



## Pupil Attendance Policy

Date of adoption: **01.12.18**

Date to be revised: **01.12.19**

Person responsible: **Deputy Head Teacher (Pupil Wellbeing)**

### Introduction

The School intends to encourage and maintain a good level of attendance in all years.

Rushcliffe School Pupil Attendance Policy has the following further intentions:

- to enhance achievement levels and external examination results;
- to carry out the school's legal responsibilities efficiently to report annually to parents;
- to clarify the responsibilities of different concerned parties;
- to identify tactics that will be effective in the achievement of the above.

These fit in with the broader school ethos – inclusivity, caring, respect, achievement, being positive.

Regular attendance at school is a prerequisite for student achievement. Absence, whether it be long-term, frequent or occasional, leads to missed experiences, and may cause fractured social relationships, which encourage an increased pattern of non-attendance.

Fostering good attendance is shared responsibility of school, the parent, and the LA (Family Services). Parents have a responsibility to see that their children receive the appropriate education and are responsible for their child attending school.

In detailing the strategies the school will undertake to ensure improved levels of attendance the importance of the following factors which encourage high levels of attendance must be kept in mind:

- delivering a curriculum, which is relevant, motivating and differentiated to the needs of the students.
- maintaining high expectations (communicated by staff in a variety of ways including punctuality, homework, marking, and extra curricular activities);
- employing the school's systems of reward for achievement, personal as well as academic;
- using sympathetic re-integration strategies for long-term absentees.

The policy will be addressed under a number of headings:

- Collection of data
- Use of data
- Attendance Monitoring Process:
  - First Day Contact

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- SAM (Student Attendance Monitoring)
  - Monitoring and targeting less than 90% attendance
  - Family Services
  - Authorised and unauthorised absence
  - Follow up for absences
  - Lateness and truancy
  - Rewards
  - Rights and responsibilities of parents
  - Re-integration of long-term absentees

## **Collection of Data**

### **Registration**

An accurate and consistent registration system to both school and lessons is essential. The following practice should be adopted:

#### **Start of Sessions**

AM registration is from 8.45 – 8.55am

PM registration is managed through p4 lesson registration at 1.15pm

- A student is late when he/she arrives after 8.45am/1:15pm. Form Tutors are responsible for marking pupils late until 8.55am.
- Students arriving after 8.55am must sign in late at the Pupil Support Unit.
- Absences (authorised or unauthorised) are to be indicated using the appropriate symbols.
- Four lates over a 2 week period with no acceptable reason will lead to a detention organised by the Head of Year. However, Heads of Year may also seek alternative strategies such as contact home with parents/carers. This can be done in conjunction with the PSU.
- In addition to the above Heads of Year will also issue suitable sanctions and interventions for students who have ongoing lateness over time.

#### **During Lessons**

For each lesson the class teacher is required to keep a record of attendance/lateness. It is important that the class teacher enters late arrivals and re-saves the register. A culture of challenging students missing from previous lessons enables students to see effectiveness of the lesson monitoring.

#### **Use of Data**

The efficient and speedy collation of the data is essential to the development of effective strategies for action. Data is required to monitor:

- individual absence and lateness to both school and lessons
- patterns of absences and lateness, and the identification of trends by the Attendance Co-ordinator, Head of Year, Pupil Support Unit and SLT.

Data can be made available for Progress Evenings on request from the PSU.

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## **Attendance Monitoring System**

### **1. First Day Contact**

The Attendance Co-ordinator will contact home for students on SAM and students with a record of truancy on the first day they are absent from school should the absences be unexplained.

### **2. SAM (Student Attendance Monitoring)**

SAM is the early intervention system for students who have trends in their attendance and fall between 95 - 90% attendance. SAM involves the Head of Year working closely with the Attendance Co-ordinator to track the identified student's attendance on a weekly basis to implement suitable interventions should their attendance decrease or trends be found.

The Attendance Co-ordinator will inform parents/carers via letter if their child is to be monitored on SAM. We welcome all contact from parents on how we can further support their child's attendance. The use of SAM may include conversations with individual students and parents to discuss absences from school.

Attendance is reviewed at the end of each half term and decision made as to whether monitoring continues, or case passed to Family Services, or monitoring to stop due to sustained improvements in attendance.

### **3. Monitoring and targeting less than 90% attendance**

To support and encourage attendance Rushcliffe School also targets students with 90% attendance and below, using the following procedure:.

On a weekly basis, attendance of pupils is checked. Students who have attendance below 90% are identified by the school's data systems. The Attendance Co-ordinator will eliminate any students who have legitimate reasons for poor attendance e.g. long term illness.

Concern is then raised with parents highlighting the links between attendance and achievement. The Attendance Co-ordinator may meet with the student individually to discuss absences. The Attendance Co-ordinator will lead on a number of interventions, including:

- Conversations and meetings with students,
- Meetings with parents/carers,
- Letters and phone calls home,
- Attendance Panel with parents/carers and SLT,
- Attendance Panel with parents/carers and Governor,
- Home visits.

Should there be little or no improvement without good reason, and attendance has dropped to below 90% (6 sessions/3 days of unauthorised absence) over a rolling six week period, a referral will be made to The Family Service – this is the first step towards Local Authority involvement and possible legal action against the parents. Individual cases are allocated to a Case Manager who will work with parents in developing an Action Plan towards improving attendance to avoid legal action by the Local authority. Regular contact will be kept with the Case Manager allocated by The Family Service and documentation and evidence will be passed on towards the legal proceedings.

### **4. Family Services**

Much of the Local Authority's responsibilities to the school in the area of attendance is currently vested in The Family Service.

Family Service Case Managers provide an important bridge between home and school, by working with families to try to establish any underlying reasons for poor attendance and punctuality.

For this partnership to be effective it is important that the school and its Attendance Co-ordinator share a common agenda. Rushcliffe School will look at students' attendance below 90%. It is appropriate that The Family Service is brought in at the stage where Head of Year /Attendance Officer/Parent discussions at school have not led to any significant improvement in attendance at school or such discussions cannot be

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initiated. To facilitate this work it is essential that all action is clearly documented by the Attendance Co-ordinator.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

Authorised absence is where the school accepts there is good reason for an absence. An authorised absence requires a written communication from the parent/carer. Verbal or telephone messages are acceptable in the first instance but should ideally be followed up with a written note or email.

Unauthorised absence is any absence which does not fall into the following categories:

- a) An absence caused by illness or other unavoidable cause.
- b) An absence for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- c) There is no acceptable transport and the school is not within walking distance.
- d) Annual holidays (maximum two weeks only in exceptional circumstances), on completion of relevant permission forms, 4 weeks prior to the absence.
- e) Situations where the school authorises absence e.g. study leave, work experience, interviews and special occasions e.g. weddings.
- f) Medical appointments.

Unacceptable reasons for absence, including:

- Truancy
- Minding the house / caring for younger siblings
- Shopping
- No school uniform
- To do homework / coursework
- Lateness
- Holidays in term time
- Birthdays

### **Follow up to Absences**

There is a range of situations to which the school needs to respond:

- unauthorised absence;
- unexplained absence;
- a pattern of absence, with parental notes, over a period of weeks;
- unexplained absence from lessons during a session;
- unexplained trends in 'odd days' absences over time.

It is important that parents/carers are aware of absences and lateness, and of their responsibility to account for all such events, and that all action taken is documented by the Attendance Co-ordinator.

Actions will consider the 'whole child' and may include:

- Request for absence note
- Telephone call home (written minute produced)
- Letter home
- Conversation with student

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- Home visit
  - Meeting with parent/carer and student
  - Attendance Co-ordinator liaising with other member of the Pastoral Team (e.g. Head of Year) or liaising with outside agencies.

The Head of Year has responsibility to co-ordinate a year team's attendance and punctuality programme. This should include:

- Monitoring year group attendance,
- Rewarding high attendance and improvements in attendance,
- Promoting high attendance,
- Liaising with PSU and Form Tutors,
- Following up lateness using the Late System,
- Following up truancy to school with suitable sanction,
- Following up to internal assessment reporting points – letters of praise / concern.

This will be done on a half termly basis.

### **Lateness and Truancy**

Persistent lateness and truancy are often a significant indicator of under-achievement.

Lateness to school, or lateness to lessons and truancy, must be acted upon and parents made fully aware of the school's expectations concerning punctuality.

Dealing with lateness and truancy to school is a year team responsibility;

Dealing with lateness to particular lessons is a curriculum area's responsibility;

Persistent lateness and truancy should be identified by the Heads of Year/ Curriculum Leaders through their regular monitoring and acted upon by them.

The appropriateness of sanctions, including detentions or communication home, to encourage prompt attendance and reduce truancy needs to be applied consistently across the school. The triggers for particular forms of action also need to be understood.

The Heads of Year together with the PSU and Attendance Co-ordinator, can use the following strategy to help improve punctuality and reduce truancy.

- Identify a half termly monitoring programme.
- Inform pupils through assemblies.
- Set suitable sanctions (detentions and isolation).
- Have conversations with student, Form Tutor, teachers and PSU where needed and set suitable interventions.
- Contact home to discuss lates and truancy.

### **Rewards**

The importance of high attendance should be regularly promoted by every member of staff.

In years 7-11 high attendance will be rewarded, including attendance awards at the half termly 'Shining Brightly' assemblies.

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## **Rights and Responsibilities of Parents**

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. The school will work with parents to find opportunities to share information about attendance.

Parents have a right to be provided in good time with the necessary information from the school which would enable them to meet these obligations. This includes:

- the times of the school day
- school dates and holidays
- school procedures relating to attendance and punctuality
- school expectations regarding lateness
- prompt communication of matters causing concern.

The school expects that all parents communicate with the school in writing giving a reason:

- (i) in advance of any planned absence;
- (ii) immediately following (the next session) any unplanned absence;
- (iii) during any absence expected to last more than 3 days. (See appendix 1 for leave of absence application form).

Parents who do not conform to the above will be contacted and requested to provide an explanation of their child's absence.

Further non-compliance on the part of the parents will be documented and acted upon by the Attendance Co-ordinator.

Following DfE Guidelines on school attendance, including what may be authorised/not authorised a summary has been produced (see appendix 2).

## **Re-integration**

When long-term absentees return to school it is important that they are sympathetically treated by all staff.

Re-integration often fails because it is unplanned; the student is sent back to his/her original timetable as if nothing has happened. Staff should be reminded to be sensitive, confine any remarks about the absence to 1:1 situations and to bear in mind the context of the attendance issue.

For each student, the Head of Year should liaise with others to draw up a re-integration action plan. This plan will acknowledge the reasons for the student's absence, and may involve a reduced timetable in the first instance and temporary additional support in the Orchard Centre.

All staff who teach the student need to be advised in advance of an anticipated return so that they can plan how to re-introduce the student to their scheme of work. Flexible achievement programmes need to be considered at KS4 to ensure the student achieves grades and progression post 16.

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## Appendix 1 – Leave of absence request



# Rushcliffe School

Rushcliffe School

Boundary Road

West Bridgford

Nottingham

NG2 7BW

Telephone: 01159 744 050

Website: [www.rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk](http://www.rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk)

E-mail: [admin.office@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk](mailto:admin.office@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk)

Dear Parent / Carer

You have requested a leave of absence form for your child. Would you please note that completion of the form does not automatically authorise an absence. Each request is considered individually.

Please read the notes on the reverse of the form.

Every school's attendance figures are now carefully monitored by the Local Authority and DfE. We are required to demonstrate our efforts to ensure students attend school. We do this by working closely with the Local Authority's Early Help Service (Targeted Support).

A concern for us both as a school and the DfE is the number of days lost to family holidays in term time. We appreciate the reasons why families do this but also accept that detrimental effect this has on a child's attainment.

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, Amendment 2013, Section 7, Leave of Absence, Section, states:

*'A pupil may be granted leave of absence from the school to enable him/ her to go away on holiday where:*

*An application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parents with whom the child normally resides; and The Head Teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to 'exceptional circumstances' relating to that application.*

*Under section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority may issue Penalty Notices to parents of children with unauthorised absences from school.*

Nottinghamshire County Council has stated that from September 2015 Penalty Notices can be issued if the school has evidence that a parent has removed a child from school for the purposes of a holiday during term time without authorisation and the level of absence is above 6 sessions / 3 days over a rolling 6 week period.

There is no legal right for a parent to remove a child from school for family holidays and as Head teacher, I am not obliged to sanction any requests.

Yours faithfully

**Mr D Painton**  
Head of School

Rushcliffe School is part of the Spencer Academies Trust. The company's registered number is 7353824.  
The registered office is Spencer Academies Trust, Arthur Mee Road, Stapleford, Nottingham NG9 7EW.



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**APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE  
FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

Pupil's Name ..... Tutor Group/Class .....

Home Address .....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of Last day at School ..... Date of Return to School .....

Total number of school days missed .....

Could you please explain the circumstances that make it necessary to have a holiday in term time?

.....  
.....

Do you expect to be taking any more term time holidays this academic year?

.....  
.....

*I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.*

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed ..... Date .....

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S  
SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED  
ABSENCE**

**Please do not book your holiday until you know that the school will  
authorise your child's absence**

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## **Appendix 2 – What does the law say?**

The government has made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This states that: Leave of absence shall not be granted unless;

(a) An application has been made in advance to the proprietor (School/Head teacher) by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and

(b) The Head Teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

Exceptional circumstances examples

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you.

Nottinghamshire County Council has stated that from September 2015 Penalty Notices can be issued if the school has evidence that a parent has removed a child from school for the purposes of a holiday during term time without authorisation and **the level of absence is above 6 sessions / 3 days over a rolling 6 week period.**

The Head Teacher will consider every request individually but the following **will not meet the criteria:**

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends who have different half terms or holidays

The Head teacher does not have to give permission if you request a holiday. If the holiday is not approved, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

### **What is the effect on your child?**

Two weeks absence in every school year would mean your child missed four terms of education during their school life. This could seriously affect your child's progress.

- 90% attendance is the equivalent of 1/2 day absence per week.
- 80% attendance is the equivalent of missing six extra weeks of schooling over a year
- Your child will find it difficult to settle in if they miss school at the start of a new term or when they are moving to a new school or class.
- Your child may miss important educational experiences. It can be very difficult to catch up.
- Preparation and revision for exams and tests may be affected.
- Your child may think that you do not see school as important.

### **Parents and Carers**

- You must always fill in a form to request pupil absence for exceptional circumstances. The school keeps a stock of these forms.
- You should do this before you consider arranging any time for the pupil to be away from school– there should be exceptional reasons.
- If the child's absence is 3 days (6 sessions) or more and unauthorised over a rolling 6 week period of unauthorised absences on your child's record, you may:
  - (i) Receive a Fixed Penalty Notice (you will be prosecuted if you do not pay the fine), per parent per child OR
  - (ii) be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court for your child's nonattendance at School. You can be fined up to £2500 or imprisoned.