

The Reddings Primary and Nursery School



Attendance Policy

Reviewed: October 2021

Next Review: October 2025

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.

The Reddings Primary School is committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance helps the children to maximise their learning and prepares them for their secondary education and the world of work.

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. Parents therefore 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
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours (unless specialist appointments which are determined by the hospital / professional practitioner)
- keep learners who have been sick at home are to be kept home for 24 hours from the last time of sickness
- maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- provide an explanation for the absence and in some circumstances medical confirmation may be requested to clarify the absence explanation

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

The school

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 will investigate all absenteeism and lateness
- we will maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- we will provide attendance details on the child's annual report.
- we will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- we will share details of poor attendance/punctuality will be reported to subsequent schools.
- we will promote a range of strategies to encourage whole school attendance. For example
 - the weekly attendance cup
 - termly and yearly certificates and prizes for pupils achieving 100% attendance
- The Reddings School staff team will support the attendance of learners and will deal with concerns that may lead to non-attendance
- 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
- Pastoral support will be provided to ensure learners are confident to come to school
- Learners who find punctuality difficult will be set targets for improvement
- 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

Absence due to Illness

Notification must be provided for all absences from school and the school will always follow this up. If parents do not notify the school, we operate a 'first day response' and will seek to establish why a child is not attending school

Parents/carers must give specific reasons for absence. This enables the school to monitor patterns and fulfil its obligation to inform the health authorities of any notifiable diseases, such as a Coronavirus, flu, measles etc.

Unless parents/carers have been given a particular time of absence through illness by a doctor they are expected to contact the school regularly to let the school know what is happening. The details of telephone calls are recorded and monitored.

Registers are monitored on a regular basis to look at patterns of absence, identify individuals or groups absences, attendance of siblings, etc. If patterns of absence are observed, a letter will be sent home

In the case of diarrhoea or vomiting, parents are expected to keep children at home for 24 hours after the last episode. This is to prevent the spread of infection to other children and staff.

Absence due to Medical Appointments

Routine medical appointments such as the dentist, should be made outside of school hours. If a medical appointment is known in advance parents/carers must notify the school and provide evidence of the appointment. If an emergency appointment is made please phone the school before 9am.

Notification must be given if a child needs to leave school during the day

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 goes 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%. The Head Teacher will write to parents on a half termly basis if the attendance statistic is below 90%

Absence during term time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

The school actively discourages parents/carers from requesting leave of absence during term time. Absence affects the learning of themselves and others and children miss work that cannot otherwise be covered.

In accordance with DfE guidance, requests for leave of absence, which will only be given in very exceptional circumstances, must be made at least 3 months in advance in writing to the head teacher. We advise that no arrangements should be made until permission has been given.

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.

Requests for term time absence will be considered on a case by case basis

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
- 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. If the school does not provide such information the local authority will issue the licence. The absence should be recorded as code C.

- Permission will **not** be given for a leave of absence which has already taken place.
- Children will not be given work to do during a term time leave of absence.
- Parents/carers are expected to contact school if they cannot get back from a holiday on time and give a reason for the delay.
- Absence will be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil is classed as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason.

Absence at this level damages any child's educational potential and we will try to work with parents/carers to improve attendance rates quickly. Persistent absentees are monitored carefully through our pastoral system and this is combined with academic support where absence adversely affects attainment. All persistent absentees are automatically made known to the Local Attendance Improvement Officer, who conducts regular checks.

Lateness

Doors open at 8:45 and registers are taken at 8:45am.

Any child arriving after that will be recorded as 'late before registers close'(code L.) Any children arriving after 9.00am will be recorded as 'late after registers close' (code U) and must report to the office to be marked in. Parents/carers will be expected to give a reason for lateness which will be recorded and monitored.

Afternoon sessions begin at 1: 00pm when the register is taken again. Children returning after home lunch after this time will be recorded as absent (code U).

It is important that children are safe and therefore accounted for at all times during the day, because of this, any unexplained absence is monitored very carefully. 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)

Procedure for following up lateness

The Head Teacher monitors lateness on a weekly basis.

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.

If no impact occurs from this conversation a more meeting is set up with the parent and a member of the SLT

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.

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 Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

It is for the Head teacher 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

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
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

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
- Monthly attendance is published on the school website, notice boards and communicated via the newsletter

Monitoring & Review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

This policy will be drawn to the attention of parents on a termly basis, particularly the details of Fixed Penalty Notices.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every four years or earlier if deemed necessary.

During the pandemic the school will follow Government guidance regarding attendance.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that this policy is followed.

Equal Opportunities

This policy applies to all children regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability

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.

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

The School works closely with the Attendance Teams, in the first instant, to support parents with improving their child's attendance

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.

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

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

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.

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 Head teacher 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 Head teacher
- if the matter still remains unresolved, the Attendance Team Manager will write to the Head teacher 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. 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>

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)

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)

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2025.

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).

Appendix 2

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