

Attendance Policy

Ramsey Grammar School



Approved by:	RGS Governing Body	Date: [10/12/2024]
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Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	<u>3-5</u>
4. Recording attendance.....	5-8
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	8-10
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	10
7. Attendance monitoring	10-14
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	14
9. Links with other policies	14
Appendix 1: Attendance codes	15



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 pupil 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 pupils 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 Department of Education, Sports and Culture (DESC) and refers to the DESC's statutory guidance which can be viewed in full by following this link:

https://desc.gov.im/media/20mdpavk/attendancepolicy20062011update_1_.pdf

The Law

Legal responsibility for ensuring that their children attend school rests with parents and it should be noted in this connection that "parent", as defined in the Education Act 2001, includes any person who has parental responsibility for a child and any person with whom a child is living and who has care of the child.

Section 24(1) of the 2001 Act states that "it is the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise" and the Department is required to enforce this duty.

"Suitable education" is defined in the Act as "efficient full-time education suitable to [a child's] age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have."

In the case of registered pupils, section 29(1) of the 2001 Act states that "if any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent of the child is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,000".

Failure to attend regularly includes failure to arrive punctually at the beginning of each session without either "leave" (see following section) or "reasonable excuse".

In addition to prosecuting parents, section 30 of the 2001 Act also allows the Department, after consultation with the Department of Social Care, to apply to a juvenile court for a child to be made the subject of an education supervision order.

The Department cannot ignore non-attendance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body 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 pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

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 to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr. Flynn and can be contacted via rgsenquiries@sch.im.

3.4 The Head of Year

The Head of Year supported by the Pastoral Leader, 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.

3.5 Form Tutors / Class Teachers

Form Tutors / Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the attendance officer via MIS no later than 09:15 for am registration and 12:05 for P4 which forms the pm registration mark.



Form tutors will share weekly attendance data with students and speak to them about the importance of school attendance and how to catch up on work that has been missed when absent.

Form teachers will build partnerships with parents to enable any challenges faced with attendance to be addressed.

Class teachers will ensure that students who have been absent from lessons are given opportunities and resources to catch up with any work missed.

3.6 The Attendance Administrator

The school attendance administrator is responsible for:

- Taking calls and emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transferring calls from parents to the Pastoral Leaders, Form Tutor or Head of Year in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- The attendance officer be contacted via 01624 811100.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents / Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time for their timetabled lessons.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 09:00 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.
- Ensure that requests for leave during school term time are only for exceptional circumstances.
- Work with the school to support attendance by engaging with school policies and procedures.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.
- Attend every timetabled session on time.
- Sign in at the West/East Office if they arrive late.
- Only leave site during the school day if they have permission to do so from school staff and only if they have signed out at the West/East reception.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils 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 (P4). It will mark whether every pupil 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 DESC attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 09:05. The register for the second session will be taken at 11:55 and will be kept open until 12:05.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's Parent / Carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school via telephone / email / text.

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 in advance.

4.3 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.



This can be done via telephone, email or text.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school may authorise.

4.4 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

Repeated lateness will be dealt with at Form Tutor and Head Year level and Parents / Carers will be contacted.

4.5 Following up on unexplained absence

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

- Contact the Parent / Carer via text message, email or telephone call by no later than 10:00
- 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
- Contact 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 an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to Parents / Carers

Parents / Carers can monitor attendance via the MIS App and will receive weekly attendance notifications. Attendance will also be issued on school reports.

4.7 Marking of register

ALL Form Tutors must mark their AM registers by 09.05. All period 4 registers must be marked by class teachers by 12.05 as this will form the PM registration mark.

In the event of an electronic register not being available, a paper register can be taken. Paper registers will be available from the office of the building that the form group registers in. All paper registers will be sent to the Attendance Administrator (AA) as follows:

i) to the East Office by 09:15, and

ii) if a period 4 register cannot be taken- contact must be made with the Attendance Administrator by 12:05 in order to collect and complete a paper register.



Form Tutors/Class teachers will use either a, /, or an N to indicate whether a student is present in the room or not. If a student is helping in the Animal Unit, or elsewhere in school, staff need to let Form Tutors know.

MIS message/email will be sent by the Attendance Administrator to those Form Tutors whose registers have not been marked, once the cover list has been checked for absent colleagues, and the paper registers checked off.

Form Tutors / teachers should not change or amend marks which have been entered by office staff. Comments entered will be initialed by the person entering them. If a code denoting absence has been entered, and the student then appears in the classroom, the code can be overwritten, and the Attendance Administrator notified by email.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for Holidays During Term Time

Statutory provision regarding holidays taken by pupils during term time is contained in the Education (Registration of Pupils) Regulations 2004, which state that:

“On application made by the parent with whom the child normally resides, a pupil may be granted leave of absence from the school to enable him to go away on holiday.

Provided that, save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil shall not be granted leave of absence for this purpose for more than 10 school days in any school year.”

The legal position here is quite clear. **Leave of absence for holiday purposes is not an entitlement and is entirely at the discretion of a child’s headteacher.**

Each request should be considered on its individual merits, and it is for headteachers themselves to determine whether the circumstances of a particular application are “exceptional” if more than 10 days’ absence is involved. Authorised leave of absence for in excess of 10 school days annually should not, however, be granted lightly.

There will be occasions when time off school is not in a child’s best interests educationally (for example, at the beginning of Years 7, 10 and 11, or where a child already has a poor attendance record) and school prospectuses should therefore make it quite clear:

- that, on educational grounds, neither the Department nor the school either supports or encourages additional time being taken off school for holiday purposes;
- that securing leave of absence for this purpose should not be regarded as a formality;
- that leave of absence will not normally be granted for more than 10 school days in any academic year;
- that any time taken off school for which leave of absence has not been granted will be recorded as unauthorised absence and is likely to result in legal action being taken against parents by the Department; and
- that leave of absence should be applied for in advance, not retrospectively.

If a child takes time off school without leave of absence or is absent for more than the number of days for which leave of absence has been granted, or if leave of absence is only applied for after a child returns from holiday, the school will refer the matter to its Education Liaison Officer, who will arrange for an appropriate letter to be sent to the child’s parent(s) by the Manager of the Department’s Legal & Administrative Services.



This letter will inform the parent(s) that any repetition of their actions will automatically result in legal proceedings being initiated by the Department.

Any time taken off school beyond the number of days for which leave of absence has been granted must be recorded in the attendance register as unauthorised absence.

If a parent/carer wishes to apply for time off during term time they must complete the leave of absence request form that is available from the school web site before the leave commences. The headteacher will give their decision in writing within 5 school days.

The Attendance Administrator records the appropriate code for absence in the school register.

5.2 Reasons for authorised absence include:

While Section 29 of the Education Act 2001 places a statutory duty on parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly, the same section protects a parent from prosecution if:

- (a) leave has been granted for the child's absence;
- (b) the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; or
- (c) the absence occurred on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

"Leave" is defined as "leave granted by any person authorised in that behalf by the Department or the governing body". At Ramsey Grammar School the person authorised to grant leave is the Headteacher.

Authorised absences are:

- Sent home for disciplinary reasons (but not formally suspended).
- Sent home for any other reason (eg illness).
- Attending interview (eg with prospective employer or with another educational establishment).
- Illness (where the explanation given is considered to be satisfactory).
- Holiday (which is considered exceptional circumstances and leave has been granted).
- Medical/dental/hospital appointment/treatment.
- Approved out-of-school activity (eg representing the Island in sporting activities, taking part in a film being produced on the Island, attending a music examination, etc).
- Day of religious observance in the religious body to which the parents belong.
- Family reasons (eg funeral of close relative).
- Newly enrolled but on temporary leave of absence pending arrival of pupil records and assessment by the Special Needs & Psychology Service (if applicable).
- Study leave. (NB Study leave may only be granted in the case of pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13 and, in the case of those in Year 11, for up to a maximum of 10 school days, ie 20 sessions.)

Explained absences are only authorised absences if the explanation given is considered by the school to be satisfactory.

5.3 Work Experience and Educational Visits

Pupils on work experience placements organised by schools and those taking part in educational visits or similar off-site activities (eg field trips) are regarded as being either present or absent.

Failure to attend a work experience placement or off-site visit/activity should therefore be recorded either as an unauthorised absence or as an authorised one, depending upon whether any



explanation is offered subsequently to the school and whether the explanation given is felt to be satisfactory.

In consequence, employers will be alerted to the need to advise the school if a pupil fails to attend his/her work experience placement, and staff will make a similar note of any absentees during educational visits and other organised off-site activities.

5.4 Adverse Weather Conditions

Where the school is closed due to adverse weather conditions, the number of possible sessions during the month will be adjusted accordingly.

If the school remains open but individual pupils are prevented from attending due to adverse weather/road conditions, the pupils' absence will be recorded as authorised absence.

5.5 Medical/Dental/Hospital Appointments/Treatment

A pupil who misses part of a morning or afternoon session due to a medical, dental or hospital appointment/treatment will be regarded as present, provided the appointment is confirmed, either by production of an appointment card or by a letter from the child's parent.

Where a full session or longer is missed, a pupil's absence will be regarded as authorised absence.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

1. Create a Welcoming and Engaging School Environment.
2. Connect with At-Risk Students.
3. Involve Parents when Addressing Poor Attendance.
4. Award Points for Attendance Achievements.
5. Focus on Attendance Schoolwide.
6. Positively Reintegrate Absentees.
7. Work with the Outreach team to overcome barriers to attendance.
8. Work closely with professional partner and agencies to support children and families where attending school is a barrier.

Remain informed about the latest research about ensuring high attendance to school.

7. Attendance monitoring

The aim is to ensure that all absences are either authorised or followed up.

Even where absences have been authorised, school staff look for:

- (i) unusually frequent absences,
- (ii) patterns of absence (eg regular Friday afternoons), and
- (iii) overall attendance levels below 95%.

7.1 Monitoring attendance and punctuality

Attendance is monitored by Form Tutors, the relevant Head of Year/Deputy Head of Year and Pastoral Leaders on a weekly basis.



Pupil's late for school in a morning report for a break time reflection the same day. A late report containing those students who have had 4 or more L marks after registration is closed is produced on a weekly basis and pupils attend a lunchtime reflection with the Head of Year.

7.2 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.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to all key stakeholders, 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.

7.4 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 DESC) 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.

7.5 Stages for managing attendance

Stage	Time Scale (approximate)	Procedure
1.1	Plus 3 working days	All unexplained absences should be followed up by the school on the pupil's return to school or after 3 consecutive days of absence. An explanation will be sought by trying to contact the parents by 'phone, text and email.
1.2	Plus 2 more working days	School to review in 2 working days.



1.3		If there is no reply or the reply is felt to be unsatisfactory and the child's attendance continues to give cause for concern, the school should continue to try to contact the parents by 'phone, text and email in an endeavour to obtain a satisfactory explanation.
1.4	Plus 2 more working days	School to review in 2 working days.

1.5		If the child's attendance still gives cause for concern, a letter should be emailed and posted to the parents by the school.
1.6	Plus 2 more working days	School to review in 2 working days.
1.7		If there is no satisfactory reply the school should contact the parents, by letter, inviting them to attend a meeting at the school.
1.8	Plus 5 more working days	Parents should be given 5 working days' notice of this meeting, the aim of which is twofold: firstly, to seek an explanation for the child's unauthorised absence(s) and, secondly, to obtain an undertaking, from the parents, regarding future attendance. Persons invited to attend the meeting would normally include: • both parents and/or guardians (or whoever else has care and control of the child); • a school representative; • the school's Education Liaison Officer; • a Social Services Division representative (if the child is on the Child Protection Register); and • in the case of a looked after child, the child's designated social worker and the school's designated teacher for looked after children.
1.9		If, at the end of this meeting, either (1) there has been no response from the parents or (2) a satisfactory undertaking has not been given, the school should refer the matter to its' Education Liaison Officer.
2.1	Plus 20 more working days	Education Liaison Officer to make appropriate enquiries and to review weekly for one month.
2.2		If the child's attendance is satisfactory throughout this period, reviews should be conducted thereafter on a monthly basis.

2.3		If the child's attendance has not been satisfactory, however, and the Education Liaison Officer's enquiries have failed to reveal any mitigating circumstances to account for the absences, the Education Liaison Officer should refer the matter to the Department for further action.
3.1	Within 2 more working days	Action will normally take the form of a formal 'warning' letter sent to the child's parents by the Manager of the Department's Legal & Administrative Services reminding them of their statutory duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually and of the consequences, in terms of legal proceedings, of their failure to do so The parents will be asked in this letter to arrange to meet with the Manager (Legal & Administrative Services) and the school's Education Liaison Officer to discuss their child's poor attendance. In the case of a looked after child, the school's designated teacher for looked after children may also be invited to attend the meeting.
3.2		The child's attendance should continue to be monitored closely by the school and its' Education Liaison Officer on a weekly basis.
3.3	Plus 20 more working days	If attendance has been satisfactory for four consecutive weeks, reviews should be conducted thereafter on a monthly basis. If attendance continues to be satisfactory for three months or more after the Department's 'warning' letter but then deteriorates to an unacceptable level, a further 'warning' letter will be sent to the parents by the Manager (Legal & Administrative Services).
3.4		If there have been any further unauthorised absences during the above four week period, however, the Education Liaison Officer should submit a further report to the Department. This must be accompanied by a Certificate of Attendance signed by the headteacher and an attendance monitoring sheet covering the same period.
4.1	Immediately	The Manager (Legal & Administrative Services) will then write to the Department's Advocate/Attorney General's Chambers requesting that arrangements be made for a summons to be served on the parents.*
4.2		Court hearing.
4.3	After court hearing	The child's attendance should be monitored closely by the school and its' Education Liaison Officer on a weekly basis during the period following the court hearing.
5		If there are further unauthorised absences a 'warning' letter will be sent to the parents by the Manager (Legal & Administrative Services) requesting an immediate reply.



6		If there is no reply from the parents or the reply is felt to be unsatisfactory and there are further unauthorised absences, the Department's Advocate/Attorney General's Chambers will be requested to take the necessary steps to bring the parents back before the court.
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The 'warning' letters referred to in stages 3.3 and 5 may be omitted at the discretion of the Department.

- * Alternatively, or additionally, application may be made to the juvenile court for the child to be made the subject of an education supervision order. If such an order is made, the child's attendance should continue to be monitored closely by the school and its' Education Liaison Officer. School staff and the relevant Department officers will need to work closely and in cooperation with the child's designated social worker for the duration of the order.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Department for Education, Sport and Culture is updated, and as a minimum b-annually by Micheal Flynn, Assistant Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions



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	Disciplinary	Sent home for disciplinary reasons (ie formal suspension)
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	College	Student Attending College
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 11/13 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
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
@	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
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

