



E31 Attendance Policy

The Ryes Education
Encompassing
The Ryes College Pump Farm School
and
Argyll House

Approved by: Cameron Phillips **Date:** April 2021

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

The Ryes College's Expectations

- 1.1. This Policy has been written for all staff at The Ryes; pupils, parents and carers. All staff should have a working knowledge of this policy.
- 1.2. Copies of this Policy may be obtained from:
 - 1.2.1. Available electronically on the School Website.
 - 1.2.2. Reference copy in the main School Office
 - 1.2.3. Shared Area – Electronically
- 1.3. Edition, review and frequency
 - 1.3.1. Edition 3 agreed September 2020
 - 1.3.2. The Objectives will be reviewed annually by the Management Committee. The Headteacher (Daniel Lawrence) will put forward a notion of a change and the committee member responsible for attendance and safeguarding (James Fisher II) will sign it off.
 - 1.3.3. The lead member of staff is the Headteacher

2. Key Pillars for School Attendance

The school ethos and values of caring for our community are built upon the five key pillars of Secure Base Theory. The following two key pillars of School Membership and Acceptance support our ethos for building improved attendance at school. These are:

SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP at the Ryes College which means that:

- We value School membership and promote belonging for all
- Knowing you are safe
- Knowing your voice will be heard
- Wanting the best for each other
- Being part of creating a warm, welcoming environment
- Everyone here has been chosen to be part of our school community

ACCEPTANCE at the Ryes College means that:

- We value Acceptance of ourselves and others which builds our self esteem
- We acknowledge and value the lived experiences we all bring to the school

- We nurture a happy relaxed environment with laughter and creativity
- Work hard to create a culture that celebrates diversity and welcomes difference
- We appreciate the role of the school in making positive childhood memories and building self-belief
- We all provide an environment that members of our school want to learn and work in
- We all respect ourselves and others, and help everyone manage setbacks
- We develop understanding and acceptance of ourselves so that we can build our future dreams

3. The Ryes College's Expectations

The Ryes College takes students with a range of needs and backgrounds. Often attendance has been an issue. There may be occasions where part time timetables are in place or a phased integration. However, the aim with all students is to improve and raise attendance to levels which will prepare students for their future and the world of work.

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. School procedures

4.1. Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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 DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils should arrive promptly for school and should punctuality become an issue then the school will liaise with parents and carers to address this issue.

4.2. Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Leave may be granted in an emergency or for genuine pastoral reasons (e.g. after the death of close relative). Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside the working day. Where such appointments are unavoidable, the school should be informed in advance and a medical certificate or appointment card must be shown as evidence (appropriately dated). A “present” mark can still be awarded if the pupil attends for a proportion of the session. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day. We always expect pupils to attend The Ryes College before and after appointments.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

4.3. Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parents and Carers can notify the school about a medical or dental appointment via a telephone call with the school administrator.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4.4. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The school will follow up ongoing issues with lateness to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the late arrival is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

4.5. Following up absence

Pupils should attend The Ryes College on time and ready to learn, every day it is open. It is also a legal requirement of parents/carers that their child attends every day. In the event of an unavoidable absence, parents should notify the College immediately to confirm the reason for absence.

In the event of no contact between home and The Ryes College regarding absence, the Head Teacher will issue a letter that details the concerns. The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The matter may be referred to the placement Education Authority. **Parents cannot authorise absence.**

4.6. Reporting to parents

The Ryes College will report, to parent/carers, on their child's attendance record – every term using the school academic report as well as in annual reviews. If the Child is looked after, attendance figures will be provided in the PEP'.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1. Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;

- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”;
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher’s discretion.:
- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Unauthorised absences are those which the Head Teacher or the Education Manager do not consider reasonable. Examples of unauthorised and unacceptable absence include:

- Keeping pupils off without a valid reason;
- Condoning truancy;
- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced;
- Pupils who arrive late at The Ryes College on a regular basis;
- Taking holidays during term time.
- Any pupil whose attendance is below 90% is defined as a “persistent absentee” by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. If a pupil’s absence is close to or below this mark, The Ryes College will instigate an attendance improvement plan.
- Should a pupil’s attendance continue to fall, without a valid reason acknowledged by the Head Teacher, serious consideration will be given to ending the pupil’s placement at The Ryes College. This is because a pupil cannot be making good progress if they are not attending lesson and a more suitable provision may be required for that pupil, to meet their educational needs.

5.2. Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority’s code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Ryes College has strategies to promote as well as reward good attendance.

From September 2020 – parents and carers will be contacted weekly sharing positive attendance figures. Pupils and students will be awarded a certificate for attendance in Headteacher assemblies every half term. At the end of the year, attendance will be celebrated through the whole school end of year celebration awards afternoon.

The school works with parents to support regular attendance – for example, communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, indicating a named contact in school who will also be in contact.

Students at the school often have barriers to learning. Improving attendance may take a multi-agency approach and the schools should gain permission for information sharing with health and other professionals through their information sharing protocols.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance will be monitored on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for their absence. However, students may have had very poor historic attendance and it is important to recognize improvements and build self-esteem.

If a pupil's absence is close to or below this mark, the Ryes College will instigate an attendance improvement plan.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Should a pupil's attendance continue to fall, without a valid reason acknowledged by the Head Teacher, serious consideration will be given to ending the pupil's placement at The Ryes College. This will only be considered after every avenue has been explored with the relevant parties including parents/carers, social workers, local authority placement teams and any other agency involved with the child. This is because a pupil cannot be making good progress if they are not attending lesson and a more suitable provision may be required for that pupil, to meet their educational needs.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The Ryes College collects and stores attendance data electronically and is backed up daily. It will be used to report attendance figures for census report, and may be used to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1. The governing board

The management committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2. The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3. The Headteacher:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

8.4. Allocated Staff

The allocated staff member who meets pupils on the gate will be responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

8.5. Office/reception staff

The school office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school electronic attendance system.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every year by the management committee. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

11. 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	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
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	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
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 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
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
U	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. Can be used for Covid absence
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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day