children arriving after 9.00am **must** enter through the office with a parent. They willbe signed in, by their parent/carer at the school office. The signing in system will record the time of arrival and the reason why the child is late. The child will be coded ‘L’ late on the register.

The register closes at 9.30am

Children arriving after this time without a valid reason will be recorded as ‘U’, this is counted as an unauthorised absence even though the pupil is in school.

If a pupil arrives late due to attending a medical appointment, the parent must provide evidence of the appointment to the office staff in the form of an appointment card or hospital letter in order for the register to be marked appropriately.

Afternoon register is taken at 1pm.

Punctuality issues are taken very seriously by school because evidence shows that this often leads to more serious attendance issues.

Parents of children who arrive late on a regular basis will be invited into school to discuss the issues and concerns around the punctuality of their child. If punctuality remains a concern, parents may be subjected to legal sanctions such as penalty notice fines.

**Safeguarding absent pupils**

School operates a first day response system; this means parents are expected to contact school on the first day of any absence as early as possible to explain why their child is not in school. Parents must phone to report the absence.

For safeguarding reasons school will attempt to contact parents until we receive a response, this may also involve a home visit to ascertain the reason for the absence.

**Parents are requested to return their child to school as soon as possible after an absence.**

**Medical appointments**

Only urgent or unavoidable medical appointments should be made during school time and pupils should return to school as soon as possible after the appointment. Routine dental checks or medical appointments should be made outside school time whenever possible. Parents must provide evidence of appointments in the form of medical appointment cards or letters.

**Medical Evidence**

When pupils have a high incidence of absence, parents may be requested to provide medical evidence to support the absence. If medical evidence has been requested and that evidence has not been provided by the parent, the absence **will be unauthorised** by school.

Acceptable medical evidence can be:

* Sight of prescription medicine or prescription counterpart (copy on right of prescription)
* Signed and dated medical appointment card
* A copy of an Orthodontist’s or hospital letter

Where children miss out on education without permission the Local Authority is required by law to take appropriate action. Please help us to support you by giving school as much information about any known absence or medical condition that could adversely affect attendance.

**Authorised and unauthorised absence**

The law states that a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A telephone message from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the school’s acceptance of the explanation authorises the absence.

**Examples of absences from school that would be authorised (providing evidence may be necessary):**

* Sickness
* Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
* Days of religious observance
* Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

**Absences from school that will NOT be authorised are:**

* Shopping trips
* Birthdays
* Family holidays not agreed by school
* Family celebrations not agreed prior to the event

**Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

From September 2015 the government set the persistent absence (PA) threshold at 10% of a pupil’s possible attendance. This means that any student who has 10% absence or above (90% attendance or below) fall into this category. The government do not distinguish between absence that is **authorised** or **unauthorised.**

Schools are judged on the number of PA pupils they have in school and are expected to investigate, support and challenge absence that is approaching or meets the above threshold.

For each pupil we expect a minimum attendance level of 95% to enable him or her to reach maximum academic achievement. Parents of pupils falling below 95% may receive letters of concern and may be invited to school to meet with the schools Education Welfare Officer. The intention of any attendance meeting is to discuss the issues and concerns around the child’s absence and to agree a plan of action to improve the situation; this may include referrals to other services such as school health.

When appropriate, school will also liaise with other agencies – Educational Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service, Social Services, the School Nurse and other agencies to support and help pupils with attendance difficulties.

**Children with medical needs**

The school will support pupils who are absent through chronic or life-threatening illness by adhering to current government guidance for children with medical needs, this may involve a plan of support and a re-integration plan back into school. The school will liaise with health professionals where appropriate to support the child and enable access to education.

**Leave of Absence in Term Time (including holidays)**

**The Headteacher will consider applications for ‘leave of absence’ during term time in ‘exceptional circumstances’. School cannot authorise time off for family holidays and parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays.**

Parents must apply for leave of absence in writing using a ‘Leave of Absence Request Form’ (available from the school’s office and the web-site) and must attach any evidence for the school to take into consideration. The application must be submitted well in advance of the absence.

The Headteacher will decide if the leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision.

**If the Headteacher does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents decide to take the leave anyway, the absence will be unauthorised.**

Leave of absence cannot be authorised retrospectively. If a child is removed from school for a period of leave of absence without the school being informed the absence will be automatically unauthorised.

Parents who are thinking of booking a family holiday **must check** with school when the school holiday dates are **before the holiday is booked**.

**Unauthorised holidays during term time may lead to Penalty Notice Fines. Penalty Notice Fines can be issued to each parent for every child concerned.**

**Penalty Notices**

The school follows the Local Authority Code of Conduct for penalty notices. Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. More information on penalty notice fines can be found at:

*https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/schools-education/education-welfare-service/legal-sanctions-for-unauthorised-school-absence*

**Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

Rivington Primary school will strive to make pupils feel welcome and valued and will encourage good attendance with praise, incentives and rewards through:

* Weekly class award
* Termly attendance prizes
* End of year certificate and prize
* Assemblies
* Other strategies as appropriate

Parents and pupils will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, parents’ evenings etc.) of the importance and value of good attendance.

Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.

The school employs the services of a Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to support the school in meeting its legal obligations with regard to school attendance. The EWO will investigate all arising attendance issues in accordance with current government guidance and legislation.

**Children Missing from Education (CME)**

**When a pupil leaves with notice the school will:**

* Agree with parent the last day the pupil will be attending the school.
* Request current telephone numbers, e-mail and addresses.
* Ask if the pupil has been allocated a place at a new school and if so, collect the details.
* If a new school has been allocated contact the school to agree the date the pupil will be starting.
* If it cannot be established that the pupil will be attending the named / any school, follow the LA CME procedure.

**Where a pupil leaves without advance notice or their destination is unknown, the school will investigate the whereabouts of the child by**:

* Checking possible whereabouts with staff
* Contacting parents and/or emergency contacts held for the pupil by telephone and e-mail
* Making a home visit to the last known address
* Checking if neighbours and friends are aware of the pupil’s whereabouts
* Contacting any other agencies known to be involved with the child including named social workers SEND services etc.
* Contact the last known school of any siblings
* Check any social media sites e.g., Facebook

If the pupil is still not located school will refer to the LA Children Missing Education Officer. If significant safeguarding issues are raised regarding the missing pupil school will also make a referral to the Safeguarding Contact Centre. This will enable the LA to make further enquires, as appropriate, to try and locate the pupil. School may also inform the Police.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that schools are expected to make reasonable enquires to find the whereabouts of a missing pupil.

**Legislation links**

This policy should be read in conjunction with ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014’ and ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff’.

This attendance policy adheres to current government legislation and guidance. For further information please refer to: [**www.legislation.gov.uk**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

• The Education Act 2002

• The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999

• The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011

• The Education and Inspections Act 2006

**Other relevant government guidance**

• Parental Responsibility Measures for school attendance and behaviour

• Children Missing Education

Policy date: September 2024

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