SOLENT
Academies Trust

REDWOOD PARK
ACADEMY

Our vision is that all pupils Redwood Park Academy will be confident communicators, who are growing to be more independent, so that they are happy and healthy young adults who make positive contributions to their community .

Attendance Policy

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Contents

1. Aims 3
2. Legislation and guidance……3
3. Roles and responsibilities…… 3
4. Recording attendance……7
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence……8
6. Strategies for promoting attendance……10
7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school……...11
8. Attendance monitoring……11
9. Monitoring arrangements……12
10. Links with other policies……12

1. Aims

This aims of this policy are to:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promote good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend academy

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is aligned with the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance *Working together to improve academy attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)*. 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 (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Academy Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees

The Trust board of trustees is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all academy leaders, staff, pupils and families
- Making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

    - recording attendance accurately in the register, and sharing the required information with the DfE and host local authority
    - working effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of attendance across the academy's policies and ethos
- Making sure the academy's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the academy has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping academy leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with academy leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the academy and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the academy's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the academy is struggling with attendance, working with academy 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:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The academy's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The academy's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, 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
- Holding academy leaders to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 Academy Leaders

Academy leaders are responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the academy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to Trust leaders and their academy committee
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

- Working with the families of pupils with particularly complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the context of this academy and Trust to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where academy transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the academy's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and families through all available channels
- Sharing information from the academy register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the academy admission register outside of standard transition times
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend academy regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 academy days
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the academy believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the academy
- 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 pupils, families and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their families
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Principal

- Advising the academy leader when the threshold for issuing a fixed-penalty notice has been reached

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Maria Thorne and can be contacted via admin@redwoodparkacademy.info

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis on the academy electronic attendance registers by 09:15 in the morning and 13:30 in the afternoon.

3.5 Academy administration team

Academy administration team will:

- Take calls from families about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system
- Pass messages from families to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.6 Families

Where this policy refers to families, it refers to the adult the academy decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents
- 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)

Families are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the academy to report their child's absence before 10:00 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Tara Watkins the Family Support Worker, who can be contacted via admin@redwoodparkacademy.info

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the Academy Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil 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 pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

The academy day starts at 08:45 and ends at 15:15.

Pupils must arrive in academy by 08:45 each day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 09:15. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:30 and will be kept open until 13:45.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's family must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible, by calling the academy administration team who can be contacted via 023 92377500.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's family notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil'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 academy can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil 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

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

- Contact the family on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. A message will be left for the family to call the school back if the phone is not answered
- If a message has not been received, then reception will phone home before 10am
- A list of all messages still outstanding at 10.45am will be produced by the administration staff and passed to the key stage DSL (who will decide who will call based on history/known circumstance)
- If there is no response by 12pm a member of the senior leadership team will decide upon the next action which may involve conducting a home visit, contacting other emergency contacts, children's social care or the police.
- For pupils subject to a child protection plan, the DSL is to be informed before 10am and the necessary phone calls will be made to children services.
- 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 five working days after the session

4.6 Reporting to parents

The academy will regularly inform families about their child's attendance and absence levels in the annual report, EHCP review and termly progress summary documentation.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Academy leaders will allow pupils to be absent from the academy for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

Academy leaders will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 academy 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 academy leader's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Generally, the academy does not consider a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering 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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via admin@redwoodparkcademy.info. The academy leader 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 pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the academy 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 academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from academy (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the academy may allow a pupil to be absent from the academy 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 academy
- Attending another academy at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend academy, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the academy premises are closed

5.2 Penalty notices

The academy leader (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police has the power to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold for issuing penalty notices has been met.
The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

If the academy were to issue a penalty notice, it would check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the academy would consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 academy weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil and family
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the academy has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Further details of the National Framework for penalty notices can be read on page 56 of the Department for Education guidance here.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Leaders do not believe that offering material rewards for attendance will make up for deeper underlying issues that are preventing pupils from attending well, so their main strategy for promoting the best possible attendance for pupils with complex learning and sometimes medical needs is to ensure the pupils' needs are well understood and that provision meets those needs in an engaging, enticing and fulfilling way.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance, absent due to mental or physical ill health, or returning after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Leaders will always work sensitively and in partnership with pupils and their families to support them back to school following any significant absence for whatever reason. This may involve a phased return to school with the aim of returning to sustainable full-time education as soon as possible, activities to ensure the pupil keeps in touch with the academy and what is happening and may involve transition activities of various types.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

Academy leaders will monitor attendance and absence data regularly across the academic year at academy, individual pupil and cohort level.
Specific pupil 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 academy absence national statistics releases. The underlying academy-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. This data will also be shared with Trust leaders via their existing termly data collection routes.

The academy will benchmark its attendance data against other Trust academies, and local, regional, and national special school benchmarks published by DfE to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with Trust leaders, the academy committee and the board of trustees.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of 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 academy will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence of all severities of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families

- Provide regular attendance reports to Trust leaders, the academy committee and the board of trustees
- 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 pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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

The academy 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
- Work in partnership with families to support improvements in attendance.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the academy will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Consider what reasonable adjustments should be made under Equality Act duty that could support improved attendance

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum biennially by the academy leader.

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 academy attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the academy		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a academy at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the academy
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the academy
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil 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	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during academy hours, approved by the academy
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in academy	Pupil of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in academy due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from academy and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend academy because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend academy because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at academy
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because academy is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of academy premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole academy site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the academy is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil 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	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the academy 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 academy	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the academy
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 academy isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in academy after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined academy yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-academy closure	Whole-academy closures that are known and planned in advance, including academy holidays