



Attendance Policy

2023 - 2024

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

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RKLT Attendance Policy

This policy meets the requirements of the 'working together to improve school attendance' from the Department for Education (DfE). [Link: Working together to improve school attendance](#)

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy is based upon several principles:

- Good attendance is vital to pupil achievement and to develop a positive school ethos.
- Government statistics show a direct link between under achievement and poor attendance at school.
- Attendance contributes to pupils feeling fully included in the school community and developing a positive attitude towards education and lifelong learning.
- It is important for schools, parents, carers, and pupils to work together to attain high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- We have a legal responsibility to follow up all absences.
- Attendance is a protective factor in keeping children safe from harm.

1.2 This Attendance Policy contributes towards our Trust's aims to ensure the following positive outcomes:

- To provide safe, caring, and welcoming environments in which to learn.
- To create happy, healthy schools where every child feels valued.
- To provide an appropriate curriculum for pupils to enjoy and achieve.
- To provide opportunities to develop economic well-being.
- To encourage all pupils to make positive contributions.

2. Responsibilities

It is important that all relevant parties accept and fulfil their responsibilities.

2.1 Trustees' Responsibilities:

- Ensure all schools prioritise good attendance by following the Trust attendance policy and ensuring people and processes are appropriate for the context.
- Monitor attendance across the Trust.
- Encourage the sharing of effective practice.

2.2 Schools' Responsibilities:

- To monitor attendance and absences (authorised and unauthorised) as we have a legal and safeguarding responsibility to do so.

- To apply the policy, including legal action, consistently and fairly to all pupils.
- To investigate any problems that may lead to non-attendance and support re-integration.
- To keep parents and carers informed of attendance regularly, including raising concerns.
- To work closely with specialist attendance professionals to offer targeted support, following the referral procedure for pupils whose absence is giving cause for concern.

2.3 Pupils' Responsibilities

- To attend school.
- To arrive at school on time and follow school specific procedures for registration, particularly if arriving late for any reason.
- To arrive at school with the correct equipment and uniform.
- To discuss any issues that might deter them from attending school with a trusted adult.

2.4 Parents'/ Carers'/Legal Guardians' Responsibility

- To ensure that their children attend school and are punctual. Absences should only be for genuine illness or exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances leave must be applied for from school using the relevant form and is given at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal of the individual school.
- To provide school with up to date contact information, including address, telephone/mobile number, and email address for primary carers and additional contact(s) where possible.
- To inform the schools on the first day of their child's absence and each subsequent day if they are still unplanned.
- To ensure that their children arrive at school with correct equipment and uniform.
- To be aware of their legal responsibilities (See Appendix A).

2.5 Quality Assurance

- The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) regulate and inspect all schools and Academies in order to achieve excellence in the care of young people in education. They regularly collate and analyse data regarding attendance from all education establishments.
- The Department for Education (DfE) guidelines state that it is the responsibility of parents / carers to ensure their children attend school regularly. They have introduced statutory guidance to give Academies the power to enforce regular school attendance where this becomes problematic, through legal measures and interventions.

- The Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) across the Trust place high importance on attendance and punctuality. Pupil attendance is regularly monitored, and each school will pursue all interventions available to promote better attendance. Effective education can only take place if the pupil attends school regularly.

2.6 All RKLT Schools

Encourage regular attendance in the following ways:

- By involving pupils in school attendance policies and practices.
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's/carer's concerns about the school or other pupils.
- By celebrating good attendance and recognising when improvements have been made.
- By appointing a member of staff to take the lead on attendance, involving working with other agencies in support of young people.
- By having attendance on the agenda of every Local Governing Board meeting.

Respond to non-attendance in the following ways:

- By daily contact to all parents, carers and legal guardians of pupils who fail to attend where no contact has been made to explain the absence.
- By follow up contacts if there is no response from the parents, carers and legal guardians. The school will continue to try and contact the named adults. If no contact is made the school will follow the RKLT procedures for monitoring absences (See Appendix B).

2.7 Registration

- All RKLT schools take attendance registers at least twice per day in the morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) sessions as legally required.
- Pupils arriving late after morning registration will receive a late mark (L) or an unauthorised absence mark (U) for the AM session. The same applies for the afternoon registration session.
- In line with the government guidance, students will be marked with a U code if they arrive at school after the form period has finished or 30 minutes after registration opens (determined by individual school timetable).

3. Authorised & unauthorised absence

3.1 Absence

- All RKLT schools will monitor their own attendance issues initially and any decision regarding authorising or not authorising absence will only be made by the Headteacher/Principal or designated nominee in each individual school.

- When schools identify concerns, which are persistent, about individual pupil absences they will escalate interventions and refer to and or consult with the designated Local Authority and/or Temple Newsam Community Partnership (TNCP) for those schools supported by the cluster team. A coordinated approach is crucial. (See Appendix B).
- All parents/carers must apply for 'Exceptional Circumstances Leave' of absence if they intend to remove their child from school during term time for any reason* (See Appendix C).
- Religious observance days are subject to Headteacher/Principal discretion.

3.2 Collection and the use of attendance data

The efficient and speedy collection of data within each school is essential to the development of effective strategies for action. Data collected will be used to monitor:

- Individual absences and lateness at school.
- Patterns of absence and lateness and the identification of trends by class, year group and whole school. This will allow weekly, half termly, termly, and whole year comparisons to be made and strategies for improving individual children and/or whole school implemented.
- Persistent Absence (PA) data (and all attendance information) is collected by all schools every week. The 10% PA definition has applied since September 2015. Alongside changing the percentage, the DfE has revised the methodology used to identify pupils with absence rates above 10%. This classifies pupils as persistent absentees if they miss 10% or more of their own individual possible sessions, rather than reaching a standard threshold of absence sessions. Persistent absence includes all authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Data will be analysed at school and Trust level to provide insights that inform our strategy for improving attendance.

3.3 Safeguarding/Child Missing Education (CME)

- All schools, after they have exhausted their own procedures, will refer to relevant Local Authority teams including the Child Missing Education team (as per the relevant local authority CME guidance).
- CME referrals will also be completed for all pupils who leave a RKLT school to move to another Local Authority if no application for another school has been made and the RKLT school has had no contact from a future proposed school.
- RKLT schools will not remove any pupil from roll unless they have consulted the local authority School Attendance Service first.
- Any child who has not attended school for 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence will be reported to the respective local authority attendance team, whether or not contact has been made with the family.

3.4 Early Years

- For all pupils below compulsory school age all our Trust schools and children centres/early years settings follow the RKLTL Attendance Policy. The families of children attending our schools are encouraged to instil good attendance and punctuality habits from the beginning. (See Appendix D).

3.5 Rewards

- Good attendance is reinforced through consistent praise and rewards.
- Each RKLTL school has appropriate reward systems and registration monitoring procedures as applicable to them. Details of these are available from the individual schools.

4. Types of Illness

- The following guidance from the NHS on types of illness can help parents/carers/legal guardians decide if their child should be kept off school or is able to attend: [NHS Link: Is my child too ill for school?](#)
- If your child has mild symptoms associated with Covid-19, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feel well enough, they can go to school. There is no requirement for self-isolation.
- In the event that your child feels unwell and has a high temperature and other symptoms of Covid-19 they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

5. Registration coding

5.1 All RKLTL schools use the Government registration codes below:

Registration Codes

| Code | Meaning/When to use |
|------|---|
| I | Present AM - morning session |
| \ | Present PM - afternoon session |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual Registration). If a child is educated in hospital, 1 session can be marked as B per day. |
| C | Leave of absence authorised by the school: Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent/carer gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling. |
| D | Dual Registration – also on roll at another educational setting e.g. PRU |
| E | Excluded |
| F | No longer in use |
| G | Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher/Principal: If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents/carers still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence |

| | |
|----------|---|
| | is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents/carers did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. |
| H | Holiday authorised by the school: Headteachers/Principals should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher/Principal must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher/Principal will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's/Principal's discretion. |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments) |
| J | Interview |
| L | Late before register closes. |
| M | Medical/Dental appointment |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity |
| R | Religious observance |
| S | Study leave |
| T | Traveller absence |
| U | Late (after registers close) |
| V | Educational visit or trip |
| W | Work experience |
| # | School closed to pupils and staff, also used for training days |
| Y | Forced and Partial school closure. Exceptional circumstances |
| Z | Not on school roll |
| - | Should attend – no mark recorded |

RKLT aspires to achieving the maximum attendance for all children attending a RKLT setting.

6. Penalty notices

- Unauthorised leave may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (as amended). By law, you must ask permission for your child to miss school. If you don't you risk a penalty notice. Penalty notices can be issued per parent/carer and per child.
- Payment of a Penalty Notice, if paid within 21 days, is £60. If you do not pay within 21 days, the fine is increased to £120. and you have a further 7 days to make this payment in full. **Note that from August 2024, Penalty Notices will increase to £80 initially and £160 if not paid within 21 days.* Non-payment of a Penalty Notice within the total 28-day period could result in the commencement of criminal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Issuing of a Penalty Notice. A penalty notice will be requested to the Local Authority after a child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 12-week period (Leeds) or 16-week period (North Yorkshire). In the event that a child does not reach the required threshold within the allotted timescale, this would require the process to restart. For persistent absenteeism, a parent/carer could receive a second Penalty Notice in the same academic year.
- The Local Authority holds additional powers to refer for legal intervention. Legal intervention can result in stage 2 fines, beginning at £1,000, parenting orders, an education supervision order and in some cases aggravated offences. Further details can be found in the Working together to improve **school attendance guidance**.

Appendix A

Attendance and Punctuality – A guide for parents and carers

- At RKLt we are committed to protecting every child's **right** to a full-time education. This can be achieved if children come to school ON TIME, EVERY DAY.
- Parents'/carers' have a legal duty to get their children to school every day unless there is a legitimate reason for absence.
- Please be punctual. School starts at 8.50 am. Doors are open from 8.40 am. If you are late your child is late you/ they must report to the school office.
- Pupils who are late disrupt the whole class, which causes embarrassment for them, and they also miss vital parts of the curriculum. Persistent lateness can result in hours/days' worth of learning time lost over the school year and create significant gaps in knowledge and understanding that are hard to fill.
- If a child is absent, we must be told the reason why on the first day of absence, and each subsequent day, before 9am, followed by a written reason for absence.
- You can contact school by calling the main office on 01423 561579 or email: absences@rap.rklt.co.uk

If we do not hear from you, we will contact you by text, phone or letter or by visiting you at home, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities.

Illness

- If a child is genuinely ill, they should remain at home, and you should notify your school. You should contact your doctor to confirm the symptoms, if they persist.
- NHS medical professionals are clear on what reasons children should remain at home. This information can be viewed at [NHS Link: Is my child too ill for school?](#) The school office or a doctor can provide some guidance on the amount of time that common illnesses, particularly contagious ones such as chicken pox, require a child to be absent.
- If a child has viral sickness and diarrhoea, they should only return to school 48 hours after the symptoms have subsided. If your child has a lot of medical absences, you will be invited into school to talk about the absences and may be referred for additional support.
- For illness that commences or progresses whilst a child is at school, they should make this known to the school office or nominated person. In the event that a child is unable to remain in school, parents/carers will be contacted for permission to send their child home or await collection. If this occurs prior to the AM or PM registration mark, this will be reflected as per the individual school protocol.

Appointments

- Whenever possible, dental, and other appointments should be made outside of school hours. We do appreciate that hospital appointments are not always flexible, and emergencies occur. School must be notified prior to the appointment and if you have an appointment card or letter, please bring this into school.

Other absences

- Some absences are allowed by law, for example if a child is ill or there is a family crisis such as a funeral. These are authorised absences. However, there are other times when pupils are absent for reasons which are not permitted. These are known as unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences include going to the shops; looking after younger children; sleeping in; hair appointments; birthdays; lack of uniform or PE kit; a parent/carer feeling unwell, feeling tired or children not wanting to come to school.
- If extended leave of more than 20 days is taken and it is suspected that a child has moved out of the area or left the country, the school will refer to the Child Missing in Education team. Following their investigation, this may then lead to the withdrawal of your child from the school roll.

Application for leave of absence

- You do not have the right to take your child out of school during term time.
- By law parents, carers or legal guardians **MUST** ask the Headteacher's/Principal's permission for a leave of absence.
- If you request a leave of absence, you may be required to attend a meeting in school.
- Unauthorised absence may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice*

As guidance for parents, carers or legal guardians it is important to note that holidays would not be authorised for the following reasons:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Holidays booked as surprises by family members
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Holidays would not be authorised under any circumstances during formal examination periods. Any exceptional request for holiday absence will be considered very carefully.

Religious observance

Children are only authorised to take 1 day per religious observance and no more than 2 days per academic year. School should be informed beforehand if you intend to keep your child away from school for a religious observance.

Good attendance

Good or improving attendance is recognised and rewarded in each school. Your child's individual school can provide specific details about that.

Poor attendance

Continued poor attendance could result in a child or family being referred to the TNCP Attendance Manager or relevant Local Authority Attendance Team. Once allocated to the nominated attendance support, the School Attendance Manager will arrange to visit you at home to complete an assessment of the reasons for poor attendance and establish the best way to help improve this. Non-engagement with support could result in a request for legal intervention from the Local Authority. Further action will then be taken if attendance fails to improve.

For RKL North Yorkshire schools, when they are progressed through stage 1 and 2 attendance interventions, a referral will be made to the Local Authority for their staged legal progression. Further details can be found below.

[Link: CYPS Info - School Attendance](#)

[Link: NYCC - School Attendance - Advice & Requirements](#)

Help with problems

If you have any problems with attendance or any other matter such as a parent/carer being ill or family difficulties, please come and talk to us.

There is a range of support that may be offered through schools for example, the Attendance Manager or other members of the Temple Newsam Community Partnership or equivalent local services. They can be contacted via Learning Mentors or Heads of Year. Please contact schools directly for more information, guidance, and support.

Where can I go for advice and support?

- [Link: Young Minds - Parent/Carer Guide to Support School Anxiety and Refusal](#)
 - [Link: Action for Children: How do I deal with school refusal and school anxiety? Support for Parents/Carers](#)
 - [Link: Parentkind: Behaviour and Attendance](#)
 - [Link: DfE - Working together to improve school attendance](#)
- * ***Payment of a Penalty Notice, if paid within 21 days, is £60.00. If you do not pay within 21 days, the fine is increased to £120.00, and you have a further 7 days to make this payment in full. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice within the total 28-day period could result in the commencement of criminal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.***
- * ***Note that from August 2024, Penalty Notices will increase to £80 initially and £160 if not paid within 21 days.***

Appendix B

Attendance Guidelines

The table below is a checklist of interventions that must have been completed by school in order to access Temple Newsam Community Partnership Attendance Manager support or assist with a Local Authority attendance referral. This has been agreed by all RKLT Headteachers/Principals. Detailed intervention information must be included on the Guidance and Support request form. Headteachers/Principals have agreed that if evidence of this work is not on the request form, it will be returned to school.

Schools who do not have access to the Temple Newsam Community Partnership Team, will refer directly to the relevant Local Authority Attendance Team following completion of stage 1 and 2 interventions/support.

| Action Guidelines | Completed | Completion Date | Staff name | Comments |
|--|-----------|-----------------|------------|--|
| Monitor and track weekly attendance in school with documentation to show tracking. | | | | |
| First day of absence contact and subsequent follow up daily (as appropriate). | | | | |
| Speak to parent/carer child face to face in school, regular phone calls to parent/carers, home visits (as appropriate). | | | | |
| Concern letter home regards attendance concerns (at around 95%) This must then be monitored for a half term with tracking documentation/ evidence. | | | | |
| During the monitoring period, letter to be sent including an offer of support from school support staff e.g., Learning Mentor, Head of Year, EHA, small group work, one to one support, signposting to services. | | | | |
| School to initiate an attendance meeting with parents/carers. Minutes are to be taken and sent to parents/carers (copies to be sent to cluster when referring). Multiple meetings can be held. | | | | Outcome/ Target set. Achieved: Yes/No |
| Additional home visits by the attendance lead/ designated staff in school (for vulnerable children this needs to be straight away). | | | | |
| Fast Track procedure if applicable, 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 12-week period. | | | | |
| Attendance must be unauthorised and be above 10% to be referred to Temple Newsam Community Partnership Attendance Support or relevant Local Authority Attendance Team. | | | | |

Child's Name.....

D.O.B

Once all actions have been completed on the checklist, please forward it with your Guidance and Support referral form or other equivalent referral form (for North Yorkshire local authority)

Appendix C

Application for leave of absence

Leave of absences are granted for exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal. Leave of absence applications for family holidays will not be approved.

Please ensure you have read the statutory declaration at the end of this form before signing.

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| SCHOOL: | | DATE OF REQUEST: | |
| First Name | Surname | Date of Birth | Class |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Leaving date: | | Date due back in school: | |
| Length of absence applied for (number of school days only): | | | days |
| | | | |
| Siblings in other schools: Please note this request information will be shared with the attendance lead in the school in which the sibling/s attend | First Name | Surname | School |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Contact Details | | | |
| Parents/Carers/Legal Guardians: | First name: | | First name: |
| | Surname: | | Surname: |
| | Address: | | Address: |
| | Postcode: | | Postcode: |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | Email: Home phone number: Mobile: Alternative number while away: | Email: Home phone number: Mobile: Alternative number while away: |
| Reason for absence including full explanation (use a separate sheet of paper if necessary) The exceptional circumstances are... | | |
| Emergency Contact Details (preferably someone who is staying in Harrogate/Leeds): First Name: Surname: Address: Postcode: Relationship to the child: Contact Number: | If child is not leaving with parent(s)/carer(s)/legal guardian(s) who is accompanying them? Who will be caring/responsible for the child? Why is/are the parent(s)/carer(s)/legal guardian(s) not leaving with the child? Name: Relationship to child: Address: | |

Statutory Declaration

Legal responsibility

As a parent/carer I understand all children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education, and under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, it is my responsibility as a parent/carer to ensure the regular school attendance of my children and that failure to do so could result in legal proceedings being taken by the Local Education Authority.

*I understand that requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are **exceptional circumstances**, and **holidays are not considered exceptional**. They must also be made to the school in advance, as the **Department for Education** has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.*

Fines

*I understand if my request is unauthorised, I am most likely to receive either a single fine of **£60 for both parents/carers or £60 per parent/carer** then an **additional £60 per child** (for example a family of four with two parents and 2 children could be fined a total of £240). Fines are handled by and issued in accordance with the Local Authority Regulation.*

*Once the penalty notice is issued, I have **21 days in which to pay the fine**. If I fail to pay in that time period, the fine **will double** and I then have **another seven days in which to pay**, taking the total time in which to make payment to 28 days.*

If I fail to make payment after 28 days, then the Local Authority has the power to prosecute me in the Magistrate's Court for the offence of failing to ensure my child attends school regularly. A guilty verdict at court **can lead to a fine of up to £1000, and a criminal record which can affect employment opportunities.**

School places

*I am aware that a **referral will made to the Local Authority Children Missing from Education Team (CME) if my request is unauthorised, and my child hasn't returned to school on the agreed date**. This can result in my child **losing their school place**.*

I am also aware that there is a shortage of places in the area, so if my child loses their school place it could result in having to travel to a school out of area or my child being without a school, being a detriment to their education and causing implications to my own employment.

Parent/Carer/Legal Guardian full name:

Parent/Carer/Legal Guardian signature:

Date:

Parent/Carer/Legal Guardian full name:

Parent/Carer/Legal Guardian signature:

Date:

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|--|-----------------|--|
| School Section Any previous request Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | | Is the requested absence during exams Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Reason for refusal/comments | | | | |
| Authorised <input type="checkbox"/> | Approved | | for school days | |
| Unauthorised <input type="checkbox"/> | Not approved | | for school days | |
| Headteacher's/Principal's signature | | | | |
| Date: | | | | |

Appendix D

Attendance and Punctuality – In the Early Years (0 to 5 years) Information for parents and carers

All RKLT Early Years settings and the Children's Centre fully adhere to the key principles outlined in this policy to encourage and promote positive attendance routines and habits.

Is regular attendance and punctuality important in RKLT settings? **YES**

- From the very first day regular attendance is vital. This will ensure your child will settle in well, gain social skills and develop a good routine of attendance and punctuality.
- Good attendance and time keeping will support your child's future learning and development as they will benefit from a wider range of activities.
- All children who are enrolled in a RKLT setting are expected to attend on a regular basis.

When should you keep your child at home?

- If your child is too sick to leave the house.
- If your child has an infectious disease like chicken pox, mumps, or measles. Please check with your setting if you are unsure/need advice.

Must I notify the RKLT setting if my child is absent? **YES**

- RKLT settings have a duty of care to monitor your child's attendance.
- Please contact your RKLT setting as soon as possible to let them know why your child is absent.

What do I need to do if my family requires exceptional leave?

- If you intend taking exceptional leave, please discuss with a member of the RKLT setting.
- If you have a child of school age in a RKLT setting, please read the RKLT Attendance Policy and/or consult your provider as exceptional leave may not be authorised in school time.
- If your child will be starting full time education within the next year, please check the relevant school calendar before asking for exceptional leave as it may not be authorised.