



Rugby Free

Secondary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Rugby Free Secondary School (RFSS) is committed to helping our children making the best possible progress with their education. To do this they need to attend school regularly and punctually. It is the parent's legal responsibility to ensure that this happens and for the school to offer all the support it can, while monitoring attendance within the school's target setting regime and as part of site security / missing pupil procedures.

Scope

It is recognised that for illness or other exceptional reasons, children may occasionally have to be absent from school, in the interests of their education however they should only be kept off school if it is essential.

Parents and carers should inform RFSS Attendance Officer if a child is absent or about to be absent. This should be done by emailing or text messaging or telephoning the school on the first morning of absence, preferably before the start of the school day. The school reserves the right to request written confirmation of absence upon the pupil's return. If it is known in advance that the child is going to be absent (e.g. for a hospital appointment) the school should be notified by email or letter beforehand.

Authorised absences arise from a decision by the school not parents and can be one of the following, which is not intended as an exhaustive list

- Genuine illness or injury preventing attendance
- Unavoidable causes, which covers unexpected crises in the child's circumstances, e.g. major domestic upsets such as bereavement, or severe weather conditions which make travel impossible
- School beyond walking distance (2 miles) and no transport provided
- Advanced permission of the school for the following:
 - Exceptional family reasons
 - Interview at another school
 - Holidays
 - Approved public performance

Please note that if your child has 3 or more days in a row off with illness (leading to less than 90% attendance) you will be requested to provide medical evidence to explain these absences. If parents are unable to justify regular absences with medical evidence, further absences will also be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

If your child's absence has not been reported to the school, the school Attendance Officer will call contact parents to enquire about the reason(s) for absence and will follow up as necessary.

RFSS discourages the taking of holidays during term time; it is not an automatic legal right to take holidays during term time and parents should not expect this - as such the Headteacher will normally grant permission only in the most exceptional cases e.g. on compassionate grounds. If a request is refused, and parents decide to take their child(ren) on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the parent(s)/carer(s) may be fined.

Monitoring

Attendance will be monitored regularly at RFSS and all absences/patterns enquired into, tracked and recorded. Unauthorised absences jeopardise a pupil's educational progress and welfare, and will be monitored very closely. Any suspicion that absence may be linked to radicalisation must be managed within the Child Protection & Safeguarding policy requirements relating to the Prevent duty.

A register of attendance will be taken at the beginning of school and immediately after lunch.

If a child arrives at school after the register has been taken but before the register closes they will be marked down as being late. Once the register has closed an unauthorised absence will be registered unless a valid reason is available in writing.

We will conduct 'lateness checks' every half term and any child who has been late more than 5 times during this period will take a 'late letter' home to his/her parents/guardians. If the lateness persists, further letters will be sent home and parents will be invited into school for an attendance clinic meeting to offer assistance.

Lateness will be monitored also as RFSS places great store on personal development and organisational skills including punctuality. If a child has the equivalent of one late per week the school will, in the first instance, write to the parents or carers to inform them of this. If the lateness persists in subsequent half terms then their school will request a meeting with parents or carers to offer assistance.

We will also arrange for staff to carry out random checks during lesson time in our schools to identify any internal truancy that may be taking place.

Reports to parents and carers, online and on paper, will include the child's attendance and punctuality record.