School Attendance Policy

RIPPLEVALE

SCHOOL

Date of issue: 14 September 2023
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Ripplevale School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values:

Ripplevale School provides a caring learning environment where our students make meaningful progress, relative to their individual starting points. Our aim is to encourage them to develop appropriate personal, social and employable skills enabling them to become confident, independent and aspiring young people

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Ripplevale School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the [Education Act 1996](), which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility]() considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- Peninsula BrightSafe (Health and Safety)
- Atlantic Data (DBS)
- Educare (online CPD)
- SchoolPro (data protection)

Ripplevale School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, students and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Ripplevale School.

The policy documents of Ripplevale School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

Contents:

1. Introduction

1.1   Every child in Ripplevale School is welcomed, valued and respected and also encouraged to respect themselves and others. Our aim is to empower all children to gain the essential skills both academic and social that will equip them for life.

1.2   As part of Cavendish Education Ripplevale School believes that education is essential for all and for children to achieve their full potential regular attendance and punctuality is required. Non-attendance for any reason is an important issue that is treated promptly and seriously. In all cases of non-attendance it is essential

that early action is taken.

1.3   The Governing Board, Principals, Head Teachers and school staff of Ripplevale School acknowledge that there is a strong correlation between high attendance and student progress.

1.4   Ripplevale school adheres to the DfE Guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and applies the recommendations relating to using student registers and attendance codes.

2.   Aims

2.1   The aim of this policy is to promote the 'most effective education for students at Ripplevale School. In order to achieve this, it is vital that students attend school consistently and punctually. In order that students and parents cooperate with this policy and students gain their full entitlement to education, parents will be informed of the requirements on attendance at Ripplevale School.

2.2   We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- promoting good attendance
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- acting early to address patterns of absence
- building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

2.3   We also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons, by class charts rewards and headteacher awards at the end of term.

3.   Legislation and guidance

3.1   This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). It is drawn from relevant legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance, including:

- 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 (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

3.2 It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance across the schools with the use and implementation of policies and ethos
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole group
- making sure the schools are providing staff with adequate training on attendance
- holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The Principal and Headteacher

The principal and headteacher are responsible for:

- implementation of this policy at the school
- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance or the attendance officer (if not the Principal or Headteacher)

The designated senior leader / attendance officer is responsible for:

- leading actions to optimise attendance across the school, including:

  o benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement and offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the /principal headteacher
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- having an oversight of data analysis/monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- working with outside agencies such as education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader or the attendance officer responsible for attendance is Jemma McFadyen and can be contacted via Email- Jemma.mcfadyen@ripplevaleschool.co.uk or by Phone- 01304 373866

4.4 form tutors / other responsible staff members

Form tutors and admin staff] are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office [by 09.00am].

Form tutors / other responsible staff members] are responsible for reporting to senior leadership team or wellbeing Manager directly when a student does not attend a timetabled session within the first 15 minutes of the session

4.5 School [admin/office] staff

School [admin/office] staff:
- take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- transfer calls from parents/carers to the Wellbeing Manager- in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every school day on time
- call the school to report their child's absence before [time, e.g. 9am] on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

- provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

4.7 Students

Students are expected to:
- attend school every day on time
- attend every timetabled session on time

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

Ripplevale School keeps an attendance register, and places all students onto this register.

Ripplevale School takes the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day.

It records whether every student is:

- present
- attending an approved off-site educational activity
- absent
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register includes:
- the original entry
- the amended entry
- the reason for the amendment
- the date on which the amendment was made
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

The school also records:

- whether the absence is authorised or not
- the nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- the nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school keeps every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by [8.45] on each school day.

The register for the first session is taken at 8.45 and is kept open until 9.00 The register for the second session is taken at [13.15] and is kept open until [13.30].

5.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent / carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school [admin/office] staff (see also section 7).

Parent/carer can make contact by phone on 01304 373866 and leave an answerphone message or email info@ripplevaleschool.co.uk

Ripplevale School marks absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school asks for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The school does not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence is recorded as unauthorised and parents / carers are notified of this.

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent / carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parent/carer can seek appointment authorisation by calling admin/reception staff on 01304 373866 or by emailing info@ripplevaleschool.co.uk, however, the school encourages parents / carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent / carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:
- before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Add details of how your school identifies and responds to ongoing punctuality issues.

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Adapt the following to match your school's day-to-day process for following up on absence.

Where any student expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school:

- calls the student's parent/carer by morning breaktime of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit.
- 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
- call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Adapt the following to explain when and how your school reports to parents/carers on their child's attendance record. The DfE expects you to do this regularly.

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels through termly reports or by communication from the Wellbeing Manager.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence
The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

Ripplevale School defines 'exceptional circumstances' as

circumstances which are exceptional for the individual student and that are beyond that student's control.

one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance or transport problems.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via . The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see section 4 for more detail)
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision

6.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Please look at your local authorities attendance requirements.

Penalty notices can be issued by a local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- the 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 student 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 or withdraw the notice.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

Telephone calls to parents/carer
· Home visits to parents
· Meetings with parents/other agencies
· Collecting students from home to bring them to school
· Liaising with KCC transport and taxi companies
· Referrals to social services
· Referrals to CAMHS
· Liaising with the school liaison team
· Providing specialised timetables for students
· Giving students designated trusted staff to talk too
· Reduced timetables if needed
· School providing the student access to the school counsellor or Well Being Staff
· Resources list for parents for support groups
· Referrals to other support agencies
· Sending staff to tutor at the students home

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 School monitoring of attendance

The school:
- monitors attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- identifies whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

The school compares attendance data to the national average, and shares this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school:
- analyses attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and uses this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families

- looks at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and develops strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school:

- provides regular attendance reports to the senior leadership team to facilitate discussions with students and families
- uses data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school:

- uses attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- holds regular meetings with the parents / carers of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- provides access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Makes changes to timetables and provides intensive 1:1 support where necessary and appropriate.
- Providing suitable rewards that are individual to each student and their interests.

9. Policy review

9.1   This policy is reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Jemma McFadyen, Wellbeing Manager in consultation with the senior leadership team.. At every review, the policy is approved by the governing board.

10. Links with other policies

10.1   This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Child missing education policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's current guidance on school attendance.

In any case of uncertainty about which code to use, the responsible staff member should always consult the DfE's current guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration.
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration.
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed.
U	Late arrival	Student arrives late after the register has closed.
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.
C	Authorised absence	Leave of absence granted by the school. Only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence.
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
E	Excluded	Where no alternative provision is made.
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Student holiday, where the school has not granted authorisation.
H	Authorised Holiday	Student holiday that has been granted as authorised by the school, only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence.

I	Illness	Not medical or dental appointments.
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
M	Medical/Dental	Student has a medical or dental appointment, evidence should be provided by the parent/carer.
N	No reason issued	The reason of absence has not yet been provided. This code should be changed once the reason has been provided.
O	Absent without authorisation.	If by the end of the registration period a reason for absence has not been issued.
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
R	Religious Observation	Schools must record absence as authorised when it falls on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the parents' religious body
S	Study Leave	Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, it should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise. As study leave is unsupervised it must be recorded as absence.
T	Traveller absence	A number of different groups are covered by the generic term traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should not be used for general absences by those groups. It must only be

		used when the pupil's parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes and the school has granted a leave of absence following a request from the parent. This code should not be used to record any other types of absence by these groups.
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Where a pupil is unable to attend school because: · the school site or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause at a time when pupils are due to attend; or · the transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within safe walking distance; or · a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school	Where a pupil not of compulsory school age is attending school part-time.
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens, (for example the student's name is on the register but the student is not yet "on roll" and so is not attending school).