



400 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Attendance Policy

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Policy Lead	Matthew Greenwood
Governor or SLT approval	Governor
Governor Committee responsible for policy	Pastoral

Introduction

At Richard Hale School we expect the whole school community to be committed to high standards in **attendance and punctuality** to enable students to maximise their academic potential and extra-curricular opportunities. However good the teaching, it does not benefit students if they are absent. High standards in attendance and punctuality also assist students in achieving the following important outcomes: to be healthy; to stay safe; to enjoy and achieve; to make a positive contribution; to achieve economic well-being.

Heads of Year and form tutors work in partnership with the Student Support Centre and the School's Attendance Officer. Heads of Year provide information on individual students when necessary to enable effective intervention to take place. If attendance in individual cases does not improve sufficiently after interventions by the School, then the local authority will be informed and legal proceedings will begin.

The School will:

- Encourage good attendance by providing a safe learning environment by following all health and safety guidelines and by applying fair and reasonable rules which are known to everyone, eg School Rules, the Classroom Code and the Anti-bullying Policy
- Set a good example through its staff in matters of attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that records of attendance are maintained on a daily basis according to government legislation and guidance
- Monitor all attendance by electronic registration in both morning and afternoon registration periods and every lesson
- Keep parents informed of their child's attendance record via annual progress reports and the Parent Portal
- Follow up any unexplained or unjustified absences, either via the school's attendance administrator, the form tutor, or the Head of Year
- Work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern, via the form tutor or Head of Year, Student Support Centre or ultimately the local authority, depending on the level of concern and parents' response
- Encourage punctuality by addressing lateness, through systematic form tutor and Head of Year monitoring, and regular senior staff spot checks
- Allocate study leave carefully, with regard to students' ability to manage and benefit from it

A student is expected to:

- Be at school and ready to go into registration by 8.45am
- Attend school and all lessons regularly and punctually
- Sign the late book in Reception if he arrives later than registration, and then go to lessons
- Sign out in Reception if leaving School during the day; and sign in on return
- Never leave the school site without permission, unless accompanied by a teacher; permission can be given by a form tutor or Head of Year if a legitimate note is provided beforehand; for unforeseen circumstances during the day permission can be obtained from duty staff or senior staff depending on the circumstances
- Knock on the door and apologise to the teacher if late to a lesson

Parents are expected to:

- Fulfil their legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance according to *Section 7 of the Education Act 1996* in order to receive efficient full-time education. We expect that parents of all students from Years 7-14 will accept this and all other obligations in this policy
- Ensure that their child attends school punctually, properly dressed and equipped, and in a fit condition to learn
- Inform school of any changes of contact details by emailing the School office (contactdetails@richardhale.co.uk) or by writing to the form tutor or Head of Year.

Action in the event of STUDENT ABSENCE:

- **With unplanned absence (such as illness), parents must inform School of the reason for their child's absence on the first and third days by emailing, phoning or writing to our Attendance Administrator (attendance@richardhale.co.uk); a note (not in the Planner) or email should be sent on the student's return stating the dates of absence and reasons**
- The Attendance Administrator will phone on the first day of absence if no contact is made by parents
- The School will accept requests or explanations for absence only from parents/carers; under normal circumstances these should be submitted to the form tutor
- By law only the School can approve absence, not parents; it is for the School to judge whether the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence
 - Authorised absence is where School has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards. Examples of what may be authorised: *sickness; music or dance exams; unavoidable medical/ dental appointments (which should be made outside of school hours whenever possible); religious observance days; exceptional family circumstances, eg bereavement; older sibling's graduation; moving house*
 - Unauthorised absence is when the School has not given approval. Examples: *repeated or extended bouts of illness for which no medical evidence is provided; birthday treats; shopping; looking after siblings or parents who are unwell; holidays in term time requested after the event; funeral of distant relative involving more than one day of absence; issues to do with pets*
- If there is any doubt about whether an absence should be authorised, the form tutor will refer to the Head of Year (who may seek clarification from SLT); the form tutor or Head of Year will inform parents of the decision
- Parents should inform the school in writing in advance of a valid planned absence (eg medical appointment). However, parents should make such appointments outside of school time whenever possible to minimise disruption to the student's learning
- If a student's absence rate becomes a cause for concern the School will initiate a series of interventions designed to improve his or her attendance. These actions will range from a series of letters, followed by School Attendance Meetings and, if necessary, the issuing of a fixed penalty notice or prosecution

- Holidays in term-time: no parent has the right to leave of absence for a family holiday; at Richard Hale it will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, it is the Governors' policy that parents who take their children out of school for holidays cannot expect extra teaching or homework to enable those pupils to catch up with missed work or examinations
- A parent wishing to apply to take a student out of school for a holiday must obtain a Leave of Absence form from the School, and submit it to the Headteacher at least three weeks before any proposed absence
- The School will notify the Local Safeguarding Board immediately if it has reason to suspect a child is missing from education

Action in the event of STUDENT LATENESS:

- Students should be in School by 8.40am, ready to proceed to registration in their form rooms at the 8.45am bell; the afternoon session starts at 2.20pm and the register is taken by 2.35pm
- Students who arrive during the registration period but after the register has been taken (i.e. after 8.50am) will be marked *late*
- Students who arrive after the registration period (i.e. after 9.10am) must sign the late book in Reception or they will be marked *absent*
- Names from the late book will be transferred to the electronic register on a daily basis
- A student who arrives late twice in one week without acceptable explanation will be given a detention by the Form Tutor; repeated lateness will be referred to the Head of Year
- The parents of a student who is persistently late will be contacted by the form tutor initially and then by the Head of Year if there is no significant improvement
- If there is no improvement to punctuality following the intervention of the Head of Year, the student will be expected to register early at 8.30am for a period of time
- Form tutors may use their discretion if lateness is caused by bad weather or transport difficulties, such as the late arrival of buses and trains

Action in the event of STUDENT TRUANCY:

- Truancy is minimised by vigilance in attendance monitoring, electronic lesson registration, alertness of duty staff at break and lunchtimes, and the general awareness of form tutors and Heads of Year of their pupils
- The parents of truants will always be informed as soon as possible, and through the form tutors and Heads of Year, the School will work with parents to investigate and remedy the underlying problems
- **Protocol for Absconding Students:** if the truancy occurs during the school day the student will be regarded as having absconded (left a classroom or the school grounds without permission) and the protocol (approved by the local constabulary) will be followed. (NB from 2007 police and community support officers have the power to pick up school age children not in school and remove them to a place of safety, the first place being school.)
- The protocol requires that someone from the School Office (usually the Attendance Administrator or Receptionist, in liaison with a senior member of staff) will telephone the police and inform them of the circumstances and the student's details (name, age, address, parent's telephone number) and then contact the parent

- A risk assessment will be made by the senior member of staff and conveyed to the police taking account of the age, state of mind, maturity and competence of the youngster. Are they at great risk? Where are they likely to go? Are there exceptional circumstances which require they should be followed and shadowed until the police intervene? The member of staff may decide (especially with an older student) that it is not necessary to alert the police, only the parent.

Fixed Penalty Notices:

We expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (a half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in a term (including unauthorised holidays), the Headteacher may ask the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. A formal warning will be sent to parents(s) before this step is taken. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the local authority may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance. A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance.

Other documents relevant to this policy:

Parents' Handbook – issued to all new parents, with latest version available online
Richard Hale School Rules – reviewed annually and widely available to students and parents
School Prospectus – revised annually and freely available to any interested party
Staff Handbook – available electronically on Teacher Only
Student Planner – issued free to every student annually
Protocol for Students Absconding
Behaviour Policy
Classroom Code
Anti-bullying Procedure

Appendix 1: Covid-19 and Attendance

The Government announced on 28th May 2020 its expectation that schools should prepare for the return of secondary students in years 10 and 12 for some face to face teaching from 15th June 2020. No more than 25% of these combined year groups is expected to be on site at any one time. While It has been confirmed that whilst the Government strongly encourages children in eligible year groups to return to school unless they are self-isolating or shielding, parents *will not* be fined for non-attendance at this time.

What we will do

- Resume taking the attendance register
- Continue to submit daily attendance figures using the educational setting status form by midday everyday
- Where we are using staggered start times, we will consider adapting our policy on how long the register should be open for.

Absence codes

We will consider using the attendance and absence codes listed below when completing the register.

Definitions

- Eligible year groups: yr 10 and yr 12
- Priority groups: children of critical workers and vulnerable children

Scenario	Code	Definition	Online form
Pupils who aren't eligible to attend a session, including pupils who aren't: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In an eligible year group or priority group• Expected to attend that particular session e.g. if you're operating a rota and the pupils aren't expected to be in that session	X	Not required to be in school	N/A
Pupils who have to shield because they are classed as clinically extremely vulnerable	Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Note if the absence is due to shielding or isolation
Pupils who have to self-isolate because they: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are clinically vulnerable• Live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable	Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Note if the absence is due to shielding or isolation

- Have symptoms of coronavirus, or live with someone who does

Pupils who have to stay at home because they have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their risk assessment says they can't safely attend school	Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	N/A
Pupils who are absent due to illness	I	Illness	Note if the illness involves coronavirus symptoms
Pupils who are eligible but don't attend and it's not for any of the reasons above	C	Authorised leave of absence	N/A
Pupils who are attending another school (where they're registered), e.g. a pupil referral unit (PRU)	D	Dual registered	N/A
Pupils who are attending a host school on a temporary basis (where they're not registered) because the home school can't accommodate them safely	B	Off-site educational activity	Host school to include the child in their daily totals

Note: The host school doesn't need to add these pupils to their attendance register but they should:

- Record their attendance for safeguarding purposes
- Notify the home school of any absences