



9th September 2021

School Attendance

Dear Parent/Carer,

Riverside Bridge School is committed to ensuring that all pupils receive the highest quality of education and are able to achieve their full potential therefore we believe that excellent attendance and punctuality is a key prerequisite to ensure that our pupils are able to maintain their routines and do not miss vital parts of the curriculum.

Whilst appreciating that the needs of our pupils can affect their attendance and punctuality and each family's circumstances are different, the school and our Partnership Learning Attendance Officer work closely with families to aim for all pupils to have attendance above 95% as parents/carers have a legal responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly.

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or evidence for the absence or unacceptable reasons are given.

Minor ailments, such as a headache or a slight cold are not acceptable reasons for your child not to attend school. Repeated absences due to illness may require the school to request that parents/carers obtain medical evidence from their Doctor's surgery as recommended in Government guidelines.

In order to minimise absences from school due to medical appointments, we continue to ask, where possible, that all medical appointments are made outside of school hours unless vital or due to an emergency and a copy of the appointment letter must be provided to the school in order for the absence to be authorised.

There are emergency occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; please be assured the school will be sympathetic to such needs.

The law does not give any entitlement to parents to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday. Headteachers may only grant leave of absence when there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

The Government has made it clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school due to the Covid-19 outbreak. If your child has to self-isolate after testing positive to Covid-19, there will be no impact on your child's attendance and the absence will be marked as authorised.

School Procedures to follow when your child is absent from school:

- Contact the school on the first day your child is not attending school, providing a reason for this absence by 9.30 am, and stating the date of their expected return to school if known.
If the date of their return to school remains unknown, parents/carers should ensure they continue to call the school by 9.30 am every day their child is absent till their return to school.
- If the school has not received a call by 9.30am, the Attendance Clerk will try to contact home via two telephone calls and a text message will be sent by the end of the day. Please ensure you get back to the school as soon as possible to explain why your child is absent.



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- On your child's return to school, complete and return the 'Return to School' slip for any absence including half a day or one day absences, with any evidence to support your child's absence from school i.e. appointment letters, copy of prescription, etc.
- If for any reason, the Attendance Clerk is unable to get in touch with a parent/carer and a child continues to be absent, they will continue to contact home via telephone calls and text messages till we have an answer to why a pupil is absent.

If a pupil continue to be absent with no reason:

- After two days' absence with no reason and no evidence, an "Unexplained Absence from School" letter will be issued by the Deputy Headteacher. This needs to be brought back to school with evidence when the pupil is back in lessons.
- After three days' absence without contact from the parents/carers, the Safeguarding Team will be informed and action will be taken such as home visit.
- After seven days' absence with no reason and no evidence, an "Unexplained Absence from School" Letter will be issued by the Headteacher. The Partnership Learning Attendance Officer will be informed to take action and a referral to Social Care will also be carried out.

If the child is back to school, but the school has yet to be given a reason or evidence for an absence:

- After the return to school of a pupil who has been absent for any number of days, an "Unexplained Absence from School" letter will be issued by the Deputy Headteacher. This needs to be brought back to school with evidence as soon as possible.
- After seven days, if there is still no parents/carers' reply to explain the absence, an "Unexplained Absence from School" Letter will be issued by the Headteacher. The Partnership Learning Attendance Officer will also be informed to take action.

Persistent Absences

When a child's attendance is close to 90%, schools are required by the Government to take swift action.

Stage One

- If attendance is between 95-92%, a letter is sent home to the parent/carer notifying them that the school is monitoring the attendance levels of that pupil, stating that there needs to be an improvement in the pupil's attendance.
- If attendance falls below 92% the parent/carer, a meeting with a member of the Deputy Headteacher and the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer and the parents is arranged to discuss any issues and agree a way forward.

Stage Two

- When a pupil's attendance does not improve following action at Stage One or attendance falls below 90% appropriate action is taken by the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer to resolve the situation. This may include:
 - direct work with the pupil and family



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- referral to other agencies, arranging suitable support to help the pupil in making a return to full attendance
- legal proceedings under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Education Act 1996 and the Children Act 1989. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers. There is an appeals process for parents who have received and contest a fixed penalty notice.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure your child fulfil their potential and we hope that this letter will help parents/carers to have a clearer understanding about Riverside Bridge School's expectations when it comes to attendance.

If you need any support from school regarding your child's attendance, please do let us know as we will endeavour our best to provide guidance and advice.

Yours sincerely

Ms K. Cerri

Headteacher

Attendance – Return to School Slips

Please complete one of these “Return to School” slips any time your child is absent for school so it can be handed out to the Attendance Clerk by the Class Team.



Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

Date of Absence: _____

Reason of Absence: _____

Parent/Carer's Signature: _____ Date: _____



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Date of Absence: _____

Reason of Absence: _____

Parent/Carer's Signature: _____ Date: _____



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