
ATTENDANCE POLICY



RÆDWALD
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RATIFIED BY THE TRUST BOARD IN:
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September 2019



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Person responsible for this policy:	Angela Ransby
Policy author:	Angela Ransby
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CEO Signature:	Angela Ransby
Trust Board Signature:	Roger Fern

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1. Scope

This policy relates to all academies across the Raedwald Trust. It may be augmented by local procedures offered by individual settings, published on academy site web pages.

2. Introduction

The Raedwald Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the Raedwald Trust will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Suffolk attendance targets.

The Raedwald Trust will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

3. Raedwald Trust Procedures

a) All children at the Raedwald Trust must have an attendance code at the morning or afternoon registration period. These codes should be recorded as present (/ \), authorised absence (B, D), unauthorised absence (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of site). Should students have an authorised leave of absence the (C) code will be used. In the event that academies feel they require an alternative statutory code, than those listed above, agreement must be sought from the Trust business team.

b) Only the Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

4. Lateness

a) Morning registration will take place at the academy site published times.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. transport was delayed.

b) In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical

appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered (M).

The afternoon registration will be at the site published times.

c) Pupils arriving after the start of Academy timetable but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers closed.

d) Parents/Carers must inform the Academy if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.

e) When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

5. Absence from School

First Day Absence

Parents are expected to contact the office as soon as it's reasonably practical (e.g. by 9.00am) whenever their child is unable to attend.

If no information regarding the absence of a student has been received and the student is not present then a First Day Response phone call will be made to the parent to check the reason for absence. This call will be made by the students' key worker or administrator.

Third Day and Continuing Absence

If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the academy will use the contacts list provided by parents.

Where there has been no response, or explanation, the academy will continue to telephone and make a home visit if appropriate.

Where there continues to be no response to the academy intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the academy will refer the issue to the County Attendance Team.

If there are safeguarding issues the academy may report the student as a missing person (MISPER).

If a student's attendance slips below 90%, the academy will initially write to parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the academy leader will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the County Attendance Team if appropriate.

If a student is repeatedly late, the academy will initially write to parents expressing concerns about late arrival and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the academy leader will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the County Attendance Team if appropriate.

In extreme circumstances, where the issue cannot be resolved between the academy and parents, with the support of the County Attendance Team, the College will refer the matter formally to the County Attendance Team and, where necessary, legal proceedings will be instigated.

Ten Day Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Suffolk County Council. The academy will include details of the action they have taken.

When a child or young person stops attending school for 10 days, or where there are safeguarding concerns, and no contact can be made to establish the child or young person's whereabouts school will complete a (CME) 'Child Missing Education' and submit this to the Local Authority. Prior to this point, the academy will take the necessary actions to assure themselves that a child is safe and secure if they have not attended school, and this may involve referring to children's social care.

6. Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

7. Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Head of School and Head Teacher to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the academy will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the academy will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

8. Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory college age shall cause him to receive efficient fulltime education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at college or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory college age and are registered at college is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school. In cases of persistent absenteeism, the academy reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to The County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the academy's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Raedwald Trust monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the college and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and college to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases may be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

9. A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

10. Leave of Absence

The Head Teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Head Teacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Head Teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

11. Register and Admission Roll Keeping

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the college at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence (*including unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances*);
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

2. Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the academy. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.