



TWO RIVERS  
HIGH SCHOOL



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Two Rivers High School

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

## 1.0 Principles

- 1.1 Promoting a positive attitude towards attendance at school is the responsibility of the whole school community. This includes governors, staff, parents/carers, students 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.
- 1.2 To manage and promote regular attendance Two Rivers High School will:
- engage students in a creative curriculum within a supportive, child-focussed environment.
  - Report to parents/carers how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this via regular parent evenings.
  - Build positive relationships between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. The link between attendance, attainment and wider wellbeing will be discussed with parents/carers.
  - Utilise attendance data, analysing patterns and trends to target attendance and punctuality improvement across student cohorts or individual students, to reduce persistent or severe absence from school.
  - Review the Attendance Policy annually and publish on the School Website.
  - Account for and consider the specific needs of students and their families where there may be other barriers to attendance (medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities) and provide support to overcome these barriers (e.g. Early Help or other wider partners).
  - Monitor and reward individual student's, via achievement points for 100% attendance per term and for weekly attendance and positive behaviour. Improved and excellent attendance is also celebrated in both strand & whole school assemblies and in our annual Presentation Awards.

- Notify parents/carers when we are worried about their child's attendance using the procedure outlined in Section 5 of this policy.

1.3 To manage and promote regular attendance parents/carers will:

- Understand their legal responsibilities by ensuring regular school attendance with regard to the Section 444(1) and 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.
- Understand their responsibility to keep the school up to date with at least two emergency contact details as required by the Children Missing Education requirements and in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance 2023.
- Impress on their children the importance of regular school attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children are only out of school when they are too sick to attend.
- Establish effective communication with the school and swiftly address any worries their children may have about coming to school so that we can work together to resolve this.

Parents/carers are advised to seek support from staff in situations where students are refusing to attend and are reminded not to cover up absences as this gives the impression that attendance does not matter and will ultimately lead to the situation getting worse.

- Contact school regarding absences using the procedure outlines in Section 5 of this policy.
- Provide the school with any medical appointment cards and where possible make appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, parents/carers should ensure that children attend prior to or following their appointment.
- Attend any meetings called by the school and partner agencies to discuss attendance.

- 1.4 Two Rivers High School is required to take an attendance register twice daily to show whether the student 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 Headteacher (or delegate) upon receipt of an acceptable reason for an absence.
- 1.5 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 (this can be Via Weduc) or by personal visit to school or contact via telephone by a parent/carer (i.e. siblings and students themselves cannot provide a legal explanation).
- 1.6 UNAUTHORISED absences are those which the 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 haircut, arriving too late during a session to be granted an attendance mark etc.

## **2.0 Working Together**

- 2.1 Parents/carers are 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.
- 2.2 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 the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team (LST). We may use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.

- 2.3 Wherever possible the school will take action to improve a student's attendance and address any underlying causes of problems before requesting intervention from the Local Authority.

### **3.0 Expected First Day of Attendance**

- 3.1 The school will enter students 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 student will be attending the school. For most students the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.
- 3.2 Should a student 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.
- 3.3 The school will notify the Local Authority within 5 days, as required by Government Guidance, of students who have been added to the Admissions Register other than at standard transition points.

### **4.0 Children Missing from Education**

- 4.1 Two Rivers High 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.
- 4.2 Should a student meet the criteria of being deleted from the Admissions Register and their whereabouts are unknown, as stated in the grounds for deleting a student from the school Admission Register, Section 6 and 8, then the school will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the student is.
- 4.3 The Children Missing Education Officers, at the Local Authority, will be informed that enquiries into the whereabouts of students as stated in the above criteria. Two Rivers High School will remove the student 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.

## 5.0 In School Procedures at Two Rivers High School

### Overview

5.1 The member of SLT responsible for attendance is Mr T Silk. The following 'in-school' procedure is followed for monitoring student's attendance.

- The Attendance Officer Administrator produces a weekly printout of students whose attendance is less than 90% since the start of the academic year. The Attendance Team will closely monitor patterns of absences.
- **Stage 1** – When there are initial concerns regarding attendance, the form tutor will contact parents/carers to open a dialogue about their child's attendance to understand any barriers there may be.
- **Stage 2** - If, where appropriate, a student's attendance falls below 90% parents/carers will receive a letter and be invited in to meet with their child's Strand Lead in order to discuss barriers to attending school on a regular basis.
- **Stage 3** - Should there be no, or limited improvement in attendance, parents/carers will be invited in for a formal meeting with a member of the Attendance Team or a member of SLT to discuss further support and actions if necessary. At this stage the school may decide to only authorise absences when we receive medical evidence. Medical evidence can be in a form of an appointment card or prescription, for example. Slips are available from the school office for parents/carers to take to the pharmacy, doctors, or other relevant health professionals to sign as proof of appointment. These can be returned to the school office and may be deemed sufficient for absences to be authorised.
- **Stage 4** – Should absences remain at the level below the target agreed, the school will invite parents/carers to a formal meeting. In the absences of relevant information regarding poor

attendance, school may take external advice and may consider statutory action.

- 5.2 Where there is persistent unauthorised absence then a Penalty Notice may be considered. The Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct changed in January 2018. From this date, a Penalty Notice can be considered where there are 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence in the previous 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. The absences do not need to be consecutive. In the situation of persistent unauthorised absence, the parent/carer 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.
- 5.3 Should Local Authority involvement be required, the Attendance Lead from Two Rivers High 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.
- 5.4 Further information on legal interventions can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DFE Sept 2022 [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)
- 5.5 Two Rivers High 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.
- 5.6 Two Rivers High School will make every effort to successfully reintegrate students 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.



## General Absences

- 5.7 The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.
- 5.8 In the event of an unavoidable absence, parents/carers are asked to contact the school before 8:40am on 01827 426124 (option 1) and stating:
- The name of the person calling
  - Student's name
  - Reason for absence
- 5.9 A telephone call to the number above or a Weduc message to the office clearly stating your child's name, date of absence and reason for absence, is required for each day your child is unable to attend.
- 5.10 Should the absence reach five or more days, we will require medical evidence to authorise such a prolonged period of time.
- 5.11 Office staff will make efforts to contact the parents/carers of any student who is absent if there has been no information received during the morning. Should no reason for absence have been ascertained, a member of staff may complete a home visit to gain the reason for the absence. A home visit may also be completed should the school receive any other information or the staff are concerned about the student's absence from school.
- 5.12 If there is no response to the text message and no explanation is received upon the child's return to school or within two weeks from an absence, the Attendance Lead will attempt to contact parents/carers to seek explanation for the absence. If this is not successful a letter requesting information will be sent to the parent/carer. The student's absence will be marked as UNAUTHORISED until an acceptable reason for the absence has been provided.

## **6 Lateness**

- 6.1 All students should be on site for 8:50am.
- 6.2 Morning registration closes at 9:00am.
- 6.3 Arrival to the form group after 9:00am will be considered as late and students will receive a late mark on the register (L).
- 6.4 The registers close at 9:30am. Students arriving after this time will be marked as 'Late After Register Closes' (U) and will be considered unauthorised, unless there is an acceptable reason verified by the parent/carer.
- 6.5 Students arriving by contracted transport will be marked present but are required to sign in at reception. This may be done by a member of the office staff.
- 6.6 If persistent lateness is deemed an issue the Attendance Lead will become involved and actions may be taken to overcome any barriers. Ultimately, continued unauthorised lateness could result in statutory action being taken by the Local Authority.

## **7 Absence for Medical Appointments**

- 7.1 Where possible, doctors and dental appointments are made outside of the school day. If this is not possible please inform the School Office as soon as possible. Evidence of the appointment may be required in order for the absence to be authorised. Following this your child's attendance record will be marked as 'M'.
- 7.2 Medical evidence can be in the form of prescriptions, appointment cards or letters signed by medical professionals. If this is not possible, medical evidence cards are available from the School Reception. These can be signed by medical professionals and returned to school and may be used as evidence of appointment.

- 7.3 For ongoing medical appointments, we may request a letter from the medical professional stating that the time off is required.
- 7.4 We will not authorise full day absences unless a reasonable explanation is given. Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure their child comes to school before and returns after an appointment.
- 7.5 Please be aware that students will not be allowed to leave the school site without a parent coming to collect them. If a student is going with another adult, the school will require consent from the parent/carer to authorise the student leaving with the adult.
- 7.6 For ongoing illness parents/carers will be expected to complete a Medical Healthcare Plan.

## **8 Planned Absence**

- 8.1 The Governors' policy is to fully comply with Government regulations. Statutory guidelines state "Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances". Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made in advance of the event and on the 'exceptional leave of absence form'. This can be requested from the School Office. Specific details will be required in order to consider the application. If a leave of absence is granted, then it will be for a fixed period of time. Regulations are clear that any lateness in the return to school may be deemed as **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. Should a leave of absence be granted, regulations are clear that any lateness in the return to school from the granted period, may be recorded as **unauthorised leave of absence**.

8.2 **Unauthorised leave of absence** presents a risk of a Penalty Notice being issued. Please note that:

- A parent/carer can receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year;
- The school will follow the Staffordshire County Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices.

8.3 If a parent/carer does not apply for leave but we believe that the student has been taken on holiday, then we will write to the parent/carer to express our concern. The parent/carer 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.

8.4 Any request for planned absences for a student to participate in a sporting or other educational activity, should be made on the 'exceptional leave of absence form'. Details of the request should be outlined.

## 9 **Monitoring Attendance**

### 9.1 Monitoring Attendance

Two Rivers High School will:

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

## 9.2 Analysing Attendance

Two Rivers High School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

## 9.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

Two Rivers High School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students 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.

## 9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

Two Rivers High School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students 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.
- Severe absentees will be referred to the local authority and statutory action may be taken.

## **10 Other Circumstances**

10.1 School will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc however leave may be granted in emergency (e.g bereavement).

## **11 School Attendance Targets for Two Rivers High School**

11.1 The attendance target for Two Rivers High School for the academic year 2022-2023 is **92%**

## **12 Persons responsible for attendance**

12.1 Mr T Silk (Assistant Headteacher – Attendance Lead)  
Mrs H Barnby (Designated Safeguarding Lead)  
Mrs S Howard (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)  
Mrs L Morris (Attendance Office Administrator)

## **13 Summary**

13.1 Two Rivers High 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.