

Riverside School Attendance Policy

Reviewed and approved at Meeting 3 of the Governing Board –15 December, 2022

This policy will be reviewed on a biennial model

Next review date: Autumn 2024

- *Attendance Policy, pp 2-5*
- *Appendix 1: Attendance – roles & responsibilities, pp 6-7*
- *Appendix 2: Parental application for student leave from school, p 8*
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(sent out in new students' admission packs and to some individual parents on a case-by-case basis)

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

At Riverside we provide a safe and welcoming environment, where all members of the school community are socially included.

The school also ensures that all its students receive an educational experience of a high quality - appropriately differentiated to meet individual learning needs - to enable them to achieve their full potential.

All staff work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school as regularly and punctually as possible.

The school has established a range of strategies to support students in maintaining high levels of attendance and to support and challenge those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. These include an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide information, advice and support.

2. Policy Aims

- *To maximise the overall attendance of all students.*
- *To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, staff and governors.*
- *To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.*
- *To maintain a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data, and to address any issues that become apparent.*
- *To continue to develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.*
- *To promote effective partnership with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other agencies.*
- *To recognise the needs of individual students with regards to their attendance.*
- *To ensure that parents are aware of national guidance relating to holidays taken in school time.*

3. The law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education act 1996 states that –

the parent of every student of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

.....either at school or otherwise

4. Impact on learning

We know from experience and from studies that regular absence and poor punctuality can have a serious effect on a student's learning. When a student is absent or arrives late it disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning not only of that student but also that of others in the same class.

Ensuring a student's regular attendance at school is every parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

5. Safeguarding

Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of students whilst they are not in the care of their parents. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or a student missing from education will be considered a safeguarding matter as this may place those in this position student at risk of harm.

Safeguarding around attendance and punctuality involves offering early help and support to students and their families experiencing problems. These are often the first signs that there are difficulties with student or within the family. *(The attendance of looked-after students is checked daily by the agency concerned).*

Safeguarding the interests of every student is a whole-school community responsibility. Further information on this area of the school's work can be found in the following policies, all available on the school's website:

- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *Behaviour Management Policy*
- *E-Safety Policy*
- *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy*
- *Student Wellbeing Multi-Agency Group*

6. Students Missing from Education

New government guidance has recently been issued regarding students missing from education. The LA can advise on setting up a joint investigation with the school and to whom to refer students missing education.

In accordance with Section 8 of the pupil registration regulations schools must notify the LA prior to removing a child who is considered missing.

7. Parental contacts

Parents are asked to provide the school with their own current contact details and also contact numbers for at least two other adults who can be contacted in case of emergency.

8. Registration

Class staff are responsible for completing electronic registers on SIMS during am and pm registration times, (9.00-9:30 am & 1:15-1:30 pm). Staff will insert information about an absence if known.

At 9:30 am and 1:30 pm, the Attendance Admin Officer checks for absences on SIMS and calls home in every case to try and find the reason for absence in cases where the class staff have not recorded a reason.

9. Lateness

Should a student arrive at school after the register has been completed they will be given a late mark and included in the totals for that session .

Since the majority of the school's students come to school on local authority transport, punctuality is not a significant issue for them although the headteacher maintains close links with the authority's transport service to ensure all students arrive in school between 9.00 and 9:15 am.

In the case of independent travellers and those brought in by parents, direct contact is made to the parent if there are any punctuality concerns. Prior to becoming an independent traveller all students receive intensive travel training from the school's accredited trainer.

10. The Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead (Deputy Headteacher) meets monthly with the administrative officer responsible for recording attendance and any patterns in absences or lateness noticed e.g. regular Monday or Friday absences. Any student whose attendance is 85% or lower has their case analysed.

Parents of students with any unauthorised absences are sent a letter seeking an explanation. When absences are authorised, the Attendance Lead will phone home and/or meet the parent to offer support in improving attendance whenever possible. Unsatisfactory responses are sent through to the EWO (see below).

The Attendance Lead can also refer students giving an attendance concern to the school's fortnightly Student Wellbeing MAG (*see Appendix 1 for details of all Attendance Roles & Responsibilities in the school*).

11. The Education Welfare Service

The school has a named Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) who liaises with the Attendance Lead. The school is allocated six hours per year for EWO meetings- The Lead meets with the EWO according to need.

At the meetings students giving cause for concern are discussed with the EWO and it is agreed to either monitor their attendance or make a formal referral to the EWS. (Prior to each meeting the EWO will obtain a SIMS attendance breakdown). When necessary the EWO will visit the family home, and may advise the school to issue a penalty notice.

12. Students with medical needs

Given Riverside's status as a special school, with a significant number of students on role with complex medical conditions, some students are unavoidably and regularly absent from school for medical reasons e.g. regular hospital appointments or frequent and persistent heavy colds.

Where this is the case the school will liaise with the school nurse who will provide advice and support e.g. by arranging an earlier school medical or making a home visit. All such cases are monitored through the school's Student Well-Being MAG meetings.

13. Family Holidays

Parents should only ever take family holidays during statutory school holiday periods. At Riverside family holidays in term-time are generally not allowed.

However sometimes there are genuine mitigating circumstances which the headteacher will consider (see below). Parents are sent an annual reminder that they can be fined for taking such family holidays without the permission of the headteacher.

Headteachers retain the discretion to grant leave, but they can only do so in very exceptional circumstances. If the headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for him to determine the length of time that the student can be away from school, weighing up such factors as any previous requests, (*see Appendix letter attached*).

Parents are reminded of dates of INSET days and reminder slips are sent home at the end of each term clearly stating the return date for students.

Appendix 1

Attendance - Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise and agree an attendance policy with assigned roles and responsibilities. Ensure these are shared with school governors, teaching and support staff (including the office staff who are often the ones who see parents and / or children at the start and end of the school day and receive messages from parents). • Appoint a senior member of staff as Attendance Lead and ensure they have the time and knowledge needed to be effective. • Set ambitious attendance targets for the whole school. • Ask for regular reports on attendance by whole school, year group and class level. Review pupils meeting persistent absence thresholds. Recommend this is carried out at least half termly. • Agree consistent and reasonable interventions for poor attendance / punctuality and rewards for excellent attendance. • With your Attendance Lead and Safeguarding Lead build a picture of children who are most vulnerable and make arrangements for their absence to be reported and / or monitored more rigorously.
Attendance Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the headteacher to devise a working attendance policy that is regularly reviewed to ensure it is relevant and effective and adapted to meet the changing needs of the school and its pupils. • Monitor attendance at a whole school, year group and class level. • Identify pupils who may be classified as particularly vulnerable therefore requiring an accelerated response time. • Identify pupils meeting or at risk of meeting Persistent Absentee thresholds and agree appropriate action plans (involving parents) to address absence / punctuality concerns. • Liaise with Safeguarding Lead and SENCO to ensure crucial information on vulnerable groups with attendance concerns are shared where appropriate. • Provide regular reports on attendance rates / patterns / trends to headteacher. • Involve all school staff in monitoring attendance – recognise the role of class teachers, learning mentors and front office staff in identifying children who absence / punctuality is causing a concern. • Assign a weekly slot with officer with daily responsibility for following up absence and liaising with parents. • Liaise with HLT – Education Attendance Service where appropriate.
Attendance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Attendance Lead to monitor attendance at least weekly • Carryout daily checks on attendance and follow school’s attendance policy • Keep record of vulnerable groups whose absence needs to be reported to attendance or safeguarding lead and acted on as agreed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For any unexplained absence carryout first day calling / texting / emailing • Follow-up unexplained absences with 3 day letters / emails. • Arrange home visit at schools agreed trigger points. • All actions should be accelerated for identified vulnerable groups. • Challenge parents /carers where the absences are unexplained or unauthorised.
All staff	<p>Report attendance concerns to attendance lead</p> <p>If parents speak to you about attendance – make sure this is passed on</p> <p>Welcome children back after an absence – often fear of others reactions prevents a child successful return to school.</p>

Consider vulnerability of individual student when following up on an absence

- Student's age and understanding – if their parent is injured would they be able to call for help?
- Parent potential vulnerability – if a lone parent became incapacitated is there support from extended family or friendship network?
- Is the student a subject of a Student Protection Plan?
- Has the school or other agency raised safeguarding concerns e.g. section 47 enquires?
- Is the student a 'Looked after Student' (LAC)?
- Does the student have any Special Education Needs or Disability that makes them more vulnerable than their peers?
- Do they travel to and from school alone (especially important if primary age)?
- Is there a history of the family moving frequently?
- Has the student changed schools without any definable reason?
- Has there been a change in the student's behaviour or attendance patterns?
- Has there been a change in the parents'/carers' engagement with school?
- Is there a history of Domestic Violence in the family/household?
- Is there a history of substance misuse?
- Is there a known person posing a risk to the student in the household or in contact with the household?
- Are there any religious or cultural reasons to believe that the student is at risk?

Other vulnerable groups:

- Persistent Absentees (PA)
- Looked After Children
- Children with EHCP / Statement
- Attendance by ethnic groups
- Children receiving free school meals
- Schools must notify the Local Authority of children who are absent for 10 consecutive days without authorisation.

Appendix 2

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL
Wood Green ILC
White Hart Lane Wood
Green London N22
5QJ Tel: 020 8889
7814



**APPLICATION FOR A STUDENT'S EMERGENCY LEAVE OF ABSENCE,
UNDER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FROM SCHOOL ***

Name(s) of student(ren):

Address:

Reason for emergency application and dates of leave requested:

Signature of parent(s)

Date:

Office use only:

Anticipated date of return:

Signed:

Leave Granted / Refused

Date:

- ***PLEASE NOTE THAT FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME ARE NO LONGER ALLOWED. This information is published in the School Offer on the school's website and in the headteacher's letters to parents.***



Attendance and Punctuality

Families and school working together

Dear Families and Students,
 Attending school every day helps your child:

- To take part in lessons, access learning and reach their full potential
- To be involved in all aspects of school life
- To enjoy a structured routine



- To make friends and develop social skills



- To feel part of the school community



- To value and understand the importance of education
- To have greater success throughout school and when preparing for adulthood





Punctuality and Attendance

A good education gives children the best possible start in life. All students at Riverside School have an equal chance of making good use of the education offered; to achieve this, it is of vital importance that your child(ren) attend school regularly and punctually. Students who do not attend school regularly and on time miss chunks of work and have difficulty keeping up with work, settling down and under-achieve.

Lateness has a negative impact. Being late may disrupt lessons, affect achievement, and embarrass or upset your child.

Coming to school on time every day helps your child:

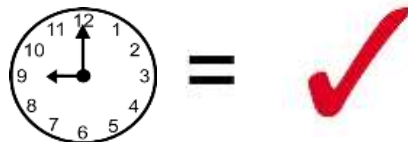
- To be ready for learning and not miss learning opportunities
- To settle into the day
- To get into good habits for the future, both in schooling and work

Normal School Day

School starts promptly at 9:00am and students should arrive in good time for when the main doors open.

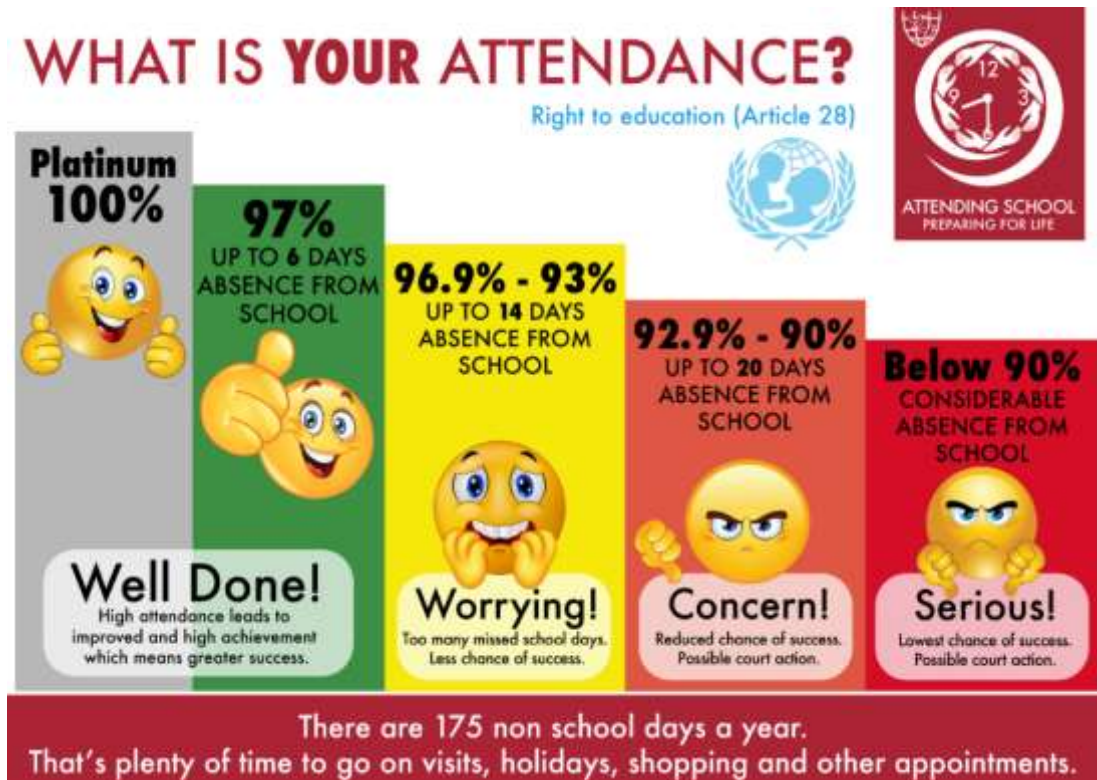
School ends at 3.15pm. Students should be collected promptly at 3.15pm.

Impact of lateness on learning



Lateness = lost learning (Figures below are calculated over a school year)	
5 minutes late each day	3 days lost!
10 minutes late each day	6.5 days lost!
15 minutes late each day	10 days lost!
20 minutes late each day	13 days lost!
30 minutes late each day	19 days lost!

Impact of absence on your child's learning



WHEN YOUR CHILD IS UNWELL:

If your child is unwell and unable to attend school, we ask that you call the school office by 9.00am, we will require your child's name, class and reason. If your child is absent for more than 5 days, the school require medical proof of illness. If you are unsure whether your child is well enough to attend school our advice is to bring them in – we can call you if they become too ill to stay at school.



If your child is vomiting/vomited or has diarrhea, they must stay at home for **48 hours** after their last episode. This is recommended by Infection Control for Schools.

WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS AN APPOINTMENT:



The school request all non-urgent appointments such as doctors, dentist, routine vaccinations and check-ups to be made outside of school hours, where possible. If your child needs to attend an appointment during the school day, they should attend school for as much of the day as possible. **The school require proof of all appointments in advanced, please bring the letter to the school office where a copy can be placed on their file as proof of authorised absence.**

REQUESTS FOR ABSENCES:

HOLIDAYS – as a school we are **NOT** permitted to authorise any holidays taken outside of the term dates. The termly dates can be found on our website, newsletters or via the school office. These are published at the end and start of each school year.

If you require leave from school, for whatever reason, you **must obtain a 'Request for absence form' from the school office**. Any decision made will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. It is always appreciated if requests are made prior to any arrangements being made. Evidence must be attached to the request form e.g. return flight tickets.

This can happen if you do not follow the rules!



Legal Responsibility

At Riverside we recognise the role parents and families have to play in supporting and encouraging good attendance and punctuality. We work together to ensure the children access teaching and learning and that parents and families fulfil their legal responsibility.

Section 23 of the Anti-Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated Local Authority officers, Head Teachers (or Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them) and the police to issue penalty notices in cases of:

- Unauthorised absence from school
- The whereabouts of pupils excluded from school

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27th February 2004. This legislation was amended in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007** which came into force on 1st September 2007 and in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012** which came into force on 1st September 2012.

The issuing of penalty notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and Disability and Equal Opportunities legislation.



The penalty notice is £120, but a 50% discount is applied if the penalty notice is paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. If paid within 21 days of issue, the amount payable is therefore £60. The penalty rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the penalty notice. Payment must be in full; we will not accept part payments or payments over time.

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 days the Local Authority must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice. This prosecution is for the offence of failing to secure attendance at school, not for non-payment of the penalty notice. Prosecutions are brought under S444 Education Act 1996. Withdrawal of the notice can only take place in very limited circumstances as set out in this code of conduct.

Penalty notices will be issued to each parent of each child whose absence from school meets the code of conduct. This means that where a family consists of father, mother and two children, the father will receive two penalty notices, one per child, and the mother will also receive two penalty notices, one per child. This family will therefore receive four penalty notices, all of which must be paid. If only one parent pays the penalty notice, legal proceedings will be taken against the parent that has not paid.

Only one penalty notice will be issued in respect of a child in any 12-month period. If a pupil has accrued further unauthorised absence from school following the issue of a penalty notice within a 12-month period, a second penalty notice will not be issued in respect of that pupil. The Local Authority will instead consider prosecution brought under S444 of the 1996 Education Act 1996.