



Attendance Policy Internal Procedures

Red Balloon Norwich

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Date of next review: 02/10/2024

Policy Owner: Mark Anderson

Please refer to Main Policy Attendance Policy

Recording Attendance

1.1 Attendance register – times:

Pupils must arrive in school by 0905 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 0905 and will be kept open until 0935. The register for the second session will be taken at 1240 and will be kept open until 13:10.

1.2 Offsite Provision

Alternative Provision/RB Air

Students who attend offsite provision as part of their timetable will have their attendance monitored by the PA to Head of Centre and Deputy Head Pastoral onsite. They will make contact with the relevant alternative provision during the times where registers at the alternative provision are open in both sessions.

1.3 Reduced Supportive Timetables

In exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a reduced timetable for a time-limited period to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family. This intervention will only be used as a part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil and not be planned to exceed 6 weeks.

2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 0830 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). This should be directed to:

- Email: attendance@rbnorwich.org.uk
Tel: 01603 622288
- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 0935 and where no reason for absence is known.
- Social Care will be contacted in the event of any unplanned absence for any student with a Child Protection Plan.
- If there is still no contact made from the student's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a student, a home visit may be carried out.
- School will telephone home if a student leaves the school without permission
- If a child has not been seen for a week, initiate 'eyes on' visual contact by school staff to check on the welfare of the young person. Where other agencies are working with the family, we will continue to liaise with them to ensure the welfare of the child.

3 Categorising Absences and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

4.1 Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that the Head of Centre can no longer authorise a leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Head of Centre and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. The Head of Centre will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Head of Centre. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Head of Centre and it will be marked as unauthorised. Each application is considered individually and the circumstances of the application discussed before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority in the following circumstances:

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Head of Centre but is still taken.

- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Head of Centre, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

4.1 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent/carer/guardian notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible.

The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer/guardian. We will invite parents to attend a school-led supportive action plan meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

4.3 Absence for religious observance

Red Balloon Norwich acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

Late to school is defined as students not being in registration when the register is taken. If a student arrives after 0935 then an unauthorised absence code of 'U' will be applied to the register.

4.4 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. There are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. Schools and Local Authorities can make a big difference to their life chances through:

- Clear high expectation of all pupils, regardless of their background
- An inclusive culture that welcomes all communities
- Strong engagement from parents

In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

4.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Head of Centre. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Mark absence as unauthorised if following communication parents/carers/guardians are not responsive.
- Complete a welfare check in the event of no communication on day 3 of an absence. In some cases this could be carried out by another relevant professional working with the family or the Police.
- Contact a link social worker where a child on a child protection plan is absent and their reason for absence is unexplained.
- Phone home if a child has been absent for three consecutive days in order to understand their expected return date.
- Follow up any patterns of poor attendance with the child and their family.

- Visit the students home for an eyes on check if the student has not been seen for one week. This could be a home visit or video call unless in the case of a known illness or with support from an external agency (eg social worker).

6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is communicated to parents throughout the year through communication with the school and during termly reviews of pupil profiles.

7.1 Attendance Interventions

At Red Balloon Norwich we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90% before offering a supportive action plan intervention.

Persistent absenteeism" (PA) is defined as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

"Severe absence" (SA) as:

- Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

7.3 Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. 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 legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

7.4 Cessation of Placement

Our contractual protocol with the Norfolk County Council Light Touch Framework and status as an Independent School allows that where a placement is no longer viable for a young person following all support and intervention offered a cessation of placement can be requested following an emergency EHCP Review. The process requires clear information and dialogue between a student, their parent/carer/guardian and the assigned EHCP Co-ordinator to explain how SEN needs can no longer be met. After the emergency EHCP Review the cessation of placement is agreed at panel and from this point 30 days notice in the provision of learning is required. Red Balloon Norwich only consider a cessation of placement as a last possible resort when all support has been exhausted.

5.5 Support Systems

We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Support from the school Safeguarding Team of 4 DSL's
- 100% attendance certificates
- Regular meetings to discuss attendance
- Attendance Panel
- Fast Track Process
- Reduced timetables
- Referral for prosecution
- Support from social care
- 3 week monitoring periods

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

8 Roles and responsibilities (Trustees)

The Trustees recognise the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the trustee board to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named member of SLT to lead on attendance.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and work effectively with the local authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

SLT

- 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 member of the senior leadership team to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor for attendance.
- 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.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff 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.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- 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 work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. 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 excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of a parenting contract.
- 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 awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

Red Balloon Norwich requests that parents:

- 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 schoolwork or home and family life.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or guardians to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

9 Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, \(September 2022\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(January 2015\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2022\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(July 2018\)](#)

Appendix 1 Attendance Codes

Absence and Attendance Codes	
Present at School	
/ \	Registration code / \ : present in school / = am \ =pm
L	Late arrival before the register has closed.
Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity	
B	Off-site educational activity.
D	Dual Registered
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity.
V	Educational visit or trip.
W	Work experience.
Absence codes when pupils are not present in school	
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school.
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made.
H	Holiday authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments).
M	Medical or dental appointments.
R	Religious observance.
S	Study leave.
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence.
Unauthorised Absence from School	
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Principal/Headteacher.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided.
O	Absent from school without authorisation.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed.
Administrative Codes	
X	Not required to be in school.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
Z	Pupil not on admission register.
#	Planned whole or partial school closure.

Appendix 2 Student Leave of Absence Request

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Important Information for Parents

- The Head of Centre complies with the 2013 amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (2006) Regulations 2013 which means that they cannot authorise a leave of absence from school unless it is exceptional; every case should be treated on an individual basis and with due consideration of the circumstances. Ultimately, it is the Head of Centre of the school who decides if a period of leave during term time should be authorised or not
- The Head of Centre may grant leave of absence if they consider exceptional circumstances apply
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head of Centre will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed
- If leave of absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- This form **MUST** be completed by the parent who intends to remove the pupil from school during term time
- Failure to make a request for a leave of absence in advance will result in the absence taken being recorded as unauthorised

Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Full name of child/ren.....

Address.....

.....

From (1st day of absence)To (last day of absence)

Total number of school days.....Expected date of return to school.....

Reason for proposed absence - please provide reasons to support the application including evidence:

.....
.....
.....

Please read the following and sign to indicate you agree:

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time, and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I undertake to make sure my child/ren catch up with any work that is required of them.

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s):

Date:

Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been:

Agreed

Days agreed

Not agreed

Signature of Headteacher:

Appendix 3 Student Leave of Absence – Headteacher Response

DATE

INSERT ADDRESS

Dear [INSERT NAME OF PARENT/CARER/GUARDIAN]

RE: Your request for a Holiday Absence for [INSERT PUPIL NAME] DOB: [INSERT DOB]

Thank you for your request to take [INSERT PUPIL NAME] out of school between [date] and [date].

I regret to inform you that I cannot consent to your request. I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time and many variables are taken into consideration.

While acknowledging that each family's circumstances are different, we are dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believe regular attendance throughout the year is essential for every child to achieve their academic and individual potential.

Because each request is unique, my decision in this instance cannot be directly compared with decisions made by the school in the past.

I am regularly challenged by the Local Authority regarding absence. Please be advised that there is a significant financial outlay from the Local Authority to send your child to our specialist school, and your child's attendance will be monitored by the Local Authority and this could impact on their placement here at Red Balloon Norwich.

However, if you still decide to take your child on holiday, you understand that your child will be marked for the period of their holiday absence as Unauthorised.

Yours sincerely,

Head of Centre

Appendix 4: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year.

You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by **0905**.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.

‘On the day’ absences: what should I do if my child is not ‘fit’ to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence using the Attendance Mailbox attendance@rbnorwich.org.uk or by calling the absence line – 01603 622288 - to let us know. In the message you must leave your child’s full name and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register on Bromcom.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our ‘Leave of absence request’ form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via attendance@rbnorwich.org.uk You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. Your child is late to school if they are not in school by **0905**.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children’s attainment. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact attendance@rbnorwich.org.uk if you require any support with ensuring your child’s regular school attendance.