



## Rainford Brook Lodge Primary School

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Responsible Committee

Site

Last review date	July	2024
Next review date	July	2026
Signed	Name	
Position	Date	
Governor ratification		
Signed	Name	
Position	Date	

# Brook Lodge Attendance Policy

## Rationale

Rainford Brook Lodge is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment, which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be in school every day and arrive on time every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Rainford Brook Lodge aims for students to have an attendance of at least 97%, as this will ensure that attendance does not become a barrier to learning and achievement. We will support both children and parents/carers in helping them to achieve this.

It is your responsibility as a parent to ensure that your child attends school regularly. This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4-2. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

This policy sets out how together, we aim to achieve this.

**This policy has been written in line with Department for Education guidance Working together to improve school attendance August 2024**

## Rights and Responsibilities

### School

- Rainford Brook Lodge expects all pupils to attend regularly and to arrive on time in a fit condition to learn.
- Staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality with all pupils and will lead through good example.
- Rainford Brook lodge employs a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and will work closely with parents/carers when attendance/punctuality gives cause for concern.
- School use School Spider App and/or telephone call to alert you to your child's absence if we have not been alerted of their absence prior to the registers being closed.
- School will inform you half termly with what your child's attendance is via School Spider
- School to make calls to parents and/or request meetings with parents to discuss, support and challenge attendance. This may also involve home visits (announced and unannounced) to check on student welfare
- School to follow the local procedures for fixed penalty notices for attendance

## Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend regularly and on time.
- Pupils will be encouraged to achieve 97+% attendance (no more than 5 days absence per year)

## Parents

- Parents are **legally responsible** for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Parents are responsible for informing the school before 09:30am on any day of absence of the reason why their child is absent by phone call or personal visit.
- Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to support absences.
- Parents should avoid routine medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours unless it is a specialist appointment that cannot be arranged outside school hours. Students are expected to return to school after an appointment if it is in the morning and attend in the morning if the appointment is in the afternoon. Absences due to medical appointments are still recorded as absences.
- Parents should inform school before any appointment and a copy of any documentation should be provided to the school office so that the absence may be authorised.
- Parents are expected to attend meetings on request if concerns arise about their child's attendance or punctuality

The senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Reece, the Headteacher

We use Mr D. Taylor from Rainford High who supports with our week-by-week procedures and practices and will contact parents too where required as well as support with Fixed Penalty Fines.

All contact re attendance should be via ParentApp to inform of absence or phone school on 01744 678816 and speak to our Office staff. For Leave of Absence Request Forms, please download from the Website (see Term Dates section)

### **Day to day attendance processes:**

- We ask all parents/carers to notify school before 8:55am if their child is going to be absent from school and with a reason why.
- Office Staff will follow up any children who are absent with no reason as a matter of priority from 9.25am.
- Attendance data is regularly analysed to identify concerns and patterns with absences so we can support and intervene to improve student attendance.

## Punctuality

We expect all students to arrive at school on time and ready to learn. The school bell will sound at 08:50am and the school gates will then be locked at 8.55am to allow parents to leave. Registers will be taken at 8.55am. Any pupil arriving after this time will then make their

way to the school office and sign in with the staff on duty in the office. Any pupil arriving from 08:55am – 09:25am will be marked in the school register as late (L). The school register will close at 09:25am. Any pupil arriving after this time will then receive a very late mark (U). A 'U' mark registers as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session. Parents should be aware that the school register is a legal document and schools are required by law to mark the registers twice daily. A child who arrives late to school regularly will disrupt the class and miss the learning that takes place at the start of each day. Regular U codes can lead to a legal sanction, such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Parents of children who arrive to school late on a regular basis may be invited to school to discuss the reasons for their poor punctuality.

### **Attendance**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parent/carer) as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**.

This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a valid reason, such as genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Where a medical/dental appointment cannot be arranged outside school hours, parents/carers should ensure their child is absent for the minimum time possible. The school acknowledges that some students may have long term medical/health issues, and works to support students and families in minimising the impact of such issues on attendance. We will often refer to the school nurse for advice and support.

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and won't record as authorised.

This type of absence may lead to the school and the Local Authority issuing sanctions and/or legal proceedings such as Penalty Notices.

Examples of this type of absence **may** include:

- Parents/carers keeping or allowing students to stay off school unnecessarily
- Truancy at any time during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to obtain a mark
- Shopping
- Holidays
- Pupils who are absent with a cough, cold or sore throat without a high temperature or other health conditions that NHS advice suggests should not preclude school attendance **may** be unauthorised
- Pupils who are saying they do not want to come to school and are absent **may** be unauthorised
- Pupils being tired **may** also be unauthorised

## **Illness**

We understand that at times pupils will become ill. However, it is unusual for a pupil to be regularly ill throughout the year. In these cases, we will request medical evidence and invite parents in for a meeting to discuss the concerns. We would look to involve the school nurse for support. A useful website is [www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school)

## **Medical Appointments**

We encourage parents to book non-urgent appointments outside of the school day so that their child does not miss learning time in school. However, if this is unavoidable then parents need to provide evidence of the appointment at least 24 hours before. This needs to be shown to the office staff. If evidence is not provided either before or after, then the absence will be marked unauthorised. Examples of evidence are appointment letters, appointment cards or appointment texts. We ask that pupils always attend school during the day as much as possible. For example, we would ask that students come to school in the morning before an appointment and return after appointments. We would expect all students to return to school unless the appointment is later than 2pm, but we understand circumstances may not always allow this. Please always keep us informed. If you have any queries, please contact school. If a pupil is absent regularly for medical appointments, then we will invite parents/carers in to discuss this.

## **Leave of Absence/Holidays during term time**

As a school, it is disappointing when parents decide to take students on holiday during term time as this removes them from the learning that their peers are receiving. Parents are not permitted to take their children on holiday out of school, during term time, without permission from the Headteacher. They will be marked as unauthorised absences. All exceptional cases need to be discussed with the Headteacher and requests should be made in writing at least 28 days before. We understand many people have had holidays delayed, moved and cancelled but education needs to be the priority and all holidays need to be taken out of term time. If holidays are 10 sessions missed (5 days) or contribute towards 10 sessions missed within a 10-week rolling programme, then a Fixed Penalty Notice will be considered.

## **Tiered Approach to Support**

### **Data Analysis and Use**

We track attendance data closely both at a student and sub group level so we can target interventions to support students in improving their attendance where necessary. We have developed a tiered system shown below that monitors all students' attendance and ensures it is reviewed by the most appropriate leaders at the correct time.

The data will be used to work with the lead for disadvantaged students, the lead for students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and young carers, so that vulnerable groups are monitored and supported.

We use data to identify and sign post concerns to the key staff in school but also to support referrals and sign posting to external agencies, such as the educational welfare service and social services. This can also be a factor in SEND referrals

### **Attendance below 97%**

On a weekly basis, your child's class teacher will monitor the student attendance and students are encouraged to maintain an attendance of 96% or above. If your child's attendance is below 97% you will receive a text/electronic communication notifying you of this on a half-termly basis (the first one being at the end of the first term, unless there is a significant issue).

### **Attendance below 92%**

Parents of students whose attendance has fallen below 92% will be informed and may receive a message or phone call inviting them to attend an Attendance Support Meeting with a member of staff.

The purpose of this meeting will be to explore/discuss reasons for the current level of attendance and to draw up an agreed Attendance Support Plan, if it is appropriate to do so. In some circumstances parents will be asked to provide medical evidence for any future absences in order for them to be authorised and the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice being requested will be discussed if rates of absence increase further. The Attendance Support Plan will include weekly attendance targets together with a longer term attendance target.

In the case of students on Pupil Premium the need for additional support from the school will be explored.

### **Attendance below 90% - Persistent Absence**

Students whose attendance has been a significant concern, in particular those who have previously been identified as PA (persistently Absent - below 90%), will be closely monitored. In order to fully support them, a 'Back to School Meeting' may be arranged following a period of absence to discuss the reason and establish any further support that may be needed. Parents will always be contacted when their child is absent if we have concerns.

In all these cases where meetings are held with parents, this will be in order to both support and challenge attendance rates and to agree on ways forward

Every persistent absentee is monitored closely. If concerning attendance continues after support is offered, then we reserve the right to involve the Educational Welfare Service and the case may be referred to them. Fixed penalty notices or prosecution will be considered too.

Particular priority will go to any child who is classed as severely absent (those missing 50% or more of school)

### **Leave of Absence during term time**

School cannot generally authorise time off for family holidays during term time and parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays. Parents can only

apply for leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances and evidence of these circumstances will be required.

Parents must apply in writing to the headteacher well in advance of the absence (at least 4 weeks in advance). The headteacher will decide if the leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised. The forms are on the website to download (look on the tab on the home page labelled term dates, then click on pupil leave of Absence)

If the headteacher does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents decide to take the leave anyway, the absence will be unauthorised and the parents may receive Penalty Notice fines.

Penalty Notice Fines may be issued to each parent for every child concerned where there are 10 sessions (5 days) in a rolling period of 10 school weeks which can span different terms or years. These are decided upon on a child-by-child basis

If parents take their child on a leave of absence, then this will impact on their attendance and their child will be an attendance concern. All attendance concerns will be monitored and supported as explained above, such as receiving concern letters/messages, calls and possibly home visits for absences.

All decisions regarding the authorising of absences will be compliant with the 2010 Equalities Act.

### **Children with health needs who cannot attend school**

Rainford Brook Lodge aims to ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows, to enable them to reach their full potential.

Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into school as soon as they are well enough.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with the Trust, LA, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education. For further details see 'Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy'.

### **Rewarding Positive Attendance**

To encourage all students to maintain a high level of attendance and to promote positive competition between forms in each year group, the following reward system will be established:

- Parents of children with 97% or above attendance will be notified to congratulate them on their attendance on a termly basis and children will be entitled to wear their own clothes on the first day back of the next term
- Weekly attendance monitored by the class teacher and informal praise and rewards given to increases of attendance or for reaching 97% or above
- Students with a 100% attendance at the end of each term will receive an individual certificate and be entered into a prize draw

*\*Children with known medical conditions that require hospital treatment (not GP or dentists) in school time may be included where the absence of the dates where they attended hospital results in 97% or more*