



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Two Rivers Primary School

Last Review Date:		Summer Term 2023
Next Review Date:		Summer Term 2024
Committee:		Curriculum & Learning Local Governing Committee
Review Cycle:		1 YEAR
Statutory Policy:		Yes
Date	Version	Reason for change
06.03.2023	V1.0	Additional information
12.06.2023	V2.0	Scheduled Review – no changes

Aims

Two Rivers Primary School is committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building positive relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

Principles

Promoting a positive attitude towards attendance at school is the responsibility of the whole school community. This includes governors, staff, parents/carers, pupils and any service provider linked to the school. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent.

Two Rivers Primary School will promote good attendance through engaging pupils in a creative curriculum within a supportive, child-focussed environment. Good attendance by pupils will be duly recognised and rewarded.

Any problems arising that can affect a child's attendance at school are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. Parents/carers are therefore encouraged to speak to school staff as soon as possible if they become aware of an issue that can affect their child's wellbeing or attendance at school. We remind parents/carers not to cover up absences as this gives the impression that attendance does not matter and will ultimately lead to the situation getting worse.

We operate an 'open door' policy for anyone wishing to speak to a member of the Management Team and will readily attempt to schedule meetings to fit around family/carer commitments. Home visits are also an option in some circumstances. In some cases, it may be necessary to involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as VIP EWO Education Service, the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team (LST) or Local Authority SEND representative. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this. Wherever possible the school will take action to improve a pupil's attendance and address any underlying causes of problems requesting intervention from the local Authority.

Two Rivers Primary School is required to take an attendance register twice daily to show whether the pupil is present. Registers have to be marked in accordance with attendance codes provided by the Department for Education. Those codes indicate whether the absence is **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Parents/carers **CANNOT** authorise their child's absence, this can only be done by the Executive Headteacher (or delegate) upon receipt of an acceptable reason for an absence.

- **AUTHORISED absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons such as illness, medical appointments, bereavement etc. all of which need to be explained, preferably in writing or by personal visit to school or contact via telephone by a parent/carers (i.e. siblings and pupils themselves cannot provide a legal explanation).**
- **UNAUTHORISED absences are those which the Executive Headteacher does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. For example, truancy, babysitting, missed the school bus, shopping for uniform, getting a hair cut, arriving too late during a session to be granted an attendance mark etc.**

This Attendance Policy includes a referral requirement that is designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Two Rivers Primary School has a duty in law to bring to the attention of the Local Support Team (LST), any absence of 10 days or more in two consecutive half terms that may result in or any pupils that have not achieved 90% attendance in total.

Any parent that wants to speak directly with the Local Support Team is entitled to do so and contact details will be provided by the school upon request.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Governing Board

The Local Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the Senior Leadership Team to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school level absence data and reporting to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.
- Working with Education Welfare Officers (VIP Education) to tackle persistent absence.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff, parents/carers and governors and reporting concerns about attendance.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Marie Povey and can be contacted via telephone 01827 426123.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the School Office. Registers are taken at the start of each morning and after lunch. Teachers must share information from parents/carers regarding attendance. Class teacher must follow safeguarding protocol if they have any safeguarding concerns.

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 Arbor system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Executive Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Report concerns to the Safeguarding Team.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Understand their legal responsibilities by ensuring regular attendance with regard to Section 444(1) and 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child as required by the Children Missing Education requirements and in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance 2023.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. If this is not possible parents/carers should follow the protocol outlined in PLANNED ABSENCE.

- Keep absence to a minimum and ensure that children are only out of school when they are too sick to attend.
- Attend any meetings called by the school and partner agencies to discuss attendance.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

Procedures

Two Rivers Primary School applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- 1) PLANNED ABSENCE** – Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers must provide the school with any medical appointment cards and we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

- 2) LATE ARRIVAL** - If a child is late arriving in school (e.g. medical appointment), the parent or carer bringing the child in must speak to a member of staff upon arrival to ensure that we are aware of their child's presence in school. The pupil **MUST** be signed in as 'late' in the register. This ensures we meet health and safety requirements e.g. in the unlikely event of a fire. It is helpful if parents/carers can inform school in advance of scheduled appointments that will result in an absence or late arrival. Lateness can be classed as unauthorised in some situations therefore, it is important that parents/carers keep the school well informed to help maintain accurate records. In order to comply with Department of Education regulations, the school closes class morning registration at 9.20am. Arrival after this time will result in the pupil receiving a late mark on the registers (L). All registers officially close at 9.30am. Arriving after this time will result in the pupil receiving a code U or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

If persistent lateness is deemed an issue the Attendance Lead will become involved and actions may be taken to overcome any barriers.

- 3) TERM-TIME HOLIDAY REQUESTS** – The Governors' policy is to fully comply with government regulations. "Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless exceptional circumstances have been identified". In order for the Executive or Deputy Headteacher to consider the request parents/carers are required to fill in the appropriate form with as much notice as possible before planned holidays. The form can be obtained from the School Office.

Regulations are clear that any lateness in the return to school may be deemed **unauthorised leave of absence**. An application for a Penalty Notice to be issued from Staffordshire County Council will be made for any unauthorised leave of absence of six or more sessions in the current or previous half term.

If a parent/carers does not apply for leave but we believe that the pupil has been taken on holiday, then we will write to the parent/carers to express our concern. The parent/carers will be expected to provide contrary evidence to support the absence and school should receive this by a specified date. Should the supporting documentation not be provided then the absence will be coded as unauthorised leave of absence and the relevant procedures will be applied. Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted.

- 4) ATTENDANCE** - In the event of an unavoidable absence, parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the **FIRST** day of absence by telephoning 01827 426123, giving the reason for non-attendance. Parents/carers should contact school on each subsequent day of absence, and advise when the child is expected to return. Regular contact will be required for absence and extended periods of absence as school is required to keep all agencies updated.
- 5) UNPLANNED ABSENCE** - School will call daily to check non-attendance of pupils where parents/carers have not informed us of the absence.

Parents/carers may also receive a text or message from the Endeavour App to seek an explanation and explore additional support needs, as required. This will NOT be done via emergency contact details. If no contact has been made a member of the Safeguarding Team will be alerted and follow-up protocols will be pursued accordingly, this may involve a home visit to complete 'safe and well' checks. A home visit may also be completed should the school receive any other information or the staff are concerned about the pupil's absence from school. All information will be documented.

Should the absence reach five or more days, we will require medical evidence to authorise such a prolonged period of time. The pupil's absence will be marked as UNAUTHORISED until an acceptable reason for the absence has been provided.

Staffordshire's County Code of Conduct January 2018 states where there is persistent unauthorised absence a Penalty Notice may be considered. School has a legal DUTY to inform the Local Authority where cases of '**UNAUTHORISED**' absences of 10 days (20 sessions) or more occur in the previous 12 school weeks. The absences do not need to be consecutive. Likewise, school has to disclose irregular attendance, persistent lateness or cases where attendance falls below 90%. School is also required to provide an explanation for all such absences (where known) and evidence of action taken to secure information and/or provide support to the family.

In the situation of persistent unauthorised absence, the parent will only receive one warning notice period in the academic year. Should there be a subsequent period of absence, the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory action.

- 6) OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES** - School will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc however leave may be granted for emergency situations e.g. bereavement.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Utilize the VIP EWO Education Services who will support parents/carers providing targeted intervention, this will include – meetings, letters and close monitoring.

Expected First Day of Attendance

The school will enter pupils on the Admission Register and Attendance Register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will be attending the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

Should a pupil fail to attend on the agreed or notified date, then the school will establish contact with the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for this. Deletions from the Admission Register will only occur on the grounds prescribed in Regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

The school will notify the Local Authority within five days, as required by Government Guidance, of pupils who have been added to the Admissions Register other than at standard transition points.

Children Missing from Education

Two Rivers Primary School will inform the Local Authority of all deletions from the Admissions Register as stated in Regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, apart from at standard transition points.

Should a pupil meet the criteria of being deleted from the Admissions Register and their whereabouts are unknown, as stated in the grounds for deleting a pupil from the school Admission Register, then the school will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is.

The Children Missing Education Officers, at the Local Authority, will be informed that enquiries into the whereabouts of pupils as stated in the above criteria. Two Rivers Primary School will remove the pupil from the Admissions Register, following the guidance, and the CTF file will be retained until further advice is provided from the Children Missing Education Officers.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Termly reports will be sent home outlining the attendance of the pupil. This letter will be colour coded to state excellent attendance (green coded), improvement needed (yellow coded) and persistent absence (red coded). This will include overall attendance and sessions missed. **Appendix A**

Attendance Support Procedures - where appropriate:

The Designated Senior Leader for attendance meets with the Office Staff and Safeguarding Team to monitor weekly attendance. Pupils whose attendance is less than 90% will be targeted for intervention. The Attendance Team will closely monitor patterns of absences. Should this pattern of absence continue this will trigger a Stage 1.

Stage 1 – if, where appropriate, a pupil's attendance falls below 90% parents/carers will receive a letter with an invitation to a dialogue with the school in order to improve the attendance.

Stage 2 – if, where appropriate, there is no improvement in the attendance, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with a Senior Leader to discuss further support. At this stage the school may decide to only authorise the absence when we receive a medical evidence.

Stage 3 – should the absences remain at the level below the target the school will invite parents/carers to a formal meeting with a Senior Leader to discuss further support and actions if necessary. In the absence of relevant information regarding poor attendance, school may take external advice and may consider statutory action. Should Local Authority involvement be required, the Attendance Lead from Two Rivers Primary School will provide appropriate records to the Local Authority for them to fulfil their statutory functions should the Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct threshold be met. This could result in a fixed Penalty Notice being issued. In some cases, referral to Children's Social Care may be considered if there are safeguarding concerns.

Further information on legal interventions can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DfE Sept 2022 [Working together to improve school attendance](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103426/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Two Rivers Primary School will already have attempted to provide support that avoids such action being taken and will continue to engage with families both during and after any legal action has commenced. Such action is the final resort undertaken by the Local Authority and it is a legal requirement.

School may also undertake a review of the placement, if it felt that attendance elsewhere would be in the child's best interests and this is done with the full knowledge of parents/carers.

TWO RIVERS PRIMARY SCHOOL WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SUCCESSFULLY REINTEGRATE PUPILS AT ANY STAGE PRIOR TO, DURING OR FOLLOWING LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AND WE WILL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS AND ALL INVOLVED PARTIES TO BRING ABOUT A POSITIVE OUTCOME.

Monitoring Arrangements

Two Rivers Primary School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Governing Board.

Summary

Two Rivers Primary School has a duty to publish attendance figures to parents/carers and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. We remain committed to working together, thus ensuring we jointly achieve as good an attendance rate as possible.

Those responsible for attendance at this school are:

Laura Slinn (Executive Headteacher) and Marie Povey (Deputy Headteacher)

Autumn Term Attendance Report

Attendance Colour Codes

97% - 100%
WELL DONE! THIS IS EXCELLENT
If you are in the Green Group, you have been absent for less than 6 days in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.

90% - 96%
IMPROVEMENT NEEDED!
If you are in the Yellow Group, you are missing between 8 - 19 days of learning in the year.

Less than 90%
PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL
You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 21 days of learning in the school year.

Your child is in the **Green Band**. That is fantastic, well done to you.

This is only a terms achievement; keep up this great effort!

Autumn Term Attendance Report

Attendance Colour Codes

97% - 100%
WELL DONE! THIS IS EXCELLENT
If you are in the Green Group, you have been absent for less than 6 days in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.

90% - 96%
IMPROVEMENT NEEDED!
If you are in the Yellow Group, you are missing between 8 - 19 days of learning in the year.

Less than 90%
PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL
You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 21 days of learning in the school year.

Well done! Your child is in the **Yellow Band.
Remember to continue to keep us informed
about absences – if you need some support with
attendance, please contact Marie.**

**This is only a terms achievement; let's try to
make it even better next term!**

Autumn Attendance Report

Attendance Colour Codes

97% - 100%
WELL DONE! THIS IS EXCELLENT
If you are in the Green Group you have been absent for less than 6 days in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.

90% - 96%
IMPROVEMENT NEEDED!
If you are in the Yellow Group you are missing between 8 - 19 days of learning in the year.

Less than 90%
PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL
You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 21 days of learning in the school year.

Your child is in the **Red Band. Remember to continue to keep us informed about absences – one of the senior team will be in touch to see how we can help support with this.**

This is only a terms achievement; let's work together to make it even better next term!