



R.E.A.L. Education Limited

Attendance Policy

(R.E.A.L. Education Ltd.)
(R.E.A.L. Independent Schools, Ilkeston)
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Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. R.E.A.L and R.E.A.L Independent Schools fully recognise its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. The government expects Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time or part-time education to which they are entitled;
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Support all pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school and is available on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant documents and legislations:

- 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
- School attendance parental responsibility measures: Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police (January 2015)
- Anxious Learners and Anxiety Related Non - Attendance (ARNA) Guidance for Secondary Schools - Nottinghamshire EPS - June 2020

Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head of Schools, Head of Behaviour and Attitudes and Chair of Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged



and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will affect their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

Context

R.E.A.L and R.E.A.L Independent School works with some of the most hard to reach and complex young people across the region, children and young people who are particularly hard to place and for whom traditional avenues of engagement have been exhausted. Some of our children and young people have a history of difficulties with punctuality and attendance and we strive to support each of our pupils to recognise and appreciate the benefits of attending school.

The Department for Education considers that for all children, 95% attendance is the benchmark for good attendance. Historical attendance figures for our young people before starting at R.E.A.L and R.E.A.L Independent School show us that some of our young people have particularly poor attendance, and some are school refusers. To enable us to deal with attendance in the most effective way, we analyse on a personal level so individual support needs, circumstances and family and home life can all be taken into consideration. Some of our learners come from difficult environments, are in care, have a learning disability and / or difficulty, mental health support needs or have been involved in the probation system and nearly all of our learners have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Personalised learning pathways are designed and adapted to meet the needs of our young people, to maximise the chance of successful and effective attendance and punctuality, and we do our utmost to support learners to engage in and enjoy their learning journey. Our model of education enables us to provide transport and support for learners to leave their homes, engage in learning at home or support our learners to become independent and confident travellers.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.



- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to children on entry to the school in order to promote good habits.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the commissioning body so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued and encouraged in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

The Admission Register

The law requires all schools, including independent schools, to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined.

Contents of Admission Register

The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.



The admissions registers at the R.E.A.L Independent Schools is collated and updated by the school's administration team.

Attendance Registers

Procedures

Our school will follow the procedures below to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes
- To maintain appropriate attendance data
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give details of any absence and lateness
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents/carers to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the commissioning body/local authority any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the commissioning bodies/local authorities we are working with
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the pupil's individual Learning Manager who has responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants are responsible for:

- Completing the register for the morning and afternoon sessions on time
- Liaising with parents/carers regarding absence on a daily basis
- Informing the Learning Managers where no contact form the parent/carer has been made
- Recording the details of the children that arrive late or go home
- Informing the Learning Manager of any concerns over attendance and working together to make improvements



- Working with their pupils and families to reinforce the importance of good attendance and promptness

Learning Managers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Referring learners to the LEAL team when attendance drops below 70% unauthorised.
- Informing the Head of Behaviour and Attitudes where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information and discussing issues around attendance to support meetings, reviews and referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their pupils and families, where appropriate, the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation, which should be recorded in the notes on the timetable app.

Learner Engagement and Attendance Lead (LEAL) is responsible for:

- Providing information to parents/carers/learners about the importance of attendance levels and how learners can be encouraged.
- Assessing problems and possible solutions working with parents/carers and learners.
- Develop alternative plans and interventions to tackle/resolve/support issues that lead to absence and promote positive engagement and increased attendance.
- Improving links between school/home
- Supporting families consistently in and out of school hours as required ensuring they receive all the benefits of their child's education.
- To share relevant information with Learning Managers and Senior Leadership Teams for monitoring and Quality assurance.

The Head of Behaviour and Attitudes is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Providing and analysing data in all attendance matters
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the commissioning body/local authority
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence

Parents/Carers are responsible for:



- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the teacher/Teaching Assistant/Learning Manager on the first morning of absence
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Enhanced Support Provision Team

This team has been developed to provide enhanced support for learners who may, at some points in their journey, need support to improve their attendance. Referrals are made by Learning Managers and through termly discussions at raising achievement meetings. Through regular team meetings and sharing of good practice, some learners may have access and work with one or more members of the ESP team to ensure learner outcomes are achieved and progression made.

The team comprises of:

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Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (MHW)

- To develop a variety of innovative and engaging approaches to share across the company with a focus upon improving learner outcomes.



- Work alongside learners to build up trust and find out more about why they are not attending, developing bespoke packages to support their mental health and wellbeing.
- Work alongside parents/carers to build up trust and support them to improve their child's mental health and wellbeing through regular home visits and support.
- Visit identified learners weekly to build a relationship and support improved mental health.

Careers and Employability Lead(CEL)

- To work alongside learners to build up trust and develop a progression pathway for Post 16.
- Support learners to visit Post 16 placements and support transitions.
- Develop and encourage aspirations for learners for their future Post 16 pathway.

Registration

R.E.A.L and R.E.A.L Independent Schools run a morning and an afternoon session:

Morning: The morning session will start no later than 9.30am to allow for travel, location and planned activity.

Afternoon: The afternoon session will start at 12.45pm

There will be controlled access to the school site to ensure the safety and welfare of our pupils during the school day.

The Teacher/Teaching Assistant running the session has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Attendance codes / and \ are used for pupils who are present and the attendance register must be completed by:

Morning: 10.00am

Afternoon: 1.00pm

Any pupil absence must also be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.



Due to the personalised programmes we run at R.E.A.L and R.E.A.L Independent Schools, learning happens across a multitude of sites so the register is electronic. All relevant staff have access to the register using an app on their mobile phones or via Atmos on their laptop/notebook through the use of an internet connection.

The Teacher/Teaching Assistant only has the option to mark whether a learner is present or absent on the electronic register, and must communicate with the pupils Learning Manager on any other matters of concern (lateness, authorised absence, illness). The Learning Manager is responsible for checking that attendance has been completed by the Teacher/Teaching Assistant for both morning and afternoon sessions and the completion of all registers is checked by our Attendance Officer and any concerns raised and discussed with the Learning Manager.

Attendance registers are legal documents and they must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer.

For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the

absence

- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents / carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents / carers will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent / carer.

Lateness

Pupils who arrive after the starting session time will be recorded as late (Attendance code L). Any pupil who arrives at school after the register is completed at 10.00am and 1.00pm is considered as having an unauthorised absence for the morning or afternoon sessions (Attendance code O).



Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than the session start time will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the staff team explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence, it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences in the register. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head of Schools and Head of Behaviour and Attitudes have the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process and contact the parents/carers to check the reasons for the child's absence.

If the child is subject to a Child protection Plan, the Learning manager will inform the social worker of the absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for a long time, or a repetitive absence, the school will do all it can to support the child to return to school.



Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right for Head teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Head of Schools will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The Department for Education expects school attendance to be 95%. R.E.A.L and R.E.A.L Independent Schools expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school life. It is the responsibility of the Head of Schools, Head of Behaviour and Attitudes and governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore, where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to inform the local authority / commissioning body. The local authority/commissioning body may issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

Reduced timetables

At REAL and REAL Independent Schools, we believe that young people are entitled to the very best personalised education provision. In some cases this means that a decision is made for them to access a reduced timetable. The circumstances for each individual learner will be unique, but may well fall into one of these categories;

- As part of a learner's planned reintegration into school following a lengthy absence due to exclusion or non-- attendance (including anxiety related non-attendance) if deemed appropriate.



- Following an extended absence due to ill health or other medical reasons.
- As a temporary fixed term intervention when a learner's current timetable needs altering following a serious incident to allow alternative education arrangements to be made to meet the needs of the learner, or to allow interventions to be put in place enabling the student to return to full time education.

These arrangements will be agreed by the learner/parents/carers, commissioners and any other professionals supporting the learner, the learning manager and the Head of Behaviour and Attendance.

The arrangements will be reviewed regularly so that the timetable can be adjusted and increased to meet the learner's needs and to enable access to a full time timetable as soon as is appropriate.

The rationale, decision making process and review of progress will be recorded on a Reduced Timetable form held in the learner's file.

Monitoring and Analysis of Attendance

Our Learning Managers have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded. Regular meetings are held with the Head of Schools and Head of Behaviour and Attitudes to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents. Attendance data will be analysed on a termly basis to identify issues, trends and figures in comparison to the Department for Education guidance and national attendance data. For the analysis of attendance data at R.E.A.L and R.E.A.L Independent Schools we use national datasets and we analyse against data for ethnicity, gender, SEN profile, Geographic's, key stage.

Please read this policy in conjunction with the Attendance policy: Coronavirus addendum for R.E.A.L and R.E.A.L Independent Schools.