



Rugby Free

Secondary School

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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## 1. Rugby Free Secondary School Ethos

Rugby Free Secondary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance. It is the policy of our school to celebrate both.

All staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually. We recognise that parents have a vital role and there is a need to establish a strong home-school links and communication systems. We will provide effective and efficient communications with students, parents, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information advice and support in order to meet our objectives. This policy is based on current government and Statutory Regulations.

## 2. Objectives

- To encourage students to achieve 100% and a minimum attendance of 95% (above the national average of 91%)
- To improve the overall percentage of students attending school
- To provide support advice and guidance to parents and students to increase attendance levels
- To develop a framework in which good attendance is promoted and attendance issues are addressed consistently
- To build relationships with outside agencies, including the Local Authority.

## 3. Statutory/Legal Guidance

Rugby Free Secondary School acknowledges the legislation provided below:

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:



The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- To his/her/their age, ability and aptitude and
- To any special needs they may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

(Note: for educational purposes, the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.)

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Additional legal requirements may be found in: The Education [Student Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow the Headteacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in exceptional circumstances.

#### **4. Safeguarding**

Rugby Free Secondary School recognises the clear links between attendance, attainment and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at the RFSS will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school. If a student is absent from school for more than five consecutive days, on the sixth day the absence will automatically be unauthorised until medical evidence is provided by the parents to the school or contact is made directly with the Attendance Officer. If a student has not been seen in school for 10 days or more, no contact with home, a home



visit will be completed. On some occasions, we may ask for a Microsoft Teams Meeting. If the student still hasn't been seen, a Child Missing in Education referral will be made by the Attendance officer.

## **Keeping Children Safe In Education 2023 Update:**

### **Children who are absent from education**

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of 145 substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures

## **5. School Responsibilities**

### **5.1 SLT Attendance Lead**

- Responsibility for attendance policy and procedures
- Responsibility for devising and delivery of attendance improvement plan
- Monitor attendance in liaison with attendance officer and pastoral leaders

### **5.2 Attendance Officer**

Day to day recording of attendance

Monitoring absences

Rewarding students' positive attendance and punctuality



Communication/attendance updates to parents

Co-ordination of attendance registers Identification of students who have poor attendance and are at risk of persistent absenteeism

Identification of any significant patterns within attendance and working closely with parent / carer to look at why this is happening looking at barriers.

### 5.3 Head of Year

Monitoring attendance, early identification of students who have poor attendance

Discuss and seek to resolve underlying causes of poor attendance

Rewarding good attendance and punctuality

Raising the importance of attendance and punctuality

### 5.4 Form Tutors

Responsible for monitoring attendance of their tutor group

Discuss the importance of attendance with tutees

Discuss any issues/concerns that may affect attendance within their tutor group

To ensure all their tutees are aware of what their attendance Trustees

Liaise with SLT lead for attendance to monitor policies, procedures and progress towards improving attendance, also review attendance data ensuring support to those students identified is given.

### 5.5 All Staff

Provide a positive and safe environment where students want to attend regularly

Be role models promoting good attendance through their own attendance and punctuality

Raise concerns of students missing lessons via CPOMS



## 6. Procedures

### 6.1 Registers

Registers are taken every lesson, within the first 10 minutes of the lesson. If the register is not taken within the first 10 minutes a notification is sent via email. If the register is still not completed after being sent this notification of a red card is issued by the Attendance Officer via email to the teacher Non-attendance is identified by the Attendance Officer and marks will be put into MIS system with relevant code and comment. In the morning if the child has not arrived in school and we have not been provided with a reason from the parent/carer or guardian we will text the parent/ carer or guardian via MIS System to request information on the reasons for absence. The DSL notifies Children's Social Team if a child with a child protection plan is absent without explanation.

### 6.2 Vulnerable Students

Rugby Free Secondary School works closely to monitor the attendance of vulnerable students, ones identified by RFSS. If we have concerns about students, we work closely with outside agencies to ensure parents/carers understand the importance of good attendance and attendance procedures.

The attendance of Vulnerable students is monitored on a lesson-by-lesson basis and absences are reported to the appropriate HOY and contact is made with parents/carers as needed

Daily school contact from the attendance officer to parents/carers for absences of vulnerable students or those at risk of persistent absence

Dual Registration – Rugby Free Secondary School maintains its responsibility to ensure that students who are dual registered, students via an offsite direction are attending and progressing with their education. The school emails other providers to check on attendance.

SEN – Students with medical and emotional issues who are poor attendees are monitored through MIS system. At the termly attendance meetings their attendance is discussed, and intervention strategies are put into place



For students that have been identified as persistent absenteeism (A) RFSS will have meetings with parents/carers/students and where necessary will encourage attendance using a clear reintegration plan, reviewed fortnightly with a clear plan of returning to full time education.

## **Children Missing in Education**

At RFSS we have a legal duty to identify children who are missing education (CME), taking action where necessary and ensuring children are receiving suitable education. This duty applies to all maintained schools, academies, free schools and independent schools.

The CME service is available for referrals when a child is absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown or that a child is not on a school roll and there does not seem to be any education in place

We will conduct home visits should we be concerned that a student has not been in school, and if we haven't received information from parents/carers as to why their child has not attended

Anyone with a concern that a child is missing education can make a referral to Complete the Children Missing Education (CME) referral form and send securely to [cme@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@warwickshire.gov.uk)

About a child's safety or well-being which requires immediate action, call the children Families Front Door (and police if appropriate) without delay on 01926 414144 or the police on 999

## **Part time timetables**

At RFSS we recognise the legal framework released May 2022 in relation to the rights of all statutory school aged children and young people to receive full time education appropriate to their age and irrespective of their needs. RFSS ensure compliance with statutory guidance and that they do not inadvertently exclude a student illegally. RFSS understand the impact a part-time timetable can present to any student.

As well as the potential impact on educational standards, a part-time timetable can present a significant safeguarding risk if not managed appropriately. RFSS adheres to the





statutory guidance provided in the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education. This applies particularly to children on part-time timetables. RFSS will support students to re-integrate into school full time, therefore any part time timetable set up will be referred fortnightly and a clear plan in place to return full time within a half term. RFSS will notify FAP (Fair Access Pathway) about any changes to timetables.

### 6.3 Absence and lateness

Parents/carers are expected to telephone the school as soon as possible to inform us if a child is to be absent or late on each day that this applies. Calls should only be made to 01788 222060 option 2 and a message left for Attendance Officer or email [attendance@rugbyfreesecondary.co.uk](mailto:attendance@rugbyfreesecondary.co.uk), the main reception number should not be used, or a message left with the receptionist.

Students are late if they are not in their tutor time by 8:45am. The Attendance Officer and HOY will monitor lateness and punctuality. Sanctions and parental contact will be used as appropriate. Lateness is considered to be equally as serious as absence. Students who are showing patterns of lateness will be reminded the importance of arriving on time. If lateness persists, parents/carers/guardians will be invited into school to discuss the issues around this. Persistent late attenders will be placed on late to school report and monitored by the tutor. RFSS will work with parents and their children to identify any barriers they may have to attending school or arriving late to school and support where possible.

### 6.4 Authorisation of Absence

We are advised by government legislation and Local Authority guidance that attendance can only be authorised if the following applies:

Medical reasons - please note medical evidence and/or a parental written note will be asked for upon return to school for student's whose attendance falls below the school's expected threshold of 96%. Medical evidence will always be required if a student has five consecutive days absence from school due to illness. Notes are to be returned to the Attendance Officer

Religious celebration observation

If transport provided by the school/Local Authority cannot bring the child to school



Absences may also be authorised for the following reasons, but this will be at the discretion of the Headteacher:

Where a Leave of Absence has been completed by parent/carer and is agreed by the Headteacher

Where a student has a medical appointment that cannot be changed e.g., a consultant appointment

When the student has no fixed abode, their parent is engaged in a trade which require them to travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and the student has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months

Other exceptional circumstances e.g., family bereavement and for a limited period will need to have been discussed and authorised first

## 6.5 Medical Appointments

Where possible, appointments should be made out of school hours or in school holidays. However, we realise this is sometimes not possible. Students should come into school before and after appointments to ensure they miss as little lesson time as possible. Students should sign out and in at the attendance office before leaving/upon their return to school, evidence should be emailed to the attendance officer before the appointment to ensure your child can leave.

## 6.6 Leave of Absence during Term Time

Arranging holidays during term time causes issues for many reasons:

The student's education suffers

Lessons and extra-curricular activities are missed

There is often no opportunity for teachers to set additional work or to assist a child in catching up on their return from holiday; and

Parents may be in breach of their legal obligation to send their child to school



The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Student Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Student Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Headteachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave

Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent/carer. i.e., the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council

The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.

A copy of which can be found at

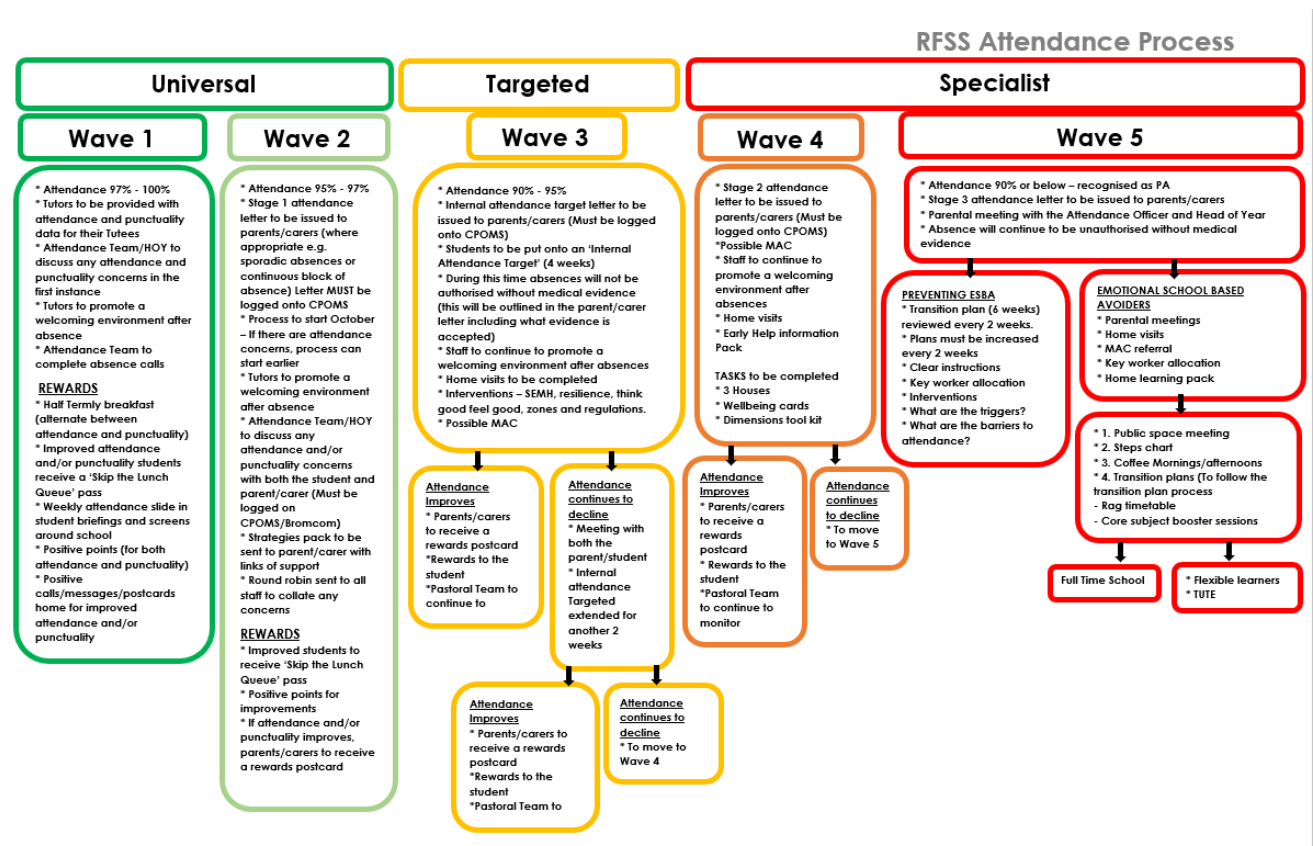
<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/studentnonattendance>

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

## 6.7 Attendance Intervention

Intervention will follow a staged approach and students will be monitored and different strategies will be used depending on the stage they are at in the process outlined below and their personal situation.



This flow chart is a guide, and each case will be assessed and reviewed depending on each students' individual needs and which interventions will be most effective in supporting them to improve or maintain positive attendance. Early intervention will be sought so students can be supported meeting their attendance targets, however early attendance figures can be misleading so this staged approach will begin in after the first half term of



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each academic year. The nature of student absence is crucial when applying this approach: a student may be at wave4 but no action is taken because there are perfectly valid reasons for their absence.

We work closely with students, parents and carers to ensure they understand the importance of attending school. RFSS will seek the support of Warwickshire Attendance Service to support students and families where attendance falls under the statutory legal requirement, prior to any formal fixed penalty notices.

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school
- Work with the school and other partners

## 6.8 Emotional Based School Avoiders

### RFSS Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Process

