

Policy document control box	
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## Purpose

Guidance issued by the DfE (August 2020) includes the following assertion:

*“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.”*

The purpose of this Policy for Attendance is to ensure that

- Pupils, staff and parents understand how our Learner Centre will monitor, maintain and address attendance
- Pupils who meet considerable difficulty in maintaining regular attendance are supported to allow them to access the same education as other pupils.

Students who wish to attend Norwich's Red Balloon Centre/Air are asked to confirm three things.

1. They want to attend a Red Balloon - they have visited and understand what it offers.
2. They will attend and want to make academic and social/emotional progress
3. They will behave with respect and consideration at all times. These three conditions can be revisited if a student stops attending.

As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and explore resolutions to any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding and admissions, and should be read in conjunction.

## Scope

This policy refers to all students registered on roll at RBNch, including those learning through the RBAir provision.

## Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Trustee for Attendance at RBN will:**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents.
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Ensure that the Regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through monthly reports by the Head of Centre at the trustee's meeting
- Ensure that the Head of Centre leads on attendance

Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.

- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

### **The Head of Centre at RBN will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with
- Ensure that there is a named Attendance Officer to assist and liaise regularly with the Head of Centre on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through monthly reporting to the Trustees.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.

- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

## All staff at RBN will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the Regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

## The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant staff members.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for supporting students who meet difficulties in attending full time
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating Individual Action Plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of a Early Help Assessment and Plan (EHAP) and/ or the implementation of a Reintegration plan.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to, if a child is absent from school without contact from parents.
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as reward schemes.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

## Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents, and the school timetable.
- Speak to their mentor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. This is to sign in with the staff in the office.

## RBN requests that parents will:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their school work or home and family life.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- Report unplanned absence to the school before 08:45am on the day of absence by calling the Centre's number 01603 622288 or by emailing [attendance@rbnorwich.org.uk](mailto:attendance@rbnorwich.org.uk)

## Admission and attendance register

### Admission and Attendance Registers

The law requires all schools, including independent schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all students are boarders, an attendance register. All students (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined. RBNch will maintain up-to-date, accurate admission and attendance registers.

### The Admission Register

The admission register must contain the personal details of every student in the centre, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the centre.

The information to be entered (and updated as necessary) in the admission register includes:

- full name of student;
- sex;

- date of birth;
- date of admission / readmission;
- name and address of all parents / guardians and one telephone number (with an indication as to which of those the student normally lives with and who has parental responsibility);
- address of new or additional place(s) of residence of child and date child began to reside there;
- full name of parent the student lives with;
- name and address of last school attended;
- emergency contact details of parents and carers;
- name of destination school;
- start date at new school;
- any necessary information concerning communication with parents (such as hearing impairment, requirement for information in Braille, language preference).

A student will only be deleted from the admissions register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended Sept 2016).

## Amendments to the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment made to the admission register and 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.

Where a parent notifies RBNch that a student will live at another address, RBNch will, in accordance with the requirements of statutory guidance (Children Missing Education Sept 2016), record in the admission register: the full name of the parent/carers with whom the student will live, the new address, and the date from when it is expected the student will live at this address.

## Preservation of the Admission Register and Attendance Register

In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and section 458(4) and (5) of the Education Act (1996) every entry in the admission register and attendance register will be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

## Children at risk of missing education

RBNch will always inform both the commissioning agent and the local authority (in many cases these will be one and the same) when a student ceases to attend. In the extremely unlikely event that RBNch excludes a student permanently or for a 'fixed term', the Head of Centre will ensure that both the commissioning agent and the local authority are informed and that requisite local practice is followed.

As required by statutory guidance (Children Missing Education Sept 2016), when RBNch notifies a local authority that a student's name is to be removed from the admission register, RBNch will provide the local authority with: the full name of the student; the full name and address of any parent with whom the student lives; at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the student lives; the full name and address of the parent who the student is going to live with, and the date the student is expected to start living there, and, if applicable, the name of the student's destination school and the student's expected start date there. RBNch will also provide the ground in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 under which the student's name is to be removed from the admission register (updated Children Missing Education 2016).

- student has ceased to attend and is to be home educated;
- student has moved out of the area;
- student has been certified as medically unable to continue attending;
- student is detained under a court order;
- student has been permanently excluded;
- student stops attending school named in school attendance order;
- student stops attending one school while registered at two schools;
- student has not returned for 10 days after authorised absence, is not believed to be unwell, and neither the school nor the local authority knows where the child is (NB The school and LA will also now be required to work cooperatively in investigating);
- student has been absent from school for 20 days (continuous) without authorisation;
- student has died;
- student stops attending other types of school;
- student reaches the end of compulsory school age and will not be returning to school...

or the student is removed by the commissioning agent.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy; The school defines absence as:

- Arrival at school after the registration has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

An "authorised absence" as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave

- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause
- An absence that has been authorized by the Head of Centre

An “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have not been sufficiently explained

## Categories/attendance codes

The following codes are used nationally to record attendance in education, this enables us to monitor attendance and absence in line with other settings and complies to regulations.

### Present at School

/ \      Registration code / \ : present in school / = am \ =pm

L      Late arrival before the register has closed. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

### Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity

B      Off-site educational activity. This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil’s absence using the relevant absence code.

D      Dual Registered – at another educational establishment. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at



more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

J At an interview with another educational establishment.

P Participating in a supervised sporting activity. This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

V Educational visit or trip. This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

C Leave of absence authorised by the school. 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.

E Excluded but no alternative provision made. If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

H Holiday authorised by the school. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher 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 head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

I Illness (not medical or dental appointments). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

**M** Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment

**R** 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.

**S** 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. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

**T** 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. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

## Unauthorised Absence from School

**G** Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher. 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.

**N** 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).

O Absent from school without authorisation. If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

U Arrived in school after registration closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

## Administrative Codes

X Not required to be in school. This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because: •

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

Z 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.

# 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.

## Supporting students who meet considerable difficulties in maintaining regular attendance

RBN seeks to provide a supportive, nurturing environment, and all staff help students make positive informed decisions about their education and their life in general. While it is hoped that this will help students to attend regularly, the need for prompt action should they not attend is acknowledged, particularly the need to ensure that the student is 'safe'.

At the point of referral RBN will ensure that students and parents/carers are aware of the need to report the reason for any absence immediately.

If the reason given for absence is considered to be legitimate, no further action will be taken. Should the absence continue (legitimately) for more than one week, the Head of Centre will ensure that liaison takes place with medical or other professionals working with the student and family to find ways of enabling the student to access education. If, for example, the student is

housebound because of illness, RB would consider sending work home to maintain the student's access to education.

If a Student's attendance drops below 85% and where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate a supportive meeting. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue the Fast Track to Attendance plan.

## Protocols

### Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the centre in advance of the appointment. Parents and Carers should email the evidence of an appointment to ([abbey.king@rbnorwich.org.uk](mailto:abbey.king@rbnorwich.org.uk)) or bring the documentation to school. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

### Unauthorised Leave of absence

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### Unplanned absence

If a child is absent and there has been no contact from the parent/carers by the time the register closes at 09:15am the Centre will:

1. Initiate contact through the first day calling procedure
2. If by 10:30am no message has been received, RBNch will again call home. If no response is gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned.

3. If the emergency contact is unable to reach the family or no contact has been made and staff are concerned about the child a home visit will be made

In some cases RBNch may request to the police for a welfare check to be completed.

## **Red Balloon of the Air**

Where there are students on roll that are receiving their education online through the Red Balloon of the Air programme. attendance is monitored via the attendance team at RB Air liaising with the team at RB Nch.

These students have individual bespoke timetables which include online lessons, a weekly visit to the home by their assigned mentor, and a weekly session within the RB Nch centre to socialise with mentors and other students on the RB Air programme, referred to as our 'Satellite centre'.

Their engagement in lessons is tracked and monitored by the mentors. Any concerns should be raised with the Attendance officer at RB Nch who will liaise with the family and RB Air to identify and support any barriers to learning. Where attendance at the Satellite centre is low, the attendance officer and mentors will work with the family to encourage and promote attendance.

The attendance of these students is recorded by the Centre using the SIMS (School Management Information System) recording system. When a pupil is actively engaged online and has received a present mark from the online tutor, a 'B' code is used.

Attendance at the satellite centre is marked with a present code. Non attendance is marked according to the codes used for RB Nch Centre absence.

## **Legislation / guidance that informs this document**

- Education Act (1996) - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006, amended Sept 2016... see 'Children Missing Education')
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2010)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2011)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2013)
- Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DfE - Sept 2016)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Gov.UK Sept 2021)

## **Other Red Balloon policies to be read in conjunction with this one**

- Admissions

- SafeGuarding and Child Protection
- Home Visits