

Ramshaw
Primary School



Attendance Policy
2022-2024

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Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. School procedures	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	4
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	6
6. Attendance monitoring	7
7. Roles and responsibilities	7
8. Monitoring arrangements	10
9. Links with other policies	10
Appendix 1: attendance codes	11

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 (97%) ,and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Poor attendance has a direct relationship to poor achievement. It follows, therefore, that our main aim is to ensure that all our pupils attend as fully as possible. Maintaining and improving attendance levels at Ramshaw primary School is the responsibility of the whole school community, including pupils, parents and all staff.

.2. Legislation and guidance

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.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance 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

Morning register

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00am on each school day when the register for the first session will be taken and will be kept open until 9:05am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register. Any child arriving after 9:00am will be met by the school secretary and will be recorded as late.

Once the registers have been submitted, the secretary will begin first day absence calls.

Afternoon register

Register must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. These should be submitted by 1:20pm.

The HeadTeacher/School secretary will inspect the registers daily and will concerns with the parents first and then if the absence persists and is unauthorized the Attendance Officer will be contacted.

3.2 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 8:45am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

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.

3.3 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 must notify the school by letter or telephone message in advance of a medical or dentist appointment. An appointment card /letter may be requested.

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.

3.4 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 has a policy of first day response to absence. If no message has been received from a parent about an absent child, then the school will do everything possible to contact the home during the day to find out the reason for absence.

3.5 Following up absence

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.

Parents will be sent a Reason for Absence letter and will be expected to return this with an appropriate reason. If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Headteacher will write to the parents and set up a meeting at school to discuss the situation.

If a pupil is persistently absent (or late without explanation) and the school's efforts to effect an explanation have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Attendance Officer. Notes from parents will be kept in the child's file in the school office.

What can parents do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why their child is away.
- Send a note when the child returns to school.
- Try to make appointments outside school time.
- Do not allow children to have time off school unless it is really necessary. If parents are worried about their children's attendance at school what can they do?
- Talk to the child; it may be something simple.
- Talk to the Headteacher and staff at the school. If it continues:
- The school may refer the problem to the Attendance Officer.
- Parents may contact the Attendance Officer, who will work with the family and the school to resolve the situation. (Number available from the School Office).

3.6 Reporting to parents

Each term parents will receive their child's attendance record and at the end of the school year.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

In line with Durham Local Authority Guidance and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

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.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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
- Traveller pupils 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.
- there is a family bereavement;
- the pupil is attending an open day at a secondary school or visiting prior to receiving a place at another school;
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition or is attending a Pupil Referral Unit;
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance or is involved in an exceptional special occasion;
- a family wedding
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school website. The Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt his/her continuity of learning. Not only do they miss

the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that

after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which staff and parents must seek to avoid.

4.2 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.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Our school seeks to offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and happy. We believe the school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late and that follow up action will be taken.

A broad and balanced curriculum will be offered to all pupils, which is varied and flexible enough to meet the

needs of all pupils, with learning tasks matched to pupils' needs.

A trophy is presented every week in Celebration Assembly to the class with the highest attendance and these percentages will be posted on our facebook page.

A certificate and small prize is awarded to each child who has 100% attendance at the end of each term.

A certificate and prize is presented to each child who has 100% attendance for the whole year.

Daily breakfast club is available every morning from 8am to ensure that children are on time for school.

Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, annual reports to

parents, etc.) of the importance of good attendance.

Parents who have not explained their child's absence will be contacted by telephone usually in the morning of the first day so that the school can be made aware of the problem.

The Attendance Officer will be contacted as soon as attendance drops below 90%.

Attendance data will be collected regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy and practice.

Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement, in discussion with parents/Parent Support Advisor (PSA) and The HeadTeacher.

Such targets will be monitored and reviewed by the Headteacher and class teachers.

Pupils who are absent for any length of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home for them, or set in advance, so that they should not fall behind or get out of good work habits.

The Headteacher Report will make regular comments to the Governing Body on issues relating to attendance.

6. Attendance monitoring

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 and a stage 1 letter will be issued.

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

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.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board 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.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Durham Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Durham Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Administrator to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

School Administrators:

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for the year groups.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.

- To promptly inform the HT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To contact parents/carers by letter, following 3 instances of lateness or absence.
- To maintain attendance records in line with this policy.
- To liaise with and report to with outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within their year groups.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To support HT with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done at 9.00 am and 1.15 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the HT, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomachaches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know.

Pupils' should be brought child back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

The Local Authority, through the School Attendance Service, is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

7.2 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.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- 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

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as needed by the Headteacher and attendance officer. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

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
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
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