



Redwood Secondary School

"Where every person matters"

Attendance Policy 2022

Rationale

The purpose of this document is to set out Redwood School's policy and procedure on attendance.

The Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that all schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance which should be set out in an attendance policy. These systems should be reviewed regularly and modified where necessary to reflect the circumstances of the school – as detailed in this policy.

At Redwood School we believe that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning and progress. We are striving to achieve our goal of 93% attendance. We will encourage excellent attendance for all our students, by offering a broad, balanced, relevant, stimulating and personalised curriculum, within a supportive and caring environment. Through this provision we strive for all our students to lead a happy and fulfilled life, which maximises all future opportunities.

This policy is written with the above statements in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in our establishment of the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality;
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- Ensure every pupil has access to a full time education which they are entitled to;
- Ensure that pupils succeed and realise their full potential whilst at school;
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

School Life

At Redwood we promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities:

At Redwood School we have a procedural framework which includes specific guidance in relation to supporting regular and punctual attendance. The procedural framework defines agreed roles and responsibilities for:-

- Parents and Carers
- Students
- School Staff
- Governors

This procedural framework also includes guidance on:-

- Registration
- Punctuality
- What constitutes unauthorised absence
- Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for students
- Systems for dealing with absence
- Criteria and systems for referral to and working with the Early Intervention Team
- Systems for monitoring whole school attendance and action planning
- Appropriate alternative curricular arrangements
- Holidays in Term Time / Extended Leave

Leave of Absence

Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, schools cannot authorise any leave other than in exceptional circumstances. In Redwood the Headteacher is the person authorised by the governing body to make this decision. If the leave is being requested for a holiday, approval should be obtained prior to making any bookings.

Redwood School actively discourages the taking of any holidays in term time. Any parents/ carers who wish to take leave of absence during term time (other than those related to specialist respite care), must formally request permission in writing from the Headteacher (via the request form obtained from the School Office). For 'exceptional reasons' only (e.g. a family bereavement), absence may be approved during term time of up to ten school days in any school year.

Redwood School will authorise one day's leave per religious festival e.g. EID, but no more than 3 days in one academic year, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/ carers must request this leave of absence in advance unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. However, as approximately 87% of Redwoods students arrive by Local Authority transport, any issues in relation to punctuality that had been caused by the transport would not be recorded as a late mark. All children should be ready to come into school at 8.45am. Staff will greet pupils as they arrive and offer assistance to those that need it. A register will be taken at 9.00am; the register will then be closed, this is a legal requirement.

A child arriving after 9.00am but before 9.10am will be accompanied by a member of staff from reception to their tutor form. Any arrivals after 9.15am will be registered at the main reception area.

The child's name and registration class will then be logged with the reason and time; your child will then receive an L code, which means your child has received a late mark for that session. Should your child arrive after 9.40am your child will receive a U code, this equates to an unauthorised absence for that session and will affect your child's annual attendance.

Unreported Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not been notified of the child's absence we will contact parents between 9.30 – 10.00am on the day of absence. If no reason for the absence is received a 'O' (unauthorised absence) mark will be awarded. In some circumstances a home visit will be made to determine the whereabouts and safety of a pupil.

Use of Penalty Notices

Redwood School will (unless there are exceptional circumstances) request that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence. This includes Leave of Absence which are taken without a prior request being made and those taken after a prior request has been made and parents have been informed that the period of absence would be classed as unauthorised by the holiday being taken regardless of this advice.

Redwood School will also request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice for days taken in excess of the agreed period of leave without good reason, (once again unless exceptional circumstances are evident).

Persistent Absence

The minimum attendance level which is expected by all students nationally is 96%. Our target as a special school is currently 92.5%. If an attendance falls significantly below this level the school will consider whether it is appropriate to offer support in order to improve the situation or to make an allowance for exceptional circumstances i.e. ill health or particular special needs applicable to the named student.

Both local and central government pay particular attention to reducing the number of students who fall into the absence category (PA). A student becomes a persistent absentee when their attendance falls below 80% at any point during the school year; whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised. When attendance nears this level children miss significant amounts of schooling and their education progress may be put at risk. We need parents' full support in ensuring that attendance does not reach this level. The school recognises that a percentage of students have a higher absence level due to complex medical conditions and consequently will not be referred. However, if for any other reason a child's attendance does fall into this category, parents will be asked to do what they can to improve the situation. Families will be supported to improve the attendance of their child by the school's senior leadership team and direct support from the School based family worker or if appropriate school nurse. The support may involve the need for parents, and children of an appropriate age, to agree to a parenting contract. Due to the seriousness of PA status it is highly likely that such cases will be referred to a local government attendance officer in the Early Help Team.'

Children Missing from Education

A child missing from education is a potential sign of abuse or neglect. The following guidance is therefore adopted by Redwood School – based directly from Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2016.

Redwood School will enter students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, class based staff will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

If students have missed ten school days or more without permission, and/or students' have ongoing significant poor attendance, Redwood School will inform the CMI team in the Local Authority.

Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or remains absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days (with no reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause), Redwood can remove the student from the admission register. This will only take place once the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child.

Monitoring, Analysis , Action Planning:

Redwood School use electronic systems for monitoring attendance at both individual student and whole school level, and will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future action planning and target setting in respect of whole school attendance matters. In addition to the follow up of absences on a daily basis, attendance is monitored weekly by the Business Manager and issues are discussed and actions planned as part of the weekly safeguarding meeting.

Review of the Whole School Attendance Policy:

Redwood School and Governors will review this policy annually.

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

This section of the document forms part of Redwood School Whole School Attendance Policy. It sets out the rights, roles and responsibilities for parents/ carers; students, school staff and Governors, and the systems and procedures in place to identify how the school will deliver its aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance. It will be reviewed annually.

Redwood School believes that it is important that Parents and Carers, Students, School Staff and Governors all work in partnership to encourage good attendance for all students. Commitment to our successful partnership is dependent on an effective, efficient system of communication; realistic expectations, mutual respect; trust and cooperation.

The following is a summary of the rights, roles and responsibilities for individual groups of stakeholders.

Parent/ Carers(s) are expected to:-

- ♣ Provide updated contact details
- ♣ Contact school by telephone on the first day their child is absent and with a clear reason for absence
- ♣ Promptly return reply slips attached to letters sent home
- ♣ Follow the procedures for requests for Extended Leave of Absence
- ♣ Attend school events, meetings (including Annual Reviews) and parents' evenings
- ♣ Support/ participate in school activities

Students are expected to:

- ♣ Attend school regularly and punctually
- ♣ Wear the correct school uniform or appropriate clothing for sixth form.
- ♣ Have the correct equipment for PE and swimming
- ♣ Be a positive member of the school community
- ♣ Make the most of the opportunities school/ college has to offer

Students and parent(s) can expect school to:-

- ♣ Have in place an accurate and efficient system for recording absence
- ♣ Have designated staff who initiate/ follow up enquiries if a student is absent without known cause
- ♣ Offer appointments to discuss/follow up areas of concern
- ♣ Treat information confidentially and with respect i.e. shared only on a 'need to know basis'
- ♣ Actively encourage and reward regular attendance and punctuality
- ♣ Advise, assist and support students and their families; enlisting the professional help of other agencies if and when required
- ♣ Keep students and parents/carers aware of progress

Office Administrators are expected to:-

- ♣ Adhere to Redwood's 'First day calling Procedures'. If a child is absent from school and there is no contact from the parents school will make telephone calls to all registered 'contacts' on the student data collection sheet until contact has been made and a reason for absence is given.
- ♣ Record and notify Form/ College teams when taking a message from parents/ carers
- ♣ Keep accurate records to assist with the collection of absence data
- ♣ Provide with each Annual Review 'an Attendance Register'

Pastoral Teams are expected to:-

- ♣ Record attendance in the class registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session on Arbor.
- ♣ Use the appropriate symbols to record absence in line with LA Policy and as stipulated in the register
- ♣ Contact parents directly if they have any concerns about attendance.
- ♣ Report any concerns about absence to SLT

The Business Manager is expected to:-

- ♣ Regularly liaise with the Local Authority concerning attendance issues
- ♣ Contact parents/ carers if the reasons are not known for a student's absence and the absence has been for more than 3 consecutive days
- ♣ Assist the administrative staff with the compilation of attendance data
- ♣ Monitor registers regularly to ensure they have been completed correctly
- ♣ Report attendance concerns to the Headteacher
- ♣ Meet with parents regarding attendance concerns

Headteacher is expected to:-

- ♣ Actively promote the high importance of attendance with parents/ carers and students from non-prejudicial visits and from transitional meetings onwards, and regularly throughout their education.
- ♣ Develop and implement agreed policies, annually updated following consultation with Governors, School Staff, Parents/Carers and other appropriate agencies
- ♣ Encourage inter-agency and parental participation in supporting students to gain maximum benefit from the educational system
- ♣ Be kept informed about attendance issues
- ♣ Reinforce positive attendance through the awarding of prizes and rewards throughout the school year.
- ♣ Report back to Parent/Carers, Governors, Staff and appropriate others re progress
- ♣ Oversee the School Attendance Policy
- ♣ Report to Governor(s) on a termly basis

Governors are expected to:-

- ♣ Attend Governors' Meetings
- ♣ Liaise with Headteacher re attendance
- ♣ Discuss attendance issues and devise improvement strategies during Curriculum and / or Staffing & Finance Committee meeting(s)
- ♣ Attend meetings with parents to discuss attendance, if required
- ♣ Report attendance issues to the Full Governing Board

Procedures for Dealing with absence

