



RIDGEWOOD
HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually

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Contents

Aims	3
(Department for Education – Advice on School Attendance (www.education.gov.uk))	3
Legislation and guidance	3
What the law says about School Attendance:	3
Roles and Responsibilities	4
The School must:	4
Parents / Carers must:	4
Medical appointments must be made out of school time wherever possible.	5
The Student must:	5
Procedures	5
Daily procedures to support good attendance	5
Promoting and incentivising good attendance	6
Registration of Students	6
Registration Codes	6
School monitoring and the promotion of good attendance and support/intervention with poor attendance	7
Lateness	7
Absence due to Illness	7
Leave of Absence	7
School Closures	7
Analysis of data to support attendance	8
Reducing Persistent absence and Severe absence	8
Stages of Attendance Support with Actions and Responsibility	9
Penalty Notices and Fines	10
Leave of absence	10
Prosecution	10
Education Support Service (ESS)	11
Appendix 1: attendance codes	12

Version	Date	Amendments
V0	01/09/2022	New policy format, first issue.
V1	12/06/2023	Rewording/clarification for 'lateness' section.
V2	01/09/2023	Annual review.

Aims

“Regular attendance at school is crucial in raising standards of education and in ensuring every child can meet their full potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The Government expects:

- *Schools and Local Authorities to:*
 - *Reduce absence including persistent absence.*
 - *Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.*
 - *Act early to address any patterns of absence.*
- *Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend early and ensure that all students are punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly”.*

(Department for Education – Advice on School Attendance (www.education.gov.uk))

The Head Teachers and Governing Bodies of local schools take very seriously their responsibilities for students’ attendance. We work very closely with the primary schools listed below and the schools in the Stour Vale MAT. Our policy, has considered the attendance policy agreed by the Head Teachers and Governing Bodies of the following schools:

- Earls High School
- Redhill School
- Amblecote Primary School
- Gig Mill Primary School
- St. James’s C of E Primary School
- The Ridge Primary School

Ridgewood High School believes that school Attendance is a key part of children growing up to become happy and productive members of society. We see good attendance as a vital part in ensuring that students are Ready, Respectful and Safe. We regard 98% as the measure of good attendance and expect all students to aspire towards this enabling them to maximise their life chances. We celebrate good attendance through individual rewards, parental communication and tutor group competition.

Legislation and guidance

What the law says about School Attendance:

All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a full-time education. Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1966 says: *“If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered student at a school, fails to attend regularly, without reasonable justification, then his/her parent is guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted”.*

This policy meets the requirements of the [working-together-to-improve-school-attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold

Ridgewood High School believes that school Attendance is a key part of children growing up to become happy and productive members of society. We regard 98% as the measure of good attendance and expect all students to aspire towards this enabling them to maximise their life chances. We celebrate good attendance through individual rewards and tutor group competitions.

Children are required to attend school for 190 days (380 sessions) in any single academic year (September-July). The school expects all children to attend every day that the school is open and on time for registration. Absence that falls below 90% is categorised by the Government as persistent absence.

Only the school can approve absence. The school does not authorise absence without good reason or exceptional circumstances and is not bound to accept the reason presented.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School must:

- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
Mr. C Ewing: Assistant Headteacher: Head of Attendance 01384 818445 cewing@ridgewood.dudley.sch.uk
- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, students and parents/carers understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Keep regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance registers. These are completed at the beginning of every session throughout the school day using SIMs data management system.

(See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes. Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.)

- Ensure that parents/carers are aware of the times for the beginning of each session, school term dates and other INSET days when a student is not expected to attend school.
- Notify the parents of any immediate school closure e.g. due to bad weather via text, e-mail or the school website.
- Respond to requests for attendance data from the Education Support Service, Local Authority, Department for Education, OFSTED.
- Present attendance data regularly to the Governing Body and parents.
- Notify parents as early as possible where their child's attendance is a cause for concern.
- Work alongside parents to improve attendance working with other outside agencies where appropriate.
- Notify the Education Support Service of individual children whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Work jointly with the local authority on an agreed approach/plan for severely absent students.
- Inform a student's social worker if they have an unexplained absence or leave the school role.

Parents / Carers must:

- Ensure that their child is able to attend school for the whole academic year by ensuring their child attends school unless there is a reason for the absence which has been approved by the school.

Medical appointments must be made out of school time wherever possible.

If a parent or carer considers their child has an illness which may warrant them remaining at home then they must:

- Consider first of all whether they feel that their child would still be able to take part in the majority, if not all, of the school's activities. In this case, they should still send their child to school. Should the child become unwell during the day and/or if the school feels that they are no longer able to participate in school activities, the school will contact parents to collect their child.
- If parents feel that their child cannot take part in the school's activities and would be better remaining at home then they must contact the school (01384 818445) or via Edulink as soon as possible on the first and any subsequent days of absence before 9:30 am. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of this policy. The person ringing will be asked to identify themselves and clearly give the reason for the absence. This information will be recorded.
- If a child has a medical appointment then parents/carers must: Contact the school prior to the appointment to ask for approved arrangements for the child to be collected/returned to school as close to the appointment time as possible. If the school has concerns about the child's attendance, a copy of the appointment time/letter may be requested.
- If parents/carers know their child will be late for school they must: Contact the school as soon as possible (01384 818445) to tell them that the child will arrive late and make every effort to get the child to school as soon as possible. Positive and negative sanctions will be used to encourage punctuality.
- If parents/carers are having difficulty getting their child to attend school they must: Notify the school immediately (01384 818445) and contact the appropriate person:

Head of Year	Support and Guidance Officer
Year 7 – Mrs Gower	Year 7 – Mrs Du-Mont
Year 8 Mrs Shakespeare	Year 11 – Mrs Bishop
Year 9 – Miss Billingham	Year 9 – Mrs Harrison
Year 10 – Mrs Bastock	Year 10 – Miss Jones
Year 11 – Mr Wilks	Year 11 – Mr Sidaway

The school will make every effort to meet with parents and attempt to rectify the problem.

- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Work with the school, other agencies and local authority if their child is at risk of becoming Persistently Absent to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support in the form of attendance support plans.

The Student must:

- to attend school regularly and punctually arriving on the school site by 8.35am.
- to arrive in registration for 8.40am.
- to attend registration even if arriving late between 8.40am and 9.05am.
- to register at student reception if arriving at school after 9.05am.
- to attend any reparation or support issued by the Head of Year or Subject Teacher for regular and persistent lateness.
- to sign out at student reception when leaving the site for approved appointments.

Procedures

Daily procedures to support good attendance

- Meet and greet at the gate.
- Access to breakfast clubs when available/library to support early arrival students.

- Use of form time to promote good attendance through weekly PowerPoint and form competitions which are attendance based.
- First day phone-calling for students whose absence the school has not received notice of.
- Support and Guidance officer phone calls to follow-up unexplained absences and high absence students.
- Attendance discussions with students by support and guidance officers.
- Tutor discussions with students about absence.
- Phone calls home from S & G officer to discuss reasons for absence with parents/carers.
- First day phone calls on the day of absence or the morning after absence prior to school to check on well-being.
- Parent/carer meetings to help students in eradicating any barriers to attendance/learning that are causing poor attendance with S and G Officer.
- Parent/carer meetings to help students in eradicating any barriers to attendance/learning that are causing poor attendance with the Head of Year.
- Attendance Clinics – student, parents completing surveys on barriers to good attendance with the Head of Year leading to an Improvement action plan.
- Attendance Clinic Plus – student, parents, Head of Year and Assistant Headteacher leading to a warning of involvement of external agencies to support improvement in attendance or referral to the Education Support Service for a Penalty Fine.
- Involvement of outside agencies:
 - School nurse
 - Educational Psychologist team
 - WHAT centre
 - Family Solutions-intervention and prevention
 - Early Help referrals or referral to the ESS.
 - Children’s Services
 - Reflexions

Promoting and incentivising good attendance

- Attendance noticeboard advertising whole school, year group and tutor group attendance including 98% club members.
- Weekly PowerPoint for tutors to highlight tutor attendance leagues.
- Promote the names of students with high or improved attendance.
- Edulink award for attendance half-termly for students.
- Send home praise e-mails to students with improved attendance.

Registration of Students

A register will be taken during registration by the form tutor (or other designated member of staff) and then every lesson consecutively from period 1-5 by the subject teacher (or other designated member of staff.)

The register will be taken through Edulink or the SIMS Attendance Module. It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor, Subject Teacher or Other Designated member of staff to ensure that a true record is entered and recorded. A paper copy of the register will be taken if an electronic version is not possible to complete.

Supply agency staff are given a login to the Edulink/SIMs system and instructions on how to complete the electronic register for the classes that they are teaching that day.

Registration Codes

The school will use the registration codes as detailed in Appendix 1. These will mirror The Department for Education codes and will be updated as necessary.

School monitoring and the promotion of good attendance and support/intervention with poor attendance

The school will use a set of monitoring procedures for the attendance of students using the Edulink/SIMs Attendance Module that are set out in the table below: Stages of Attendance Support with Actions and Responsibility.

The school will use these procedures which promote good attendance and support poor attendance.

Lateness

A bell is rung at 8.35am so that children are at their form room or assembly by 8.40 am. A child who arrives after 9.05am but before the register closes will be marked 'late' and must sign in at the office. Registers close 30 minutes after the start of registration. Children arriving after the close of the registers are coded as 'unauthorised absence' and this will have a negative impact on their attendance figures.

Absence due to illness

Children who are genuinely poorly are not expected to attend school and an authorised code will be used (See appendix 1). However, where the child's repeated absence due to illness is becoming a concern and reaches 9 days in any school year, the school may request evidence to inform a decision to authorise any further absence. The Attendance Officer may ask the parent to provide information to demonstrate that the child is too unwell to return/attend school e.g. prescriptions, appointment cards/letters, medication boxes with the date of prescription still on it.

The school may decide to remove the right to the authorised absence due to illness and record any absence as 'unauthorised'. The school will notify the parent of this decision in writing. In order to avoid this, it is essential that parents inform the school of any health concerns that may be affecting their child's ability to attend school regularly.

Leave of Absence

Any request for 'leave' must be put in writing stating exceptional circumstances. This must be received by the Attendance Officer no later than **28 days before** the proposed leave is due to take place. In making an application for leave, the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides must make the case that their child will need to be treated differently from the norm. Each request must meet specific 'exceptional circumstances' which would not be expected to be repeated within an academic year, or to occur regularly throughout a child's school life. Where parents/carers are only able to take holiday at specified times, owing to the nature of their employment, the school will request to see written evidence of this from the employer.

Holiday/Any other Absence/Leave taken without a formal request being made to the Attendance Officer will remain unauthorised even if the parent enters a request on returning from the leave.

School Closures

The academic year is 190 days. Schools are also required to have an additional 5 days that are used for staff training; often called INSET (In Service Training) Days. These days are not part of the 190 days which is every child's free entitlement and schools endeavour to schedule these to minimise inconvenience to parents and carers.

The Head Teacher will make every effort to ensure that the school remains open for 190 days. However, in some circumstances, the school may have to close. The Head Teacher must always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person who uses the school site, students, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors. If at any point, to use the school building would be detrimental to a person or persons' health, safety and welfare, then the Head Teacher must close part or all of the school.

If a decision is made to close part or all of the school, the Head Teacher will endeavour to inform parents of that decision and the details of any arrangements that have been put in place. If the Head Teacher decides to close part or all of the school, then the register for those students affected is closed for the day and coded as an enforced school closure. This does not affect a child's attendance record.

Parents should always assume that the school will remain open during term time unless they hear otherwise.

Analysis of data to support attendance

- Attendance and PA figures are sent weekly to the MAT for comparison across the schools in the MAT and a summary re-circulated to provide an up-to-date local picture of attendance.
- Daily attendance dashboard produced by the Support and Guidance administrator and circulated to staff who have a responsibility in supporting student attendance.
- Every two weeks, weekly SIMs heat map used to analyse individual student attendance on a weekly basis. Heat map to be grouped by Head of Attendance to analyse key groups of students.
- Broken weeks data to be used to target students for support and not just overall attendance.
- A weekly attendance e-mail sent to all staff with attached to it:
 - the weekly form attendance grid
 - cumulative yearly totals by form
- Weekly SLT agenda item of attendance data to robustly challenge progress.
- A Bi-weekly meeting of the Assistant Headteacher; head of attendance and each Year Leader to organize actions that need to be taken following the attendance of the previous weeks.
- Half-termly whole school, year group and student group attendance analysis to include attendance and PA statistics.

Reducing Persistent absence and Severe absence

- Rigorous application.
- Phone calls home from S & G officer to discuss reasons for absence with parents/carers.
- First day phone calls on the day of absence or the morning after absence prior to school to check on well-being.
- Parent/carers meetings to help students in eradicating any barriers to attendance/learning that are causing poor attendance with S and G Officer.
- Parent/carers meetings to help students in eradicating any barriers to attendance/learning that are causing poor attendance with the Head of Year.
- Attendance Support Plan Meetings – student, parents completing surveys on barriers to good attendance with the Head of Year leading to an attendance Support plan to involve any outside agencies which are applicable.
- Attendance Support Plan reviews– student, parents, Head of Year and Assistant Headteacher Head of Attendance leading to an early help referral and a warning of involvement of external agencies to support improvement in attendance or referral to the Education Support Service for a Penalty Fine.
- Home-visits to replace in-school meetings where appropriate or perceived as beneficial.
- Involvement of outside agencies:
 - School nurse
 - Educational Psychologist team
 - WHAT centre
 - Family Solutions-intervention and prevention
 - Early Help referrals
 - Children's Services
 - Reflexions

Stages of Attendance Support with Actions and Responsibility

Support	Possible Triggers for stage	Actions Taken	Outcome of Actions	Lead
Daily Attendance calls	Daily attendance calls to students not in school where notification has not been received from parents, had low attendance in the previous year or are Pupil Premium.	Text and follow-up phone call home.	Students in school or knowledge of student safety known. Communication of absence to staff.	S & G
Safe and Well check	Safeguarding concern students: if no notification of absence received or 3 days of absence with no notification or contact with home.	Home visit welfare check.	Student seen and if not seen then police and any outside agency involved contacted.	Pastoral Team with a HOY or DSL
Attendance Stage 1	6 sessions of absence = 3days. Pattern of broken weeks or missed sessions above year average.	Phone call home by SGO highlighting attendance concerns. Tutor discussion with student.	Stage 1 letter sent home	SGO/ HOY
Attendance Stage 2	12 sessions of absence=6 days. Continued pattern of broken weeks or missed sessions.	Informal attendance concern meeting of parents with Support and Guidance officer (S & G). Completion of student attendance questionnaire.	Stage 2 letter sent home. Barriers to attendance identified. Early Help Offered Follow up phone call 2 weeks later.	HOY
Attendance Stage 3	18 sessions of absence =9 days. Student now PA with ESS referral levels of absence approaching. Personal student issues emerging.	Discussion with student Further phone calls to parents. Attendance Clinic meeting of parents with Head of Year (HOY).	Attendance support plan initiated and a copy sent home. Possible outside agency support sort, RIPE and Early Help referral. Stage 3 letter sent home including Medical evidence request and Education Support Service (ESS) explanation. Raise profile of student with Local Authority attendance team. Follow up phone call 2 weeks later/review meeting 4 weeks later.	HOY (CEG?)

Attendance Stage 4	24 sessions of absence = 12 days. Attendance Support Plan has not been successful so student continues to have attendance at PA and ESS referral levels with no/little improvement in attendance. Any outside agency support has not brought about improved attendance. Possible negative response from parent and/or student to school support.	Attendance contract meeting with parents.	Attendance support plan reviewed, signed and a copy sent home. Outside agency support sort. Early help referral offered again if not taken up the first time. Stage 4 letter sent home including ESS warning. Raise profile of student with Local Authority attendance team. No further authorised absences.	HOY/ CEG
Attendance Stage 5	30 sessions of absence = 15days. Attendance Support Plan has not been successful despite reviews and target setting. Absence meets ESS referral requirements. Family not responding to Early Help support or other outside agency involvement which has now failed or broken down.	Parents contacted/met with and informed of referral to the ESS.	Stage 5 letter sent ESS Referral made. No further authorised absences	CEG

Penalty Notices and Fines

Leave of absence – Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 a Headteacher MAY NOT authorise a leave of absence in term time for a holiday. A Headteacher MAY (at his or her own discretion) authorise absence for exceptional circumstances. An application for a leave of absence must be made in writing to the school. Dudley Local Authorities Code of Conduct states that Penalty Notices can be issued where a student’s absence has not been authorised by the school. This includes: a number of unauthorised absences, within a running academic year; one off instances of irregular attendance; and where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours.

Penalty Notices are imposed upon each parent/carer/responsible adult per child and are fines of £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The parents can be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made and under S444(i) Education Act 1996 where there is sufficient evidence. There is no right to appeal against the penalty notices.

Prosecution

If parents/carers/responsible adults fail to meet all of the above, they may be prosecuted. This could result in each parent/carer/responsible adult receiving a fine of up to £2,500 and/or three months imprisonment for failing to ensure their child regularly attends school.

Education Support Service (ESS)

The Education Support Service is responsible for ensuring that parents meet their legal obligations in respect of their child's education and in doing so they may issue penalty fines, or take legal proceedings to ensure that you do so.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body of school have a responsibility to inform the ESS when a child's attendance becomes a matter of concern and to support the ESS in the actions that they may take.

Education Outcomes

Education Support Service

Children's Services

Dudley Council

Council House,

1 Priory Road,

Dudley,

DY1 1HF

01384 815743

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Present		
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveler absence	Pupil from a Traveler community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
Other codes		
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day