Attendance Policy

Ramsden Hall Academy

LAST REVIEW DATE	Sept 2020	REVIEW PERIOD	Annually
NEXT REVIEW DATE	Sept 2021	OWNER	A Wells

Contents

Attendance Policy

Ramsden Hall Academy Mission statement:

We will support our students to develop the skills they need to reach their personal potential, and become positive members of the community.

Learning is our core purpose. We believe:

- Every child can achieve
- Every student can make progress
- Every member of our community matters
- Everyone deserves a fresh start

We will provide a safe, secure environment where students are valued, respected, challenged and supported to achieve and make progress.

Aims & Purpose

Ramsden Hall Academy is committed to providing a wide range of educational opportunities to all students. In order for students to benefit from these opportunities, good attendance is crucial. As a school we will track and monitor every student's attendance and challenge, support and address any problems that may arise.

We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance but as with our student's social development and education will personalise our approach to ensure that all students make progress with their attendance.

Responsibilities & Expectations

Ramsden Hall Academy will:

- Regularly and accurately record student's attendance and punctuality.

- Contact parents daily when a student fails to attend school and no reason has been provided by an appropriate parent/carer.

- Support with any problems that are impacting on student attendance.

- Promote and reward good attendance.

- Analyse attendance figures and set targets, reviewing systems and procedures at regular intervals to ensure that we are achieving our set goals.

Students will:
- Attend school regularly.
- Attend all lessons.

Parents will:

- Ensure their child/children attend school regularly.
- Contact the school as soon as possible every day if their child is unable to attend school before 8am. – Via our Parental School Communication System – Free with the app.
- Provide medical evidence for their child's absence.
- Unless under exceptional circumstances plan to take their children on holiday during term time (See Holidays during Term Time).
- Inform school/tutor if for any reason they are unable to attend school.

Absence/Attendance Procedure

- Student attendance is recorded by allocated staff at the Taxi drop off point (students that have boarded the previous evening will be highlighted as attended).
- Attendance is recorded on SIMS (both student marks and comments).
- Attendance marks are emailed to staff from SIMS for information.
- Parental School Communication sent to parents/carers of students with unexplained absence.
- Follow up attendance calls made by 1pm to parents/carers that have not replied to Parent Mail.
- SIMS is then updated again with both attendance marks and comments.
- Attendance is communicated to Local Authority welfare for named looked after students as requested daily.
- Attendance for pathways tuition and alternative provision is reported to the attendance administrator. SIMS will then be updated and parents/carer of non-attendees are contacted by telephone and our Parental School Communication System. Home visits will be carried out following the sessions by the pathways tutors if students have missed the session with no reason provided. Post cards will be placed in letter boxes if no answer is obtained.
- A summary of the attendance procedure can be found below in Appendix 2

Absence Monitoring, Strategies & Interventions

- Attendance data will be regularly analysed to inform pastoral and curriculum practices. The Senior Leadership Team and the Academy Council will be informed of the data.
- Fortnightly meetings will take place between the Safeguarding Lead, SLT and Operations Lead responsible for recording attendance. At the meetings this team will review attendance of individuals, set actions and strategies to improve individual and whole school attendance.
- Individual letters will be sent to parents/carers for identified students regarding attendance.
- Students with identified attendance issues will be asked to attend meetings to discuss how to improve attendance. Failing to attend the meeting or failing to engage regarding attendance may result in a referral to Local Authority which could lead to legal intervention resulting in a penalty notice, prosecution or an educational supervision order.
- Where possible necessary outside agencies will be informed and help sought support families and individuals.
- When there is no contact/response from the parent/carer then the school may make a home visit and may report the absence to Local Authority

- Where a student is refusing to attend school, a home visit or meeting will be made to ascertain the issue and to support both the family and the student.
- Comparison to peer letters will be issued to students/parents with poor attendance or at risk of poor attendance to ensure there are no misconceptions regarding attendance and its impact
- For the most at risk students, the school will contact them directly via 'nudge' texts and 'missed you today' texts.

Reporting Absence

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school each day that a student is absent. A brief account of the reason should be given, 'unwell' is not sufficient and may lead to the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'. A member of staff may call the parent/carer to ascertain further information of the reason for absence.

If no contact is made by the parent/carer, a Parental School communication email/text will be sent. If no reply is received a telephone call no later than 1pm will be made to all the emergency numbers held for the student until the reason for the absence has been confirmed. If there is no reply, messages will be left for the parent/carer to call the school office.

If no contact can be made, a referral to the Local Authority

Holidays during Term Time

Permission for leave of absence for a holiday during term time must be sought from the Headteacher. Parents/carers are required to submit an 'application for student leave in term time due to exceptional circumstances form', which can be requested from the Academy or found on the Academy website. Ten working days is required for the request to be processed and approved.

An application will only be authorised if there are exceptional circumstances.

An application for leave of absence for a holiday during term time could be refused, in guidance with Government Regulations. If the student is taken out of school on holiday during term time, without prior agreement will be recorded as unauthorised and a referral to the Local Authority who may impose a fine of £120, if paid within 21 days it will reduce to £60, rising to £120 if paid between 22 days and 28 days. Should you fail to pay within the prescribed timescales, you will be prosecuted for the original offence.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices can be issued for unauthorised absence and on occasion exceptional circumstances.

A penalty notice may be issued for unauthorised absence as an early alternative to prosecution or other forms of intervention, as follows, depending on the individual circumstances:

- Where a student has at least 10 days unauthorised absence within the last 10 term weeks and the parent(s)/carer(s) are not cooperating with the Local Authority and/or school to solve the problem.
- The parent(s)/carer(s) has received a formal warning of the possibility of the penalty notice being issued.

- Where a pupil is required to attend alternative education provision at a named site, and/or fails to attend on or after the first day.

If a student attendance fails to improve without good reason we may have no alternative but to refer the family to the Local Authority, who may impose a fine of £120, if paid within 21 days it will reduce to £60, rising to £120 if paid between 22 days and 28 days. Should you fail to pay within the prescribed timescales, you will be prosecuted for the original offence. The Local Authority may then instigate legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. In the following exceptional circumstances, a penalty notice may be issued without formal written notification to the parent/carer depending on the individual circumstances:

- Where a parent/carer has taken the pupil on holiday during term-time without the school's authorisation or (in cases where the school has authorised the absence) has failed to return the pupil to school on the date agreed with the school.
- Where a pupil and parent/carer have been stopped during a Police sweep, the parent/carer cannot provide an acceptable reason for absence and the parent is known to have condoned absence previously.
- Where a child is excluded from school and is seen in a public place during normal school hours on the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion.
- Where a child is excluded from school and is seen in a public place during normal school hours causing anti-social behaviour on the first five days of each fixed period and/or permanent exclusion.
- If there are six or more unauthorised sessions (3 days) due to holiday taken during the first two weeks of September.

Rewarding Good Attendance

As part of our regular monitoring and analysis of student attendance we will ensure a range of rewards will be promoted and issued for good attendance to both school and to lessons.

These will include:

- Celebrations and certificates issued weekly.
- Weekly rewards for the tutor group with the highest attendance.
- Termly 90%+ attendance rewards issued to individuals.
- Vouchers.
- End of term trips.
- Random trips of rightness.
- Yearly award issued in awards ceremony.

Appendix 1 – COVID-19, DfE Attendance Guidance

In March, when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, the Government made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

As we approach the new academic year 2020-2021, these circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19:

- Pupils who have symptoms should isolate and get a test
- Schools should code pupil absence with 'X' up until the result of the test
- If the pupil tests negative and they no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus they can return to school
- If the pupil remains unwell following the test (with a different illness) and cannot attend school sessions, schools should code absent sessions with and 'I'
- If the pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the start of their symptoms and schools should code this absence with 'I'
- The pupil can only return to school after the isolation period if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of smell or taste. Pupils can return to school should they be displaying these symptoms alone as these can occur for several weeks after the infection has gone
- Pupils who have a member of their household displaying symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of the household should get a test. Schools should code this absence with 'X' up until the result of the test
- If the result is negative the pupil can return to school
- If the result of the test is positive, the pupil should continue to self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of the household first had symptoms. Schools should code this absence with 'X'

Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19 (e.g. identified in the NHS test and trace system):

- Where a pupil has been in close contact with a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19, the local health protection team will advise on who should self-isolate for 14 days. Schools should code absence with 'X'

Pupils required to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine:

- Where pupils are required to self-isolate following trips overseas and a period of quarantine is required, schools should code this absence with 'X'

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only:

- In the event of a future local lockdown individual children or children identified of families may be advised by the government to shield for a period of time. Schools should seek acceptable evidence to support absence of this type and where appropriate code non-attendance with 'X'
- Once lockdown restrictions have been lifted and shielding measures paused, schools should contact shielding pupil's families to advise of attendance expectations and cease coding 'X' from the time where attendance is expected

Local Lockdown

- Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups due to a local lockdown, pupils not expected to attend during this period should be coded 'X'

Appendix 2 – Attendance Procedure Flow Chart

Check the school answerphone, admin email box & school communication system for any pupil attendance related queries or messages before 8:30am

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Pupils are then signed in upon arrival in their taxis & attendance marks are put onto Sims. Any pupil not in school will be marked with an 'N' code initially.

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Has contact been made with the parent/carer of pupils not in school?

← No | Yes →

No path:

Text or email to be sent via the school's communication system to parent/carer for non-attendance.

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A follow up call to be made by 11am and logged on sleuth. Has contact been made with parent/carer?

→ Yes →

↓ No

A weekly 'missing marks letter' will be sent to any parents/carers where we have been unsuccessful in ascertaining the reason for absence.

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If no contact has been made with parents/carers and the child has not returned to school for 4 days, on the 4th day a concern is to be raised on sleuth so that a home visit can be arranged to check on the welfare of the pupil on the 5th day.

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If no contact has been made with parents/carers and the child has not returned to school and the home visit was unsuccessful, after 10 days the child will be reported to the LA Child Missing in Education team so they can perform investigations & the pupil's caseworker and any other professionals working with the pupil will be notified of the referral too.

Yes path:

Depending on reason for absence given, amend the 'N' code to which attendance code is appropriate on Sims.

9