Attendance policy

Red Kite School

Approved by: Michael Davis	**Date:** 09.02.2026
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Contents

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students

- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure students have the support in place to attend school

- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- 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, and 2016 amendments)

- The School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/madeIt also refers to:

- School census guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students and parents

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

  o   Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

  o   Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

  o   Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

  o   Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for students who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

  o   Making sure the school has high aspirations for all students, but adapts processes and support to students' individual needs

  o   Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual students or cohorts who need it most

  o   Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge

  o   Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting students' needs

- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:

  o   The importance of good attendance

  o   That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues

  o   The school's legal requirements for keeping registers

- o The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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

- Working with the parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where students with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a student with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the student's needs

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader Lucy Metcalfe, Assistant Headteacher is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis

- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance

- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

- Liaising with students, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues

- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

3.4 The family liaison officer (FLO)

The family liaison officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

  Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Working closely with families to break down barriers to attendance

- Conducting regular home visits and liaising closely with external agencies to best support the families

- Running attendance incentives and clinics on the stages of attendance

- Being an integral part of the school's safeguarding team

The family liaison officer is Victoria Margan and can be contacted via email on Victoria.margan@redkiteschool.co.uk

3.5 Tutors and the Pastoral Team

Tutors and the Pastoral Team are responsible for monitoring attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, ensuring the correct codes are being used and helping the FLO to analyse attendance.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- 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 phase leads where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

- Liaise with taxi companies and parents regarding any changes in transport

- Plan and book in agency and parental meetings

3.7 Pastoral team

- Pastoral team monitors student attendance and punctuality daily and takes appropriate steps to ensure that attendance and punctuality in the school is at the highest levels

- Phase Leads liaise with the Attendance Officer and other outside agencies regarding attendance

- Meet with parents at varying stages of attendance

- Accompany FLO on home visits for students they support

- Working closely with families to break down barriers to attendance

- Join attendance meetings and clinics and review attendance contracts

- Run regular attendance data reports and discuss impact and intervention

3.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise the office when you expect to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting your child's tutor, pastoral team and/or family liaison officer who can be contacted via the school number - 01844 885649.

3.9 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend every timetabled session, on time and remain in their timetabled sessions

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 will include:

- 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.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity, where a student is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances, where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 9.00am and ends at 2.45pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via telephone on 01844 885649 or email enquiries@redkiteschool.co.uk

We will mark 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 will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

4.3 Planned absence

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

If you are requesting a leave of absence for any reason please contact the Headteacher on enquiries@redkiteschool.co.uk

However, we encourage parents 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 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.

4.4 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

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the student's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach the parent or any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may conduct an unannounced 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(s) for which the student was absent

- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer or Family Liaison Officer

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the student's youth offending team officer

- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance

- Identify whether the student needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with place the student on an attendance action plan which is monitored by the AHT for Behaviour and Attitudes

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

- Attending an interview

- Study leave

- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

- 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a situation that is unforeseen, unconventional and beyond an individual's control. These circumstances may include events such as the death of a close relative, a serious illness, or other completely unavoidable situations.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in a protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

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

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Parent(s) 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

- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)

- Attending provision arranged by the local authority

- Attending work experience

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school may make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis. **This approach will be taken when support via Trauma Informed Practice is unsuccessful. TIP approach will always be implemented in the first instance.**

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve may be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the student attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences

- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996

- Details of the support provided so far

- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

There are 4 stages to promoting good attendance at Red Kite School, please see below for the staged strategies:

Stage 1 – 100% - 96% attendance
- Monitor via registration and weekly attendance spreadsheet
- 100% attendance rewards given discretely in line with Trauma Informed Practice
- Daily positive rewards – 1 point for every session attendance if school values upheld, up to 30 points per day

Stage 2 – 95.9% - 90.0%
- Phone call home with SLT link to discuss support
- Attendance meeting in school with form tutor and student

Stage 3 – 89.9% - 85%
- Parent/student meeting with SLT link – set up 4-week review cycle
- Medical evidence to be provided for further absence
- Push/pull factors > reasons for absence + next steps – pastoral/Clinical intervention implemented and monitored by AHT B&A

Stage 4 – below 85%
- Attendance letter sent home
- Parent/student meeting with FLO and Assistant Headteacher B&A – 4 week review cycle continues
- Home visits as required
- Referral to Early Help for support made by FLO
- Daily attendance catch up with FLO/form tutor
- Student placed on a Pastoral Support Plan

- Attendance agreement is drawn up to support the family and student to re-engage

7. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Students absent due to complex barriers to attendance
- Adjusted transition, slow integration to a full-time timetable
- Regular home visits
- Wellbeing sessions with the pastoral team
- Clinical input
- Regular meetings with the FLO
- Identifying a trusted team of adults
- Rewards and incentives for attendance via positive points linked to school values
- Modified timetables, in agreement with students and parents/carers
- Alternative timetables and structure of the day
- Alternative provision offered

7.2 Students absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND
Where a student has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the student's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence
- Adjusted transition, slow integration to a full-time timetable
- Regular home visits
- Wellbeing sessions with the pastoral team
- Tutor wellbeing catch up

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance
The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student, year group and cohort level.

Specific student information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance
The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and

- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

- Provide regular attendance reports to tutors to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding team, SLT links)

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

    o Discuss attendance and engagement at school

    o Listen, and understand barriers to attendance

    o Explain the help that is available

o   Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence

o   Review any existing actions or interventions

o   Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

o   Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

o   Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's 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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)

E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes

	Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
	Administrative codes	
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Family Support

UNIVERSAL PARTNERSHIP PLUS
Children with additional needs

Children whose health and/or development may be adversely affected and would benefit from extra help in order to make the best of their life chances

Consider additional support using the Early Help Assessment. May include GP, school, health visitor, school nurse, dentist etc.

Additional support may or may not require multi-agency work with other professionals

TARGET SUPPORT/ PARTNERSHIP PLUS
Children with complex additional needs

Children whose health and/or development is being impaired or there is a high risk of significant impairment

Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or make a referral to Children's Services

Potential involvement of Children's Social Care from this point

UNIVERSAL
No additional needs – needs are met by universal services

Children who make good overall progress in all areas of universal development and receive appropriate universal services

Consider access to universal services eg. GP, dentist, health visiting, nursery, pre-school and school settings

Mainstream community services provided to all – e.g. Education, GP's, dentist and the Healthy Child programme.

Child/young person and the family at the centre throughout. If unsure consult your safeguarding lead.

STATUTORY/SPECIALIST/ CHILD PROTECTION
Children who are experiencing significant harm

Children who are experiencing significant harm or where there is a likelihood of significant harm

Make a referral to Children's Services