

Attendance Policy 2024-2025

Parents can access this policy via the academy website or request a copy from the main office.

Academy Commitment

At Ryecroft Primary Academy we are committed to the improvement and sustainability of excellent attendance, and therefore are proactive in tackling poor attendance. Our aim is to achieve and maintain a whole school target of at least 97% and to reduce persistent absence. The academy will work in partnership with parents and extended services in improving attendance and therefore raising achievement for all our children.

Aims and Objectives

- To achieve and maintain a target of 97% whole school attendance.
- To reduce persistent absence.
- To ensure excellence and enjoyment for every child by providing a safe environment and a relevant curriculum that meets the needs and interests of all our pupils.
- To offer a range of extra-curricular activities that children really want to attend.
- To tackle poor attendance rigorously with a consistent and transparent approach so being firm and fair.
- To support families where attendance is poor by removing any barriers that may attribute to poor attendance.
- To raise aspirations and expectations for our children and their families so changing cultural attitudes in the long term.
- To deter all holidays in term time.
- To safeguard all our children where there are safety concerns such as a children missing in education by working positively with external agencies such as the ESW service and Children's Social Care.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

As an academy attendance is a high priority. We have an attendance team who focuses on maintaining excellent attendance across the academy alongside the Head of Academy.

Ryecroft Primary Academy works hard to provide a relevant and enjoyable curriculum including extra-curricular activities. Despite this, children's attendance is usually dictated by their parents/carers. Therefore, our work with parents/carers is crucial in achieving outstanding attendance for all pupils. The academy sends out regular information about attendance. This includes information on how the academy can support families in overcoming any barriers to attendance, information about holidays in term time and Fixed Penalty Notices. Where there are concerns about a child's attendance, parents/carers are involved from the very beginning in working to improve the situation. The academy has a positive approach to attendance that is constantly reviewed and shared with all staff.

Expectations and Daily Routines What

is good attendance and why is it important to us?

At Ryecroft Primary Academy good attendance means attending 97% of all school days on time by 8.50am. It is important to us because we want to make sure that every child meets their full academic potential as well as being safe, healthy and successful children.

Attendance below 97% will mean that children are at a disadvantage and will not keep up with the learning that is taking place in class. Children who are persistently absent from school are more likely than others to underperform and to leave school with few or no qualifications. They are more likely to be unemployed, to experience social isolation, to suffer mental illness and to become homeless. Poor attendance is also associated with vulnerability, exploitation, and crime. We also link attendance to safeguarding, we need to make sure that children are safe. Children not attending 97% of the time are also considered at risk.

Parents and carers are expected to ensure that their children attend school in line with national expectations of 97%. This means that children should not have more than 4 days off over an academic year.

The school day starts at 8.50 am. Staff are available at the main gate and every door to welcome children and families in to school each morning and home time. The school gates are opened at 8.35am and are closed at 8.50am. Any child arriving after this time, is required to sign in late at the office and explain their reason for being late. The registers close at 9.00am and children not present will be marked as absent.

If your child is going to be absent, parents/carers must call the office by 9.00am on the morning of the absence to state the reason. If phone lines are engaged there is a voice message service available and attendance staff will call parents/carers back to discuss the reason for absence where necessary. Failure to notify school of any absence will result in the absence being unauthorised and attendance staff may complete a home visit in line with our safeguarding duty of care.

Attendance Team

Miss H Wrightson Head of Academy, Mrs C McCormack Business Manager and Mrs A Bibi Office Manager

Contact:

Ryecroft Primary Academy Tel:

01274 422044 email:

info@ryecroftpa.org.uk

What are our daily attendance routines?

Each morning at 9.05am, the attendance team will identify the children who are absent with no reason provided. They will then begin calling families. If the reason for absence provided is not considered

satisfactory, then the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Previous attendance and family circumstances will be taken into consideration.

Other reasons for unauthorised absence will include not returning to school when a child has a short medical/dental appointment, or if the child has a record of poor attendance due to minor ailments. Children can attend school with minor ailments. If parents/carers are unsure, they can discuss this with the attendance team. All absence reasons will be discussed with parents to ensure that the academy is supporting the family to get their child back in to school.

First Day Absence/Home visits

If a child is absent for more than two days, there are no safeguarding concerns and we have not had contact with parents/carers, we will conduct a home visit on the third day of absence. The school has the right to unauthorise an absence if the reason given is not satisfactory and/or a pupil's attendance falls below 90%.

Sometimes they will make a home visit without delay to ensure the child is safe. These sometimes be made unannounced. Home visits will also be made where there are general safeguarding concerns, queries about a persistently absent child or just to confirm that a child is too unwell to attend.

Religious Observance

The school may allow authorised absence for religious observance per occasion. This is at the Head of Academy discretion.

Bradford Council recommends that all children, regardless of their faith are afforded up to 3 days authorised absence per academic year for religious and cultural observance.

Dentist and Medical Appointments

Parents are asked not to take children out of school for dental and medical appointments, with the exception of an emergency or consultant appointment. If children are taken out the main office will need to see a letter or an appointment card.

Children should not be taken out of school due to appointments for parents/carers. Please note that children's attendance will be marked as unauthorised in these circumstances.

Pupils are expected to attend school before and after medical appointments. Failure to do so will result in the child receiving an unauthorised absence mark.

Rewards.

There are a range of rewards in place to promote attendance.

| | Individual | Class |
|---|--|---|
| Daily | In school 1 dojo On time 1 dojo | <i>Name on the door.</i> For each day a whole class has 100%, they will receive a letter on their door to make 'Ryecroft Academy'. Once this is complete, the class will receive a whole class reward in agreement with their class teacher. |
| Weekly | All children receive dojos for attendance and punctuality which they can spend at the Dojo Shop | All classes aim for 96% for the week. If a class achieves this, they have the chance to 'Roll the dice' in assembly and earn a reward for their class for that week. |
| Half-term rewards | Children who achieve 100% attendance in a half term will receive a certificate and be entered into a prize draw. | |
| End of year rewards | Children who achieve 100% attendance in a school year will receive a certificate and a special reward. | |
| Throughout the year there will be spotlight incentives for attendance including rewards for the whole family. | | |

Bank of Rewards include (but not limited to):

- Extra playtime
- Games session
- Cartoons and popcorn session
- Tablet games session
- Class Party
- Visit to the Ice-cream van

Promoting Good Attendance

To encourage children with attendance that is below what is expected, there is a clear strategy of support. We aim to address all of the underlying reasons for low attendance and will build committed, trusting relationships between families and school.

We will:

- open a line of communication with families through text messages and phone calls
- invite families into school to meet attendance staff to discuss what interests and motivates their child
- build a relationship with families through home visits and regular check-ins

Data and Monitoring

How will we track the attendance of children?

If a pupil's attendance/absence drops below the school's expected level of attendance (i.e. 97% or 3 separate instances of absence) the following procedure may be applied:

Stage 1

Letter 1 Letter 1 acts as a reminder letter which reminds parents/carers of the impact of poor attendance and puts attendance into context whilst offering support.

Letter 2 For use, should unauthorised absence still continue and parent/carer has failed to engage with the school. Parent/carer is invited to attend a listening and understanding meeting with a member of the School Attendance team to discuss reasons for absence and to consider possible support measures. If attendance continues to be of concern and there is not enough evidence of improvement, then school will begin the Stage 2 process.

Stage 2

At Stage 2 there will be 2 types of action: Enforcement Action or Early Help Action

Engagement at Stage 2 will support the identification of any unmet needs through an Early Help Assessment in collaboration with the family. Relevant sources of support will then be actioned. If unmet needs are not identified at Stage 2 then Enforcement Action will commence.

Enforcement Letter 1 An enforcement letter 1 will be sent to families asking them to engage with the attendance process, a monitoring period of 3 weeks will be set.

Enforcement Letter 2 After 3 weeks if there is no improvement or there has been failure to engage with the attendance process, enforcement letter 2 will be issued along with an invitation to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting with the Head of Academy and an attendance officer. This may also be attended by the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Home Visit If parents/carers fail to attend the attendance panel meeting, a home visit will be completed with an attempt to engage the family. A parenting contract will be completed. A further three weekly monitoring cycle will commence.

Enforcement Letter 3 At the end of the 3 weekly review period, if attendance has failed to improve, a letter will be sent to inform parents/carers of school's intention to begin the Stage 3 Intervention Request.

Stage 3 After a further monitoring period and when all attempts to engage with the family at intervention stages 1 and 2 have failed, and the criteria has been met, the school can refer to the Education Safeguarding Team to undertake a criminal investigation in line with the Criminal Investigation Process.

Escalation of Procedures

Unauthorised absence

Children should be brought to school with minor illnesses. If you are unsure, you should bring your child to school and if they deteriorate and are seriously unwell, we will call you without delay to collect them.

Note, if children have a pattern of short absences for minor illnesses, it is our right to list the illness as unauthorised, as unless children are seriously unwell, they should be in school. Frequent, short-term illnesses can lead to significant periods of absence, and this has a serious impact on children's wellbeing, attainment and life chances.

In line with the Bradford Local Authority guidance, a child with 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period and where their attendance has not been below 80% in the same period, could be considered for a penalty notice for 'poor attendance'.

Persistent Absence

The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority at Stage 2 (detailed above)

Children who attend school for less than 90% of the time are known nationally as persistently absent pupils. Where a child becomes persistently absent (90% or below) then we can issue proceedings to support an improvement in attendance. This can include meetings and supportive strategies, or we can issue warning letters and fines.

If we feel that a child is at risk of becoming persistently absent, then the school will implement supportive strategies such as meetings to support families, so they do not become persistently absent. We will implement these strategies when a child falls below 95% attendance.

Unauthorised Leave During Term Time (Holiday in Term Time)

The school does not authorise any Holiday in Term Time for any reason or length of time, including visiting relatives. We strongly discourage this. The school enforces Bradford Local Authorities policy updated August 2024 in relation to unauthorised leave during term time which will result in Fixed Penalty Notices being issued and could further result in legal proceedings.

- If a parent/carer does request a holiday, they must meet with an attendance officer or Head of Academy **prior to the holiday being booked**. They will explain clearly that the absence will be unauthorised and that they are in danger of losing their child/ren's place at school, being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or legal proceedings through the magistrate's court.
- We do advise families to notify school of any intention to take holiday in term time, without notification we will presume holiday has been taken and still apply the policy.
- Penalty Notices issued in line with Bradford Local Authority (please see below)

- Legal proceedings. In line with Bradford Local Authority's policy, legal proceedings may be considered where a child has a continuous period of unauthorised leave of 20 days or more, or 2 or more periods of unauthorised leave totalling 20 school days or more within a 12-month period.
- If the holiday extends over twenty school days a CME Referral (Child Missing Education) will be made to the Local Authority.
- Parents/carers will receive written confirmation that the holiday is unauthorised prior to the absence when possible.
- Verbal confirmation will always be given prior to the absence and recorded on the Holiday in Term Time form.
- The Head of Academy and Attendance Officer may also meet with the parents/carers post-holiday to discuss with them how the absence has affected their child's attendance percentage and learning. Class teachers may also be present for this meeting.

Penalty Notices

- Penalty notices are fines imposed as an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.
- The penalty is £160 if paid within 28 days of receipt, however a discounted rate of £80 will apply if the fine is paid within 21 days. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority.

The parents can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired, and full payment has not been made. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the local authority (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council) must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

- Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences. Penalty notices can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalty Notices are issued to an individual parent of an individual child. If the same individual parent receives a second penalty notice in relation to the same individual child within a 3-year period, they lose the ability to pay a discounted rate, and must pay £160 within 28 days to avoid being prosecuted for the offence. Local Authorities can no longer issue a third penalty notice to the same individual parent for the same individual child within a 3-year period, parents will usually be prosecuted for the offence via the magistrates court.
- Penalty notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies. In this situation, the penalty is £120 if paid within 28 days of receipt, however a discounted rate of £60 will apply if the fine is paid within 21 days. There are no limits to the number of times an individual parent of an individual child may receive a penalty notice in this situation.

Engagement of External Support Services

In order to safeguard all pupils and their families the school will be proactive in liaising openly and professionally with all external agencies with the aim of protecting a child and their family and improving attendance outcomes. These agencies include New Communities and Travellers Service,

Admission Team, Education Social Work Service, Children's Social Care, Police Service, School Nursing Team and the Hospital and Home Teaching Service.

Children Missing from Education

The school follows guidance from the DfE regarding Children Missing Education. Where children on roll do not attend and the school has made enquiries through phone calls and home visits, we will refer the case to the CME Team. The CME team will advise school when it is safe to take a child off roll.

Pupil Information

As in all aspects of school data and pupil information the Delta's Data Protection Policy is adhered to. Ryecroft Primary Academy will aim to keep up to date and accurate information in order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them. The school requires accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives
- Names and addresses of all persons with parental responsibility
- Emergency contact details
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school
- Any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child
- A child who is or has been on a Child Protection Plan/Family Support Plan.
- Name and contact detail of GP
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child

Children not collected

The following procedure is followed when children are not collected by an appropriate adult at the end of the school day or extra-curricular activity.

- If not collected at 3.15pm children are kept safe with their Class teacher/Teaching Assistant until 3.25pm.
- At 3.25pm the children are safely escorted by one of the above adults to the main office and a member of staff supervises the children until they are collected by an appropriate adult. The academy office staff will be alerted and will contact parents/carers to collect them as soon as possible. Other emergency contact numbers will be rung if parents/carers cannot be reached until an appropriate adult can collect them.
- If no contact is made, two members of staff will escort the child home, leave them with their parents/carers or another appropriate adult and ask for up to date contact numbers.
- If there is no suitable person at home the staff will return to the academy with the child and Children's Social Care/Police will be contacted so that appropriate actions can be taken.
- The same procedures will be followed if a child is not collected after a school visit or extracurricular activity.

- Children who go home alone at the end of the school day must have written consent from a parent/carer. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to update this permission if they wish to do so via the academy office.

Children Leaving Academy Premises without Permission

Every effort is made to ensure that the academy site is as safe and secure as possible and that children are supervised appropriately at all times. In the event that a child is reported missing the following procedures will be followed.

- A thorough search of the academy site and immediate locality is made by all available staff.
- Admin staff to check if they have been signed out.
- A senior leader is informed.
- Admin staff will ring the child's contact numbers so they are fully informed and also to check whether or not the child is at home.
- If the child has not been located after these actions the police will be notified.

Roles and Responsibilities

To support children and families in maintaining good attendance the whole school community has a responsibility to promote good attendance.

This includes:

Parents and carers

Children

Attendance Staff

Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants

Senior Leadership Team

All staff will follow the agreed systems and culture as set out in this policy. Parents and carers in sending their child to Ryecroft Primary Academy agree to the details set out in this policy.

Our responsibility as a school is in line with Ofsted attendance guidance 2022. In our work to promote and maintain good attendance, to support children and families we will **'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate'**.

Policy updated : October 2024