



Attendance Policy



Policy Details	
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Date to Trust Board	September 2026
Date Ratified	
Review Date	September 2027
Policy displayed on website	YES
CEO Signature	Angela Ransby
Trust Board Signature	Alan Whittaker
Updates Made	Date
Sections 2, 5.3.2, 3.4, 5.6.1, 6.1 and 6.7 updated Section on Covid absence removed Appendix 1 reviewed and updated in line with DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance	September 2026

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1 1. Aim of this policy

1.1 To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at the Raedwald Trust.

1.2 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*** (2026), 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.
- Regular attendance means attending all sessions for the full duration of those sessions, unless there is a statutory reason for non-attendance.
- 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

3.1 The Trust

The Trust will:

- develop and maintain a whole Trust culture that promotes the benefit of regular 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 regulations¹ 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 Policy).
- 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

¹ School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
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- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Trust to a designated senior leader, known as the Senior Attendance Champion
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

3.2 Parents/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 \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) .

3.3 Pupils

We expect pupils to:

- attend their Raedwald Trust session and be on time
- be punctual to all sessions

3.4 Senior Attendance Champions

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

3.4.2 The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Academy and will:

- Have a thorough understanding of 'Working Together to improve school attendance' 2026 Government guidance.
- Lead, champion and support improvement in pupil attendance across the Trust through close monitoring of weekly review and safeguarding overview.
- During weekly review, review attendance data and focus on absence data to agree an action plan for the Headteacher to implement.
- Set a clear vision for [improving and maintaining good attendance](#).
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the Trust
- Establishing and maintaining [effective systems for tackling absence](#), and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Ensure Headteachers act in the role of 'attendance officer' providing monitoring, analysing and benchmarking attendance data, and raising attendance concerns to the SAC.
- Provide training and guidance for all staff on attendance processes and systems; ensuring staff understand that non or poor attendance is a safeguarding issue.
- Ensure all Raedwald Trust staff know who the SACs are for the Trust and ensure the names and contact details of the SACs are named in the RT Attendance Policy.
- Provide attendance data and reports to support the work of the Board of Trustees.

3.5 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

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 When marking attendance, the pupil's start and end time will be recorded along with the relevant attendance code.
- 4.3 The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in the DfE Attendance and also in Appendix 1.

5 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

- 5.1 **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.
- 5.2 **Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the Academy is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.
- 5.3 Reporting absence from the Academy
 - 5.3.1 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.
 - 5.3.2 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. Where there are prolonged or repeated patterns of illness, medical evidence may also be requested to support the Academy's understanding of a pupil's health needs and to ensure that appropriate support and/or adjustments are put in place (please refer to the Trust Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy).
- 5.4 Unexplained absence
 - 5.4.1 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.
 - 5.4.2 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.
 - 5.4.3 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.

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- 5.4.4 The academy will ensure that all contact (successful or otherwise) is recorded on the Academy Management Information System (MIS).
- 5.4.5 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 home school (if relevant). They will also consider whether a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) is completed. Academies should liaise with the Trust Safeguarding & Compliance Lead to inform of concern and actions being taken.
- 5.5 Appointments
- 5.5.1 Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.
- 5.5.2 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.
- 5.6 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)
- 5.6.1 The Academy will grant permission for a pupil to be absent from school in the circumstances described in paragraph 36 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, which will be decided upon based on the individual merits of each case.
- 5.6.2 Parents/carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupil out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.
- 5.6.3 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 four school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- 5.6.4 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.
- 5.6.5 Where permission is granted, the CEO will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- 5.6.6 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).
- 5.7 Religious observance
- 5.7.1 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.

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

6 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

- 6.1 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 and changes in attendance at individual pupil, cohort and year group level to support early intervention.
 - 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
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the Academy will signpost and support access to any additional services.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:
- the National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 179 – 205 of the DfE Attendance Guidance; and
 - the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.
- 6.8 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.

7 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 2026 the following codes will be used to record attendance across all Raedwald Trust sites on the Trust's Management Information System.

ATTENDANCE RECORDING	ATTENDANCE CODE
PRESENT: Attending AM session	/
PRESENT: Attending PM session	\
PRESENT: Attending Dual Registered setting	D
ATTENDING the pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience, without RT 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
ABSENT: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. This code must be used for RT remote and online learning. 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: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable. 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: Illness (not medical or dental appointment).	I
ABSENT: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another education institution.	J1
ABSENT: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	M
ABSENT: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements. Code Q is only used where a pupil is absent because the Local Authority has a legal duty to arrange home to school travel for the pupil and they have not done so (including where they are in the process of doing so but have not yet done it).	Q
ABSENT: Religious observance. The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent/s belong to (not the parents themselves).	R
ABSENT: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. This code must only be used with approval from the CEO.	S
ABSENT: The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is	T

engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.	
ABSENT: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the CEO. The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.	G
ABSENT: Reason for absence not yet established.	N
ABSENT: Absent in other or unknown circumstances. Where no reason for the absence is established, or the school is not satisfied that the reason would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorized.	O
ABSENT: The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under the arrangements made by the Local Authority or the school as part of the pupil's education.	W
ABSENT: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.	X
ABSENT: 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
ABSENT: 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
ABSENT: 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
ABSENT: 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
ABSENT: 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 their school.	Y6
Unable to attend due to any other unavoidable cause. 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.	Y7
Prospective pupil not on admission register	Z
Planned whole school closure. Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as days between terms, half terms, occasional days (for example bank holidays), up to 5 non-educational days and the use of the whole school as a polling station.	#