

The Reddings Primary and Nursery **School**



Policy Name: Attendance Policy

Reviewed: October 2018

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Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children, individual schools and for Hertfordshire as a whole. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

This Attendance Policy is intended to guide, assist and empower schools to meet their responsibilities and to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practices and procedures can be applied.

Hertfordshire County Council expects the Children's Services and all schools to work closely together in partnership with parents in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

At The Reddings Primary School, we want the whole school community (Governors, Staff, Parents and Learners) to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance helps learners in this school community to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

2. Purpose

- To ensure all learners on the school's roll attend regularly
- To promote the importance of attendance and assist all learners to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality
- To ensure all learners take full advantage of the wide range of educational opportunities available to them through excellent attendance and punctuality.

3. Rights and Responsibilities

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and learners. All these groups need to understand their expectations:

Parents and Carers

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for all learners registered at The Reddings Primary & Nursery School and is essential if learners are to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Therefore parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and 'Ready to Learn' (*Links to Home-School Agreement*)

Parents should:

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance

- On a daily basis, if your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, we ask parents to do one of the following:
 - Telephone the school as soon as possible before 9.30am
 - Send a written note to the school
 - Inform the school office in person
 - E-mail admin@reddings.herts.sch.uk
- Parents should also provide an explanation for the absence and in some circumstances medical confirmation may be requested to clarify the absence explanation - this information would be provided by the parent / carer. Parents and carers will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- **Parents and carers will ensure that school are informed of any change of contact details or changes of parental responsibility**
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours (unless specialist appointments which are determined by the hospital / professional practitioner)
- Learners who have been sick at home are to be kept home for 24 hours from the last time of sickness

Schools

Schools are responsible for supporting the attendance of their learners and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

Schools are required to call attendance registers:

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. They should ensure that pupils can be accounted for in an emergency and that a pupil removed from the school at lunchtime will not go unnoticed.

Registers must record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

Schools should:

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
- have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. Schools should recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications. They should also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come into school
- Produce school attendance policies which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents, pupils and staff

At The Reddings:

- The Head Teacher has overall responsible for Attendance
- We expect learners to attend school regularly and on time, and are 'Ready to Learn'
- The Reddings School will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality, and will investigate all absenteeism and lateness

- The Reddings School staff team will support the attendance of learners and will deal with concerns that may lead to non-attendance
- The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality. We will offer an environment in which learners feel valued and welcomed. Learners must feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late and that follow up action will be taken as outlined below:
 - Every effort will be made to personalise the curriculum to the learners' needs
 - Learners who find punctuality difficult will be set targets for improvement
 - Learners who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will have work sent home
 - The Head Teacher will monitor attendance on at least a weekly basis
 - The Head Teacher will report to the Governing Board on attendance matters on at least a termly basis
 - The Head Teacher will write to parents on at least a termly basis on attendance matters
 - Parents will receive their child's Attendance Registration Certificate on a termly basis
 - The Head Teacher will liaise with external agencies when appropriate

ISL Attendance Team

The ISL Attendance Teams fulfil the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

Each school in Hertfordshire has a link Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who will work in close partnership with the school.

In working closely with schools the Attendance Teams will offer the following services:

ATTENDANCE DUTY SYSTEM

A dedicated telephone line through which schools can contact an AIO between the hours of 9.00 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Thursday and between the hours of 9.00 am to 3.30 pm on a Friday.

Types of enquiries may include

- School issues e.g. register coding, holiday absence etc.
- enquiries relating to a pupil
- 10 day absence returns
- request for Early Intervention letters
- FPN enquiries
- Removal from Roll enquiries
- requests for referrals

VISITS TO SCHOOLS

All schools have a named link AIO who will liaise with the school and undertake whole school work for their allocated schools.

Whole School Attendance Overview

This will be the first meeting of the year with each school to ensure all schools are Ofsted ready. Any issues arising from this visit will inform targeted whole school work for the academic year, focussing on supporting schools to reduce PA and the absence of vulnerable groups.

Schools with above the Hertfordshire average levels of persistent absence (PA) are allocated a PA visit or visits. Schools with high levels of PA may be subject to 'no notice' Ofsted inspections. The visit(s) will be used to analyse the school's data, discuss any school specific

PA issues, and agree a strategy and action plans to address PA.

Data analysis is an important part of this process and AIOs will support schools to analyse their attendance data and draw up plans to address any specific issues. Analysis may include:

- persistent absence
- absence profile
- use of register codes
- comparison of form groups in individual years
- percentage of absence due to holidays
- attendance of vulnerable groups
- types of absence e.g. a few pupils with significant absence or many pupils with occasional absence
- lateness after registers close
- year by year percentage attendance
- Attendance trends – is attendance increasing or decreasing?

Other than engaging in casework there are a variety of supportive ways in which AIOs can work with schools to increase attendance levels

i) **School Attendance Policies:** Schools are not required to have an attendance policy, but are encouraged to do so to support consistent practice and effective communication of expectations around attendance

ii) **Parents' Evenings:** AIOs can play a key role in promoting school attendance at parents' evenings and new parent induction meetings.

iii) **Attendance Surgeries:** AIOs can support schools by attending attendance surgeries, to meet with a number of pupils and parents where attendance or persistent absence has been identified as a concern and early intervention deemed an appropriate action to undertake.

iv) **INSET:** AIOs may offer INSET/staff training. This may cover such issues as school attendance, the role of the AIO, school-age employment and persistent absence.

v) **Governors Meetings:** AIOs may attend governors meetings to explain various aspects of the work of the attendance team – case work, legal work, FPNs etc.

Casework

Once a case has been accepted, the AIO will undertake direct work with pupils and their parents. This may include:

- arranging meetings between the school, parents and pupils
- making home visits to assess the situation and determine what action needs to be taken
- offering specific support to parents and individual pupils, either at school or elsewhere
- facilitating meetings
- enabling the pupil and parents to access appropriate support from other services and agencies

Attendance Improvement Officers will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, AIOs may work with children whose absences have been authorised, such as persistent absentee (PA) pupils (See APPENDIX 1).

4. The Use of Legal Action

If a pupil, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the

Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' might include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the AIO will keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.

In cases where parents wilfully withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the ISL Attendance Teams will begin legal proceedings promptly on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

The Central Attendance & Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority will give approval before legal proceedings are commenced.

The Attendance Teams will consider applying for an Education Supervision Order when a parent finds it difficult to exercise an effective influence over a child who has developed a pattern of poor attendance. Education Supervision Orders will not usually be applied for in relation to pupils in Years 10 or 11.

Before an application is made for an Education Supervision Order:

- other possible means of dealing with the pupil's poor attendance will be explored
- the attitudes of the parent and pupil towards the poor attendance, and their wishes as to how it should be dealt with, will be noted
- the Local Authority will be of the view that the Order will have a significant effect on the pupil's attendance at school

5. Education Related Penalty Notices for Parents of Truants

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added two sections (444A and 444B) to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. For example it could be used where a parent has failed to engage in any supportive measures

Further information on penalty notices is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml> or from the local Attendance Team Manager

6. School Attendance Orders

If a parent fails to register a child of compulsory school age at a school (and he/she does not intend to educate the child otherwise than at school). The LA will serve a School Attendance Order under Sections 437 - 439 of the Education Act 1996. This requires the parent to register their child at a school named by the Local Authority.

7. Admission & Attendance Registers

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016.

It is important that the school's admission register is accurate and kept up to-date. Schools should regularly encourage parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur, through existing communication channels such as regular emails and newsletters. This will assist both the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

Where a parent notifies a school that a pupil will live at another address, all schools are required to record in the admission register:

- a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- b) the new address; and
- c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, schools must record in the admission register:

- a) the name of the new school; and
- b) the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

All schools are required to notify the local authority **within five days** via school admissions - <http://www.intra.thegrid.org.uk/admissions/seam.shtml> when a pupil's name is added to the admissions register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason. This duty also extends to academies and independent schools.

For further guidance see - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/csf/admissions.shtml>

Responsibilities of the AIO – Attendance Registers

Inspection of registers

Registers should be available for inspection during school hours by an Attendance Improvement Officer when requested.

If the link AIO is concerned that a school's registers have not been kept in accordance with the requirements of the relevant regulations he/she will:

- notify the Headteacher of the concern and request that the matter is addressed
- if no appropriate action is taken by the school, and the AIO remains concerned, the Attendance Team Manager will address the concern with the Headteacher
- if the matter still remains unresolved, the Attendance Team Manager will write to the Headteacher formally noting the concern. A copy of this letter will be sent to the relevant ISL Area Manager and the County Lead for Access and Inclusion

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in **Regulation 8** of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the

register. This responsibility applies to all Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools, University Technical Colleges, Education Support Centres and Independent Schools. Full guidance on Removal from Roll is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or radicalisation please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If a school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure should establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school should complete a Removal from Roll form and return it to the local Attendance Team office. Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If a school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared" the matter should be drawn without delay to the attention of the Local Attendance Team.

Further guidance and a referral form is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Registration Procedure at The Reddings:

- Breakfast Club opens at 8.00am
- Learners have access to the classrooms (Reception, KS1 and KS2) from 8.45am (early arrival is only for those attending Breakfast Club and extra-curricular activity or through prior permission authorised by the Headship Team) **No learner should be unsupervised on the playground before 8.45am**
- Learners are expected to be on site by 8.50am
- At 8.55am the external doors are closed
- A learner arriving after this is considered to be late and must report to the school office (code L)
- Registers close at 9.15am and 1.15pm, any learner arriving after the closure and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the learner has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' (U) for that session
- Registers are marked electronically and in accordance with DFE guidance
- If a learner is persistently late, the parents will be contacted
- The Head Teacher will inspect all registers regularly ensuring that correct procedures are being followed

When calling the register, the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools should use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education.

When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as is practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days without a legitimate reason.

8. Punctuality

Late Arrival

Learners who arrive at The Reddings Primary School late, that is after the classroom doors have been closed at 8.55am, must enter the school via the main office. On arrival the learner will be asked to provide a satisfactory explanation, he / she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session (Code L or other code linked to explanation) and a record kept in the late arrivals register for the purpose of emergency evacuation etc

When a learner arrives after the register has closed and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)

Following up lateness

Parents, whose children are regularly late for school, will be contacted by a member of staff who will work with the parent(s) to bring about improvement in punctuality.

Leaving and returning to school during the School Day

When learners leave or return to school during the school day, office staff must be notified. Learners are required to sign out and back in at the school office.

9. Authorising Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence should be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

Absence should be authorised if:

- the pupil is absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing board')
- the pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following: the child's transport to and from school; boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school; enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents who 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 alternative provision
- there is a close family bereavement
- a Year 11 pupil is granted study leave. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise
- leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application. (Parents should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence)
- leave of absence should be granted to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (c) for which a child performance licence has been issued

Before granting a licence the local authority must be satisfied that the child's education will not suffer. A

school letter is requested as part of the licence application as confirmation of this. If a

school believes a child's education will suffer as a result of taking part in a performance they should provide reasons to the local authority in writing. The information must be specific to the child (saying for example that it is against school policy is not sufficient). If the school does not provide such information the local authority will issue the licence. The absence should be recorded as code C.

Absence should be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

Requests for Family Holidays During Term time

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which come into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. In these circumstances parents must apply to the school in writing **in advance**, and it likely that a meeting will occur with the Head Teacher.

Procedures for following up absences

- If a pupil is absent without explanation a member of the office team will call home that morning to gain an explanation. A message will be left by the school office team member and this will be followed up by a text message. If there is no response further calls are made throughout the day. All of this is logged on CPOMs
- If days of absence persist with or without an explanation, this is then monitored and further phone calls are made by the office team and the Head Teacher / member of the SLT if appropriate. All communication is logged on CPOMs
- School will also consult with the Attendance team; this advice will then be implemented
- If the school has not managed to have any contact with the parent a home visit is undertaken (2 staff members). If the extended absence heads into the weekend / holiday periods the school may contact the police and request a well-being check. All actions are logged on CPOMs
- The Head Teacher monitors the absence / late explanations on a weekly basis and follows up as appropriate
- A member of the SLT will write to the parent on a half termly basis if the attendance statistic is below 93%

Procedure for following up lateness

- The Head Teacher monitors lateness on a weekly basis
- Once a pattern is observed the class teacher will speak to the parent. Conversation logged on CPOMs
- If no impact occurs from this conversation a more meeting is set up with the parent and a member of the SLT

10. Rewards

The Reddings School rewards good attendance through a variety of individual and group awards, these include:

Weekly class award for the best attendance (Attendance Trophy)
Termly certificates and badges / pencils for 100% attendance for the current term
Termly letters home to parents where their child's attendance is 98%+
'Ready to Learn' weekly award for the class
'Ready to Learn' termly award for the class (badge and £50 for the class)
£10 gift cards awarded to learners with 100% attendance and good punctuality for the year
Hertfordshire certificates for excellent annual attendance and the most improved attendance
'What a star' certificates may be awarded for good / improved attendance
Head Teacher merits awarded for excellent attendance / improved attendance / punctuality
Names of learners with 100% attendance and good punctuality published in the newsletter

11. Publication of Information

- Parents, learners, staff, and Governors are informed of whole school performance (statistics) and any concerns linked to attendance on a regular basis
- The Reddings School shares information on individual learners' attendance as necessary with parents, learners and staff
- Daily attendance is displayed on the 'Ready to Learn' board
- Monthly attendance is published on the school website, notice boards and communicated via the newsletter

12. Administration Codes

There are a number of administrative codes which are not counted as a possible attendance in the school census (Y, X, Z, #). They must only be used in specific circumstances.

13. Flexi-schooling

Head Teachers can agree to flexi-schooling arrangements where the parents take on the responsibility for their child's education for part of the school week. Head Teachers are advised to consider any such requests from parents very carefully before agreeing to them and are advised to draw up a written agreement with the parent. Where agreement has been reached, pupils should be marked authorised absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. (C)

14. Part-time time-tables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs. A part time timetable must be time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. The school should mark the sessions were the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (C)

Appendix 1

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Policy for Attendance Improvement Officers working with children whose absence has been authorised

if the AIO becomes concerned (through checking the attendance register) that a pupil has accumulated significant amounts of authorised absence this will be discussed with the relevant member of school staff

if it is agreed that there is a concern about the pupil's attendance the school should share this concern with the parents

if concerns about the pupil's attendance remain, the AIO will consider asking the school to make a referral to the attendance team

if a pupil is identified as being a persistent absentee (PA). Persistent absence is when a pupil enrolment's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions.

(Note: if a pupil's absence has been authorised by the school, the LA cannot cite that absence as evidence of non attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at:

www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance