Attendance Policy

Policy Details	
Person Responsible for this Policy	**Angela Ransby**
Policy Author	**Angela Ransby**
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Policy displayed on website	**YES**
CEO Signature	**Angela Ransby**
Trust Board Signature	**Alan Whittaker**

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Section 8 added	March 2025

Contents

1. Aim of this policy
To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at the Raedwald Trust.

This policy has been prepared with regard to the Trust's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled ***Working together to improve school attendance*** (2024), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".

2. Key principles
- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the Trust to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the Trust's Positive Behaviour Change Policy.
- Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. The Trust will work with pupils, parents/carers and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents/carers or pupils have should be discussed with the Academy's Head Teacher.

3. Roles and responsibilities
The Trust
The Trust will:
- provide a full and efficient education to all pupils
- endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed
- develop and maintain a whole Trust culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance
- work with pupils and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate
- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the Trust's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- share information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with regulations[1] and the DfE Attendance Guidance, and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance
- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- ensure that all pupils can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where this is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- ensure that the Trust Board and the Trust's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the DfE Attendance Guidance;
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies.
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels
- support pupils who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Trust to a designated senior leader, known as the Senior Attendance Champion

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[1] School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk))](publishing.service.gov.uk) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:
- ensure that their child arrives at the Academy on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the Academy (see section 6.3 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the Academy informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.5 below)
- inform the Academy in advance of any proposed change of address for their child, along with the name of the parent/carer with whom the child shall live
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)](publishing.service.gov.uk) .

Pupils

We expect pupils to:
- attend the Academy regularly and on time
- be punctual to all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the Academy late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champions ("**SAC**") at the Trust are Laura Leeder (Trust PA) and Fe Dunachie (Trust Safeguarding Lead)

The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Academy and will:
- set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure that these are followed by all staff
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the Trust
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents/carers and pupils
- provide data and reports to support the work of the Board of Trustees (see below).

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will:
- take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Trust and Academy's ethos and policies
- ensure the Trust's leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help Trust leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- ensure Trust staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance
- share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its academies
- require the Academy to report to the trustees on the Academy's attendance at regular intervals

4. Registration

Each Raedwald Trust Academy maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each pupil's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Pupils who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late (code L). Where pupils arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.

The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in Appendix 1.

Where a pupil attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the behaviour policy and engage parents where necessary.

5. Late arrival

If a pupil arrives at the Academy after the relevant registration period has ended but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to the Academy office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness to enable the Academy to establish the appropriate attendance or absence code. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with behaviour policy.

6. Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

Authorised absence - absence will only be authorised where the Academy has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the CEO can authorise absence.

Unauthorised absence – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the Academy is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Reporting absence from the Academy

Where a pupil is to be absent from the Academy without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the Academy by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the Academy know when they expect the pupil to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the Academy on each day of absence.

On the day of return to the Academy, parents must also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence.

In cases where the academy needs clarification to accurately record the absence in the attendance register, the parents/cares may be asked to provide the Academy with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor to support an absence for illness. If satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

Unexplained absence

If no information regarding the absence of a pupil has been received and the pupil is not present at their expected arrival time, then a phone call will be made promptly to the parent/carer to check the reason for absence. If contact via phone call is not successful, the school will follow up via other methods e.g. sending text message to parent/carer or contacting the other emergency contacts as listed for the pupil. In cases where the pupil's personal mobile number is held on file, attempts will also be made to contact them directly.

If contact with the pupil is successful, the Academy will continue to try contact parents/carers to ensure they are aware that the pupil is not in school.

If contact with parents/carers is made who confirm the pupil is unwell, the Academy will still contact the parent/carer on a daily basis, to check on the wellbeing of the student.

The academy will ensure that all contact (successful or otherwise) is recorded on the Academy Management Information System (MIS).

Where there has been no response, or explanation, the Head Teacher will ensure nominated staff continue to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil. If all methods of contact have been unsuccessful a further conversation will take place with the Academy's safeguarding team who will determine next steps which will likely include an attempted 'eyes on' visit that day. If contact with parents/carers and/or pupil continues to be unsuccessful the Head Teacher will ensure that concerns are passed onto the relevant professionals (if in place, such as social care) and mainstream school (if relevant). They will also consider whether a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) is completed. Academies should liaise with the Trust Safeguarding Lead to inform of concern and actions being taken.

Appointments
Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.

Where an appointment must take place during school time, the pupil should attend the Academy for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given.

Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)
The Academy will grant permission for a pupil to be absent from school in the circumstances described in paragraph 37 of the DfE Attendance Guidance which can be summarised as follows:
- taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting or future employment
- study leave for public examinations
- temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- other exceptional circumstances.

Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupil out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.

To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the CEO and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.

Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the CEO will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
- will be confirmed in writing
- is solely at the CEO's discretion and
- is final.

Where permission is granted, the CEO will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.

If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the Academy, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

Religious observance
We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:
- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs, the absence from the Academy will be authorised.

We ask that parents/carers notify the Academy by writing to Head Teacher in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

Coronavirus (Covid-19)
There may be circumstances in which pupils cannot attend school due to Covid-19. The Academy will adhere to any current guidance issued by the Department for Education relating to the recording of attendance in relation to Covid-19.

If a pupil tests positive for coronavirus, their absence will be recorded as illness.

7. Addressing poor attendance and punctuality
The Trust will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or groups of pupils who need it most. In doing so, the Trust, led by the Head Teacher and/or SAC, will:
- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- provide regular attendance reports to relevant leaders
- identify pupils who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and fully year data to identify patterns and trends
- benchmark Academy attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
- monitor the impact of academy strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups
- hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the Academy and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable

Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:
- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
- persistent truancy or lateness

the Head Teacher/academy team will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

In cases where the Academy has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the pupil a home welfare check may be carried out.

Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract.

Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the Academy will signpost and support access to any additional services.

Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the Academy and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£80 if paid within 21 days, £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:
- the National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 175 – 201 of the DfE Attendance Guidance; and
- the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.

In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.

8. Children Missing in Education
The Trust will follow the statutory guidance for children missing in education. Please refer to the Raedwald Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy for more information.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Reporting

In line with government guidance from 1st September 2024 the following codes will be used to record attendance across all Raedwald Trust sites on School Pod.

ATTENDANCE RECORDING	ATTENDANCE CODE
PRESENT: Attending AM session	/
PRESENT: Attending PM session	\
PRESENT: Attending Dual Registered setting	D
ATTENDING a Medical or Dental appointment	M
ATTENDING a host school or OFFSITE educational activity without Raedwald Trust staff member.	B
ATTENDING the pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by the Local Authority.	K
LATE ARRIVAL	L
ABSENT: Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally be the case, the pupil should be recorded as code I (illness – NOT medical or dental appointment). Only 3 days for Covid illness will be authorised.	I
ABSENT: Leave of absence authorised by the CEO. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. **Any C code must only be used with approval from the CEO.**	C
ABSENT: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	C1
ABSENT: This code should be used for part time timetables / induction timetables and for pupils on Haven pathway when they are not due RT sessions.	C2
ABSENT: Holiday authorised by the CEO should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the CEO must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the CEO will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the CEO's discretion.	H
ABSENT: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.	J
ABSENT: Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code	W
ABSENT: Religious observance Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.	R
ABSENT: Study leave Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. **This code must only be used with approval from the CEO.**	S

ABSENT: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.	T
ABSENT: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the CEO. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.	G
ABSENT: Reason for absence not yet provided Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).	N
ABSENT: Absent from school without authorisation If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.	O
ABSENT: Not required to be in school This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.	X
Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available. The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available.	Y1
Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel. The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.	Y2
Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.	Y3
Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be recorded with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.	Y4
Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.	Y5
Unable to attend in accordance with pupil health guidance or law. The pupil is well enough to attend (otherwise Code I would have been recorded) but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend.	Y6
Unable to attend due to any other unavoidable cause.	Y7

This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause, examples are bail conditions or court attendance.	
Pupil not on admission register This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.	Z
Planned whole or partial school closure This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.	#