

POLICY FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

This policy is compliant with SCC policy. This policy is based on the DfE's 'Working together to improve attendance' guidance (August 2024) & Ofsted's report (February 2022) 'Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence.'

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Introduction

At Redhill Primary School, we are committed to working together to build strong relationships with families to ensure all children receive the best education possible and to enable them to make progress to do as well as they can to prepare them for a successful future. For this to happen, children need to:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school prepared

We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for poor attendance supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.

Our approach to securing good attendance, in line with Ofsted's research, can be summarised as '*Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate.*'

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ksi/2006/1751/contents](#) [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made](#) It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)



Responsibilities

The Executive Headteacher, Mrs L Banks, has overall responsibility for attendance at the school. Mr S Phillips, Mrs Cocker, Mrs Windsor and Miss Stamford work alongside. We are legally required to complete attendance registers accurately and on time, and class teachers ensure this is the case.

All Pupils		
Parents	School	Local Authority
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>



Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent		
Parents	School	Local Authority
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service.</p> <p>Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners.</p> <p>Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>



Persistently absent pupils (Below 90%)		
Parents	School	Local Authority
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered - including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>



Severely absent pupils (Below 50%)		
Parents	School	Local Authority
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered - including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>



Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance		
Parents	School	Local Authority
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>



Support for pupils with a social worker		
Parents	School	Local Authority
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance - whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development - and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. • Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. • Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.



Looked after and previously looked after children		
Parents	School	Local Authority
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance - including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort - with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked- after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children - doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p>



Principles

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote the importance of positive behaviour and good attendance through the curriculum and school values (ANTLERS). Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We will ensure that parents are aware of attendance matters as they relate to their child and work with them to ensure good attendance and punctuality.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. The attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils.

Our Expectations:

We expect that all pupils will:

- ✓ Attend school regularly and punctually.
- ✓ Arrive at school by 8.55am (gates open at 8.45am) for the daily morning session and 12.45pm - for the daily afternoon session.
- ✓ Attend school appropriately prepared for the day. (eg refreshed, wearing uniform, any necessary kit or equipment needed). - Ready, Respectful & Safe.

We expect that parents/carers will:

Ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually and ready to learn. Regular attendance is a legal requirement. Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

- ✓ Maintain effective home routines at home to support good attendance
- ✓ Notify the school of a pupil absence by 8.45am on the first day of absence.
- ✓ Not take their children out of school during term time for the purpose of family holidays.
- ✓ Provide the school with up to date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility.
- ✓ Contact the school promptly whenever any problem/change of circumstance occurs that may keep a child away from school.
- ✓ Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending any meetings.



We expect that teachers will:

- ✓ Keep an accurate attendance register.
- ✓ Ensure pupils are be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm.
- ✓ Praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance.
- ✓ Monitor pupil absence and inform the Headteacher when absence is impacting upon achievement.

We expect that Senior Leaders will:

- ✓ Inform parents/carers of school policy and procedures with regards to attendance.
- ✓ Monitor attendance as a priority and to develop policies and procedures to ensure the expectation of 96% attendance is met.
- ✓ Give regular updates on attendance levels to parents
- ✓ Intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern.
- ✓ Develop a multi-agency response to attendance.
- ✓ Utilise the support of available specialists in relation to the attendance.
- ✓ Report termly to the Academy Council.

Daily Routines:

Breakfast Club opens at 8am. Places can be booked with Mrs Windsor 01543 227140.

- At Redhill our staff meet and greet our pupils at the gate This begins at 8.45am each day. Pupils are then able to go to the school classrooms.
- Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session of each school day at 8.55am and once during each afternoon session.
- Our school day begins at 8.45am. The morning register will open and be taken at 8.55am. Any pupil arriving after 8.55am is required to report to the main school office to sign in and provide a reason for lateness
- Afternoon Registration is between 12.45 and 12.50pm for Reception, Year 1 & 2 and between 1.00pm and 1.05pm for Year 3, 4, 5 & 6.
- Our normal school day ends at 3.25pm.
- Schools are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.



Lateness and punctuality

- If arrival is before 9.25am then the pupil will be recorded as late (Late **before** the close of register)
- The school register will officially close at 9.25am Any pupil arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session (Late **after** the close of register)
- Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in further action being taken to support improved attendance

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required. 90% attendance might sound impressive, but actually ...

- If a child has 90% attendance over a school year, this means that 4 whole weeks' worth of lessons have been missed
- If 90% attendance is maintained over 5 years, half a school year will have been missed overall
- 90% attendance is not impressive, we use this Attendance Ladder in school to make sure children realise that in Attendance terms, 90% represents a significant, persistent problem that needs to be avoided.



The DfE identifies 90% as persistent absence, and therefore the school uses this percentage to trigger documentation linked to persistent absence. ***If your child has had 5 days absence for medical/illness reasons then medical evidence will be required to authorise the absence from the 6th day.***

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical appointments or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off from school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive to school after the close of the register
- school refusal
- holidays taken during term time that have not been authorised by the Head Teacher
- when your child's attendance is 90% or below, or ***if your child has had 5 days absence for a medical or illness then medical evidence will be required to authorise the absence from the 6th day.***

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with legal intervention will be used as appropriate
- When completing the register, school follow the DFE school attendance guidance to determine which relevant code to use



Arriving Late:

Each morning, pupil entrances will remain open until 8.55am. Any pupil arriving after the pupil entrance has closed will receive a later mark (L) on the register.

When a pupil arrives after the pupil entrances close they will need to be signed in at the main school office/late gate and a reason for the lateness must be given.

The headteacher / school office is responsible for maintaining the signing in/out system. This contains details of name, class, time admitted/time released and reason for lateness/early departure.

Minutes late per day during a school year	Equals days worth of teaching lost a year in KS1	Equals days worth of teaching lost in a year in KS2
5	3.7 days	3.4 days
10	7.4 days	6.9 days
15	11 days	10.3 days
20	14.7 days	13.8 days
30	22 days	20.7 days

Ways to avoid being late at Redhill:

- Breakfast Club opens from 8.00am.
- Pupil jobs and responsibilities in school.
- Study Club / Tutoring.

Any child who goes home during the lunch hour must be collected from the school office at the end of the morning session. They must return to school by 12.40 pm (Reception) and 12.55 pm (Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) in order to be in their classroom in time for the afternoon registration period. Any children arriving after the afternoon registration period will be marked as late (L).

Persistent Lateness:

If lateness is a cause for concern, the following procedures will be applied:

1. Parents will receive a letter informing of the concern
2. Parents will be invited to a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The discussion held will be documented and an action plan to improve punctuality will be devised with Parents and the pupil during the meeting and a review date set if needed

3. If no improvement is evidenced, the school will follow Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent lateness. More information can be found at:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Documents/Penalty-Notice-Code-of-Conduct-July-24-FINAL.pdf>



Authorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any holiday requests must be submitted 3 weeks prior to the holiday at least to be considered.

Any other request should be submitted as soon as possible before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s).
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes - this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

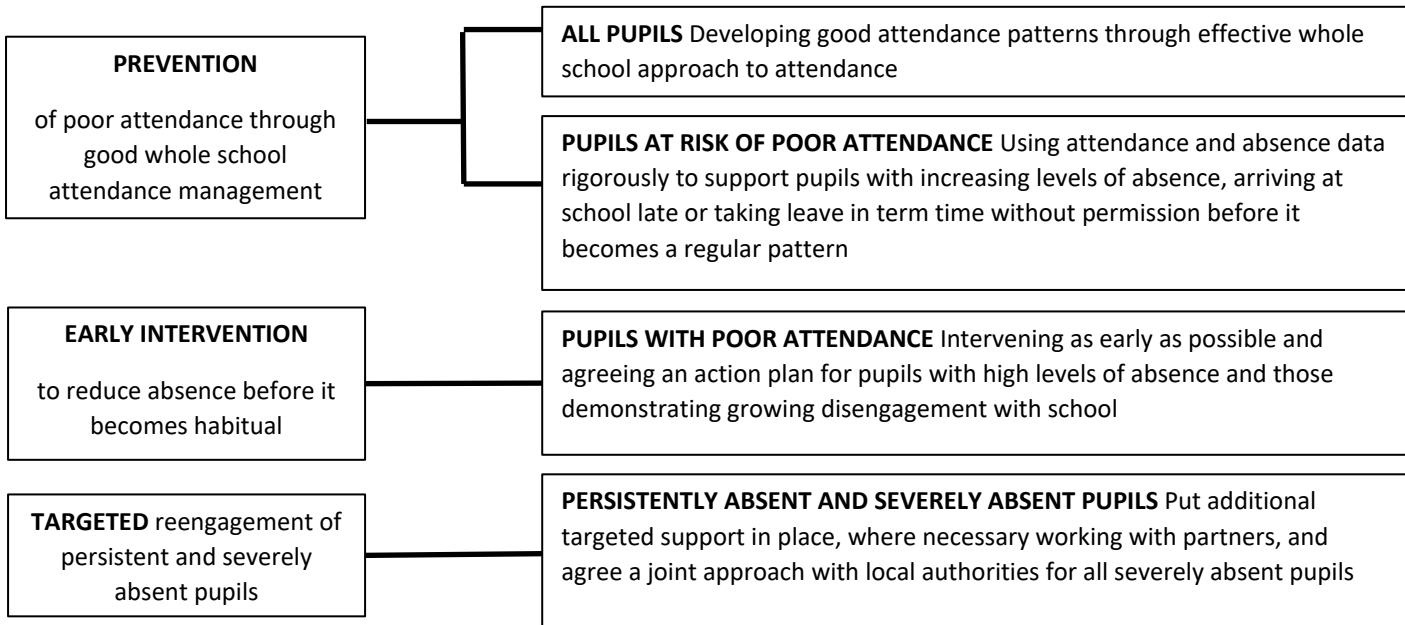
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority



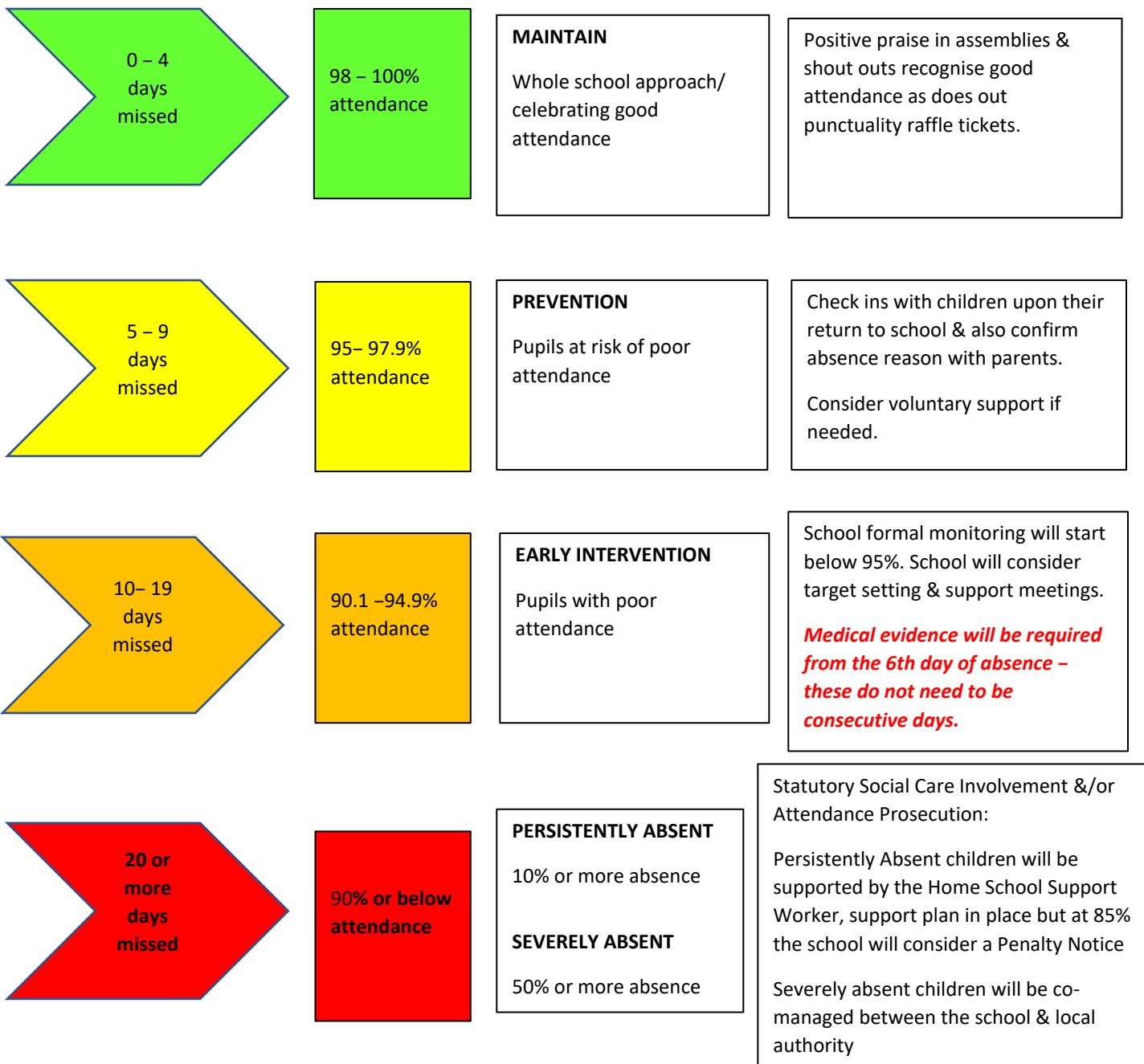
Absence Prevention:

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful.

Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance, have poor attendance or are identified as being either persistently absent or severely absent.



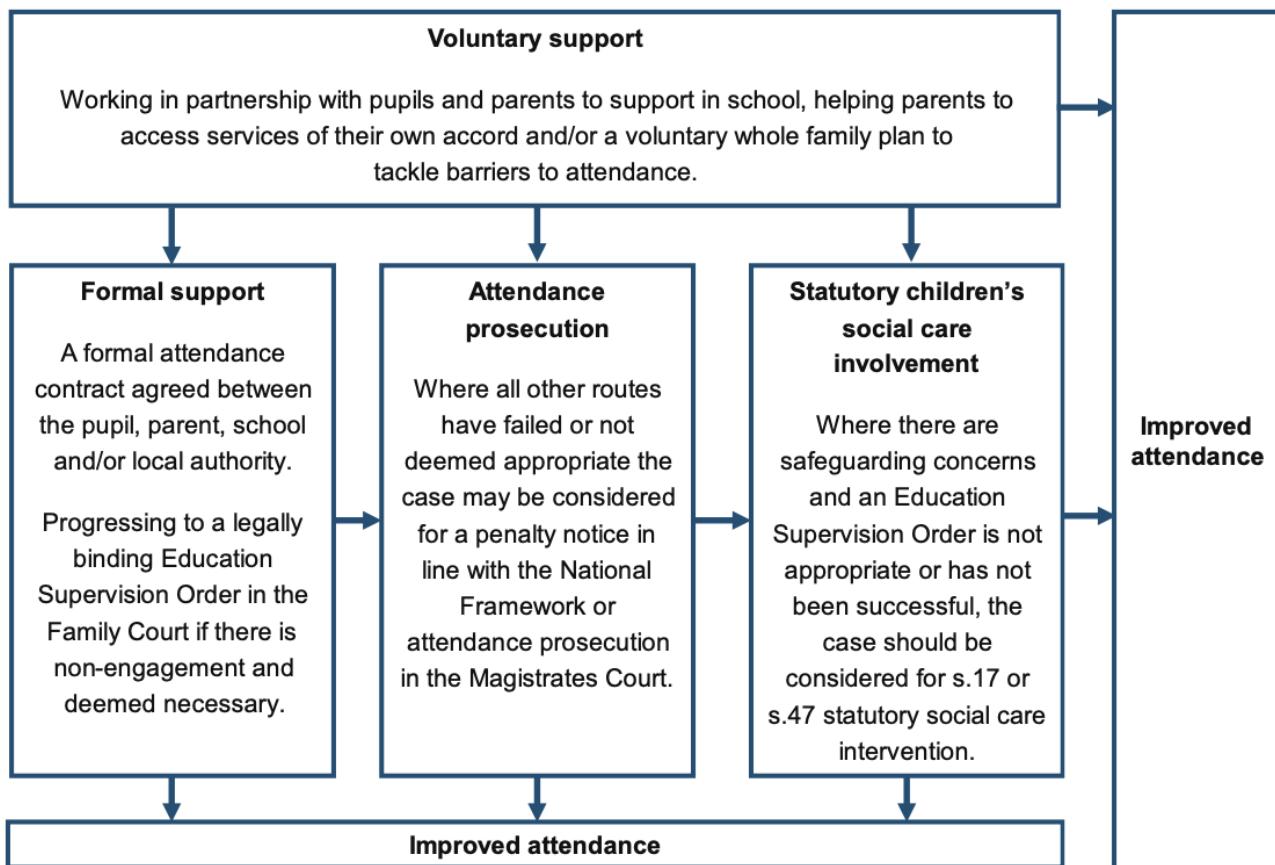
Our strategy for using data to target our work on attendance, including reducing persistent absence (pupils who are absent for 10% or more sessions) and severe absence (pupils who are absent for 50% or more sessions) is based on the following chart:



Attendance Legal Intervention

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing we will work with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions will be made on an individual case by case basis.

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



Attendance contracts / Action Plans:

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.

There is no obligation on the school or local authority to offer an attendance contract, and it may not be appropriate in every instance, but an attendance contract should always be explored before moving forward to an education supervision order or prosecution.

Education Supervision Orders:

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the pupil and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, the lead practitioner should also discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services and agree an ESO would be a more suitable option than a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan. In all cases, local authorities must fully consider using an ESO before moving forward to prosecution.

Attendance prosecution:

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation.



Parenting orders:

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour. The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months.

National Framework for penalty notices:

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

A Penalty Notice is a fine to a parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents/carers must pay up to £60 if they pay within 21 days; or up to £120 if they pay within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions. The school will follow Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent lateness. More information can be found at:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Documents/Code-of-Conduct-From-11.2018.pdf>

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).



When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

- Is support appropriate in this case?
 - If yes, schools are expected to continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a Notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked.
 - If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.
- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the headteacher or in excess of the period authorised by the headteacher e.g. family holiday)
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

A session is equivalent to half a day in school.

Other conditions:

- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year



- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child
- Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.

As part of this process the parent(s) could first be issued with a 20 day notice period, clearly advising that if unauthorised absence / lateness occurs in this 20 day period, a Penalty Notice may be issued. This is to allow the parents a further period to address their child's irregular attendance by working with the school or other agencies. It is part of a scaled approach and affords the parents an opportunity to avoid receiving a penalty notice. This is seen as good practice and integral to a proportionate response.

Therefore, the process is as follows:

- School completes and signs a penalty notice request form.
- School provides the pupil's attendance registration certificate signed by the Head teacher / Principal - or their nominated deputy - confirming that non-attendance / lateness during the period was unauthorised.
- School provides an assessment and plan which demonstrates that the use of a Penalty Notice is now the appropriate action to improve the child's school attendance / punctuality.
- The local authority issues a 20 day Warning Notice to the parent (s) advising them of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and that the child must have no unauthorised absence / lateness during the set period.
- If there are unauthorised absences / lateness in the period and after due consideration of the facts of the case with the school, issue a Penalty Notice through the post.

Please note:

Where the Penalty Notice is requested from a school in response to a leave of absence (holiday) related unauthorised absence or is in relation to an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the formal warning letter and 20 day improvement period will not apply.

All Penalty Notices are entered onto a database maintained by Families First to ensure that no duplicate Penalty Notices are issued.

Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.



Children Missing in Education

Schools have a duty by law to refer any absence of 20 days or more to Staffordshire County Council's Children Missing in Education department where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence. In line with our safeguarding policy, which is based on the Staffordshire Safeguarding policy, we will do this following a continuous absence of 10 days or more.

In order to avoid any referrals, parents are requested to inform the school if they are moving house/area or country and to provide a forwarding address, contact number and the name of the new school if known.

Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this -particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Prior to making a decision to Elective Home Educate, Parents are requested to contact Staffordshire

Staffordshire County Council's Elective Home Education department;

[Elective home education - Home - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Medical Absence

In the case of specific illnesses that require pupils to be kept off school, parents should follow public health advice to ensure the wellbeing of the whole school community. These illnesses are Chickenpox, Diarrhoea and Vomiting, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Scabies, Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough - see '[How long should you keep your child off school - checklist poster](#)'

If a child is ill the parent/carer's first action is to call the school on **01543 227140**, where possible, before 8.45am and notify the school office of the absence and the reason for the absence. An answerphone service is available or email office@redhill.set.org

This needs to be done every day of absence (unless the child is admitted to hospital, or has a long-term illness-related absence for a period of time - in this instance parents/carers do not need to ring every day).

If a child is not in school and we have not had a phone call by 9am one of our pastoral team will call parents/carers to find out why a child is not in school. If no contact is made a text message will be sent and a home visit may be carried out.

Safe and well checks will be conducted by the pastoral team if a child has not been seen in school for a minimum of three days.



Medical and Dental Appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible then confirmation of the appointment will be required prior to authorising the absence. Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents expected to return their children to the school following the appointment whenever possible.

Long-term medical absence

The school follows the procedures set out by Staffordshire County Council "Children who are missing Education due to Health/Medical Needs" More information can be found at:

<https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/advice.page?id=cwhbuUNF4cc#:~:text=Protocol%20for%20Children%20who%20are%20missing%20Education%20due,health%20needs%20who%20are%20of%20compulsory%20school%20age.>

Request for a Leave of Absence

The headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Holidays are not generally considered as 'exceptional circumstances'. It is expected that families will take holiday in the school holiday periods.

Any request for leave of absence must be made in writing to the headteacher on the 'Request for Leave' proforma available from the school office (**Appendix 1**). This must be received at least fourteen days in advance for it to be considered by the headteacher. Where a child does not reside with both parents, it is the responsibility of the parent making the request to inform the other parent. The school will send a reply to both parents.

The headteacher is the only person able to authorise leave of absence.

The headteacher may grant compassionate leave as authorised absence.

From 1st January 2018 any period of unauthorised leave (a period could be as little as one day) may result in parents/carers receiving a penalty notice fine. The headteacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will only apply in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the headteacher to the local authority.

Any request made because of exceptional circumstances can only be judged on a case-by-case basis, taking into account individual circumstances. Requests should be made in writing at least fourteen days before the period of requested absence, otherwise they will be automatically unauthorised. Only the Principal can overrule this, in discussion with the Academy Council, and **only in exceptional circumstances**, eg overseas funerals.



Even with the "exceptional circumstances" we will still consider the following on a case-by-case basis before permission can be granted:

- Current level of school attendance including punctuality. Where attendance is below 96%, the absence may not be authorised, even in the case of exceptional circumstances;
- The current progress being made towards individual pupils' academic targets;
- The time and length of the requested exceptional absence;
- The amount of exceptional absence that has been authorised previously.

If an unauthorised leave of absence is taken, the school follow Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised leave of absence. More information can be found at:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Documents/Code-of-Conduct-From-1.1.2018.pdf>

Summary

It is vital to a child's progress that they attend school as often as possible and that they are on time. There are strong and proven links between pupil attendance and educational achievement. Attendance of less than 95% (equivalent to 9.5 days or more absence in a school year) has been shown to compromise pupil attainment. An attendance of 90% is equivalent to missing 19 days or nearly 4 weeks from school in a year. Whilst we are a primary school, statistics show that only 10% of pupils who are persistently absent from school achieve 5 A*-C grades at GCSE/the equivalent on the 1-9 scale grades.

Procedure Originator: L Banks

Approved by: Academy Council

Date Approved: April 2023

Review Interval: Annually

Last review date: September 24

Next review date: September 25



Redhill Primary School - Term Time Leave Request Form Appendix 1

Dear Headteacher,

I request consideration for a grant of leave from school during term time for:

My child's full name: Date of Birth:

Address:

For the period from (date) :..... to (date).....

Total Number of days: Location (if travelling):.....

Name/ s of parent / carer who will be with the child(ren) when the leave is taken:

Name:..... Name:.....

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for the request are –

(please detail below the reason for your request of absence in term time and where relevant, include any supporting information)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Are there any siblings of compulsory school age? **Yes / No** (if so, please complete full names below.)

Child/ren's full name/s:..... School/s attended:

Declaration:

I have read the guidance notes for parents overleaf and understand I/we may receive a penalty notice if my / our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. **Please note the school day is divided into 2 registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day, this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence equals 10 sessions.**

Signature of 1st parent / carer Print full name:

Signature of 2nd parent / carer Print full name:

Please return completed form to school office.

The school will write to you to inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.



Redhill Primary School - Term Time Leave Request Form- Appendix 2

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

My child's full name:

Request for leave for the period from (date) :..... to (date).....

Current attendance%

Last Year's attendance%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time (this academic year)

Leave Request: Agreed / Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed / not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Rationale to decline request:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Signed: (Headteacher)

Date:

Notification of decision – date letter sent to parent / carer

