



Attendance Policy

Approved: *October 2016*

Next Review: October 2019



PARTNERSHIP LEARNING
RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Excellence for All



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1. Values

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

Riverside Primary School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

- At Riverside Primary School, we are continuously working towards our goal of 97% attendance for all pupils.

2. Overall Aims

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

3. Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality

The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.



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- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Headteacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Local Authority policies and procedures.

The Governing Body:

The Governing Body has responsibility for school attendance and will be familiar with current legislation. The Headteacher will report on attendance to the Governors at regular intervals. The Governors will form part of the School Attendance Working Party, who will ensure that the Whole School Attendance Policy is reviewed every two years.

The Member of the SLT with Responsibility for Attendance:

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Administrator to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.



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Inclusion Lead:

The SENCO will monitor the attendance of all following pupils:

- SEN Support
- EHCP
- EAL
- CAF pupils
- Vulnerable Pupils
- Gifted and Talented

They will support class teachers in the inclusion of attendance where appropriate. They will monitor identified needs and levels of absence for the above groups and will refer to the appropriate member of senior staff for discussion with the Local Authority Attendance Officer when necessary.

School Office:

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls. When a child doesn't arrive at school and no reason has been received school office to carry out first day absence procedure.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for year groups.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform SLT or Headteacher, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for SLT/Headteacher to analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of SIMs registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions. .
- To maintain SIMs attendance records in line with this policy.
- To liaise with and report to with outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within year groups.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To support SLT and Headteacher with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.



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- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

Staff:

- To complete the daily class attendance and punctuality chart, with the pupils'.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the SIMs register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's SIMs system at 9.00 am and 1.15 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with families and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform SLT or Headteacher, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents or Carers

The school wishes to work in partnership with families to achieve good school attendance. **The minimum target attendance for all pupils registered at this school is 97%.to ensure the best learning opportunities for all our pupils.**

Even though 97% may sound high, it is still equivalent to approximately half a day absence every three weeks over the academic year. As further examples, if your child has **90%** attendance over an academic year, it means on average, that your child is absent from school for half a day a week. If the attendance level slips to **80%** then this is equivalent to missing one day of school a week. If a child's attendance continued at this level throughout their school life, by the time they left school, they would have missed an entire academic year. At **75%** attendance the equivalent of approximately 1½ days a week is missed.



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Pupils with attendance below 90% are Persistent Absentees. Pupils who are Persistent Absentees are referred to the Borough Attendance Officer.

Parents/carers have responsibilities for ensuring their child comes to school regularly, which are outlined in the Home-School agreement. Families of children of compulsory age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance at school or otherwise. (Education Act 1996)

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach-aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.

All medical appointments should be made outside school time. If this is not possible the appointment card should be shown in advance to the Office Staff and the child must be brought to school before the appointment and returned to school afterwards. There may be times when the parent/carer will be asked to provide further medical evidence for their child's absence.

Punctuality

Regular attendance includes pupils being on time for school, every day.

The school gates open at 8:45am. Pupils enter into school from this time and make their way directly to their classrooms. The children should go to class to be registered. **The external doors and gates will be closed promptly at 8:55am. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child is in school before the school gates close at 8.55am.** Children arriving after this time will need to enter the school through the office and will be marked as late. The reasons for lateness are recorded by the parents.

The afternoon session starts at **1.00pm (EYFS/KS1)** and **1.15pm (KS2)** pupils arriving from home dinners after this time will be marked as late.

The end of the school day is 3.15pm.

In severe weather conditions, such as snow, it remains the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that the pupils arrive at school on time and are picked up promptly at the end of the day.



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Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence for their child. Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and be on time every day.

Pupils should be ready to learn and be appropriately prepared for lessons. The target attendance figure for all pupils is a minimum of **97%**; this is equivalent to half a day absence every fortnight over the academic year.

Educational Welfare Service is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

There is a formal legal system, which involves fining parents for their child's poor attendance; over a specified period of time. The action is taken with an identified cohort of pupils (a year group). **All families are formally written to by the school, outlining the process.** Formal meetings are held after a specified period of time, for pupils with continued poor attendance. Targets are set and attendance is monitored for a further specified period of time. **EWS court section issues fines to families, whose pupils fail to improve their attendance.**



4. Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

Aims:

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Weekly Celebration Assemblies

Celebration Assemblies are held every week on Friday. Pupils who have 100% for the week receive a sticker and a small prize.

Monthly School Newsletter

Each month, the School newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.

School Attendance Board

The board includes attendance information and information about the classes with the highest attendance and punctuality. Details of how parents can support the school by improving their child's attendance and punctuality, is also included.

The School Learning Environment

A welcoming, organised learning environment that supports and celebrates its learners is key factors in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT to ensure this.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.



End of Term Attendance Rewards

At the end of each term there is a special reward for children who have achieved attendance at 100%. The Headteacher and the School Administrator organise and lead on the end of term attendance incentives.

100% Attendance Reward

Pupils achieving 100% attendance and 6 lates or less for the whole school year, are eligible for the end of year reward. This reward will be reviewed and decided on each year by SLT.

Sharing Attendance Data

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the number of pupils achieving 97% - 100% attendance are shared in termly assemblies. This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

Parent/teacher Consultation Evenings

This provides an opportunity for teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to SLT and/or Headteacher.

5. Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using SIMs. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

Morning Register

Class registers remain open until 9:15am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register and close down SIMs. The teacher may submit the register as many times as they wish before 9.15 am (e.g. if a mistake has been made or a child has arrived slightly late) but at 9.15am the register must be correct and submitted. From 8.55 am the school playground gates are closed. A member of the School Office will meet children arriving late. The children's names and classes are recorded in the 'Children Arriving Late' folder. This is to ensure that no children



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are missed on the register due to arriving in school late. Children arriving after 9:30am are recorded as 'L' (late after register closed) in the register. The School Officer then checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked '/' (present) in the registers and corrects any mistakes or inputs codes for children who are known to be absent. The School Officer then begins first day absence calls.

Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. They should be completed by 1:30pm.

School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality. (Copies of all standard letter formats are included at the end of this document.)

Punctuality Folder

The School Officer and Headteacher monitor the punctuality folder regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly, or via a phone call. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent; explain how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents are invited in to school, to discuss the concerns with the Headteacher or a member of SLT and plan a way forward. If lateness does not improve following the meeting, then the family will be referred to the ESW who will contact parents warning them that further action may be taken.

IMPORTANT: Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection Policy.

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the family, a first day absence call will be made. The School Officer follows this system:

- Get registers in promptly
- Listen to absence calls, read absence emails
- Bring together registers, lates, absence calls - produce the list of children absent with no explanation



- Start first day calling for children absent without explanation, call everyone on the contact list until you get an answer. Leave messages if there is a voicemail option.
- Call the contact list at least twice
- If no reply at all from the contact list consider whether any children have additional agency support, such as a social worker, contact them.
- Make a prompt home visit.
- If you cannot get an answer refer immediately to children's services / MASH / Police and request a welfare call.

The family is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name in the register.

The School Officer must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code.

Attendance Meetings

The Headteacher and School Officer monitor individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 95% and parents who are concerned about their child's attendance, are invited to work in partnership with the school.

6. Summary of procedures to promote good attendance/punctuality:

The following tables show specific procedures to maintain and encourage excellent attendance at Riverside Primary School:

Daily Procedures	By whom	Outcomes / Actions
Parents ensure pupils arrive at school on time	Parents/carers	
Parents inform the school by 8.30 am, if their child is absent that day	Parents/carers	Office Staff update registration codes



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Pupils arriving late to school are registered at reception	School Officer	Absence mark on SIMS amended to a late mark by School Officer
Teachers record attendance using SIMS. This is done by 9.15am and 1.30 pm.	Teachers/Support staff	Teacher/Support Staff use a paper register, if required. Teacher takes responsibility for promptly informing Headteacher or School Office of concerns.
1st day absence phone calls are made to inform parents of their child's unexplained absence for that day. Headteacher/SLT informed of attendance/punctuality issues – parents contacted, if required	School Officer Headteacher/SLT	School Officer updates attendance codes.
Parents provide written note, including dates of and reason for absence upon the child's return to school	Parents	School Officer collects at reception/Teachers collect these and pass on to SO for filing

Weekly Procedures	By whom	Outcomes / Actions
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced by year group and school	School Officer	Entered into Attendance Overview spread sheet to allow for monitoring and analysis
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced and shared in Celebration Assembly, displayed on the School Attendance Boards	School Officer	Parents are able to see which class(es) have been successful with their attendance and punctuality.
Absence codes for individual pupils are updated using SIMS to show reason for absence.	School Officer	Information provided here is used to provide targeted interventions as appropriate

Half Termly and Termly Procedures	By whom	Outcomes / Actions
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Analyse attendance/punctuality data to monitor trends and progress	School Officer and Headteacher/SLT	
Assemblies to promote attendance/punctuality and share term's data and progress	School Officer and Headteacher/SLT	
Discussions as required in response to specific attendance/punctuality concerns of a particular cohort of pupils	Headteacher/SLT	
Individual attendance/punctuality discussed with pupils and families, at parents' evenings	Class teachers	Mentoring and advice on attendance/ punctuality issues provided to all families
Analyse attendance/punctuality data and information to identify cases of concern and develop appropriate interventions	School Officer and Headteacher/SLT	Targeted intervention for individual concerns
Meeting to discuss individual cases, monitor progress and refer new concerns. Support and meeting provided for pupils and families.	School Officer and Headteacher/SLT	
Review success and impact of attendance/punctuality strategies for the term	School Officer and Headteacher/SLT	Amend and refine interventions as appropriate

7. Extended Holidays

In line with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Local Authority, 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances. The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Headteacher may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil



- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have led you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Headteacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

8. Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.