



# Attendance Policy

***Our pupils say attending school is important because...***

*we learn new things and skills  
it will help us have a good future  
it prepares us for the next stage of our education  
I get to play with my friends!*

Reviewed: February 2021

Next review: February 2022

## **Rationale**

At Rivers Primary Academy we believe that each and every one of our children deserves the very best and each and every one of our children is special in their own unique way. All of our staff work hard to ensure that every child has the best possible learning journey and we strongly believe that together as a community 'we inspire to aspire'. In order for our children to learn and thrive, they must regularly attend school.

Rivers Primary Academy recognises that attendance is a safeguarding matter and that poor attendance may indicate that a child's welfare is at risk.

Rivers Primary Academy also recognises that parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

## **Aims of this policy**

At Rivers Primary Academy we aim to:

- Ensure that all children attend our academy for the maximum time possible and at least to the level of national average attendance.
- Ensure that effective attendance practice is understood and implemented by all staff and is closely linked to safeguarding practice.
- Promote punctuality in attendance.
- Support parents and carers in their legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

To these ends, this policy is designed to:

- Promote regular attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every student has access to the full time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

## **Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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 legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance.

## **Attendance Register**

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

At Rivers Primary Academy, the gates open at 8.30 am, children can enter their class at this time. Children arriving after 9.00 am will be required to enter school by the front office and a reason will need to be provided and recorded as L. Morning registers are kept open until 9.30 am, children arriving after this time will be recorded as U. The afternoon register is taken after lunch no later than 1.10 pm.

Persistent lateness will result in meeting with the pastoral team or referral to the Education Welfare Officer. Arriving late to school means that pupils miss important input from teachers which impacts upon their learning. It is also very disruptive for the teachers and other class members.

See Appendix A for the DfE attendance codes.

### **Unplanned absence**

Parents or carers must notify Rivers Primary Academy on 01922 710164 on each day of an unplanned absence, specifying the reason for the absence by 8.30 am or as soon as practically possible.

Absence due to illness will usually be authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. When the academy is concerned about the authenticity of the illness, we will ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card. If we are not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in this instance parents and carers will be notified.

Walsall Council will issue fixed penalty notices on behalf of Rivers Primary Academy for unauthorised absences of 4 consecutive days or more.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Advance notice is required for authorising these absences and evidence of appointments must be provided. We encourage parents and carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. The absence will be marked as unauthorised for pupils who do not attend school around their medical appointments when able.

### **Daily absence check**

At the start of each day, the class registers are checked and if a child is absent and no communication has been received from the child's parent or carer, then a phone call will be made to find out the whereabouts of the student and the reason for absence. All contact numbers that have been provided to the academy will be tried and messages will be left where necessary. Absence is also followed up to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken. When a child is unexpectedly absent, all efforts must be made to assure their whereabouts and welfare as quickly as possible.

Following the daily absence check, a home visit may take place at the discretion of the academy's Pastoral Lead. A visit will always be carried out by members of the academy's pastoral team on the third day of no contact. These visits will continue until absence information has been secured. Children whose attendance is of a concern will be monitored by Walsall Council's Education Welfare Service.

### **Children Missing in Education**

The DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' states 'schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on

repeat occasions. Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

### Reporting to parents and carers

Rivers Primary Academy will report student attendance to parents and carers termly at parents evening or more often when monitoring is taking place.

### Granting approval for term-time absence

At Rivers Primary Academy, we consider carefully term dates to ensure families are able to enjoy full weeks in and out of school. Leave of absence during term time will not be granted unless 'exceptional circumstances' are considered, this will be granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

When requesting a holiday during term time parents and carers must complete the holiday request form (Appendix B) and meet with the headteacher. No holidays will be agreed. Walsall Council will issue a penalty notice fine of £60 per parent per child, if paid within 21 days, going up to £120 if paid within 22 to 28 days.

### Legal sanctions

Rivers Primary Academy will refer parents of compulsory school age children to Walsall Council's Education Welfare Service where there has been unauthorised absences who will issue a penalty notice.

### Strategies for promoting attendance

At Rivers Primary Academy we promote attendance through the use of rewards, pastoral groups, sanctions, assemblies and meetings with parents and carers.

100 - 97%	96 - 95%	94 - 93%	92 - 91%	90% & Below
Gold	Silver	Bronze	Orange	Red
Up to 1 week of school missed	Up to 1.5 weeks of school missed	Up to 2.5 weeks of school missed	Up to 3 weeks of school missed	Over 3.5 weeks of school missed
	Dojo Alert	Letter alerting, meeting with pastoral lead (Appendix C)	Letter alerting, meeting with pastoral lead and SLT member (Appendix D)	Attendance monitored by Walsall Council's Education Welfare Service

At Rivers Primary Academy we monitor class attendance closely. We celebrate attendance in the following ways:

- When daily class attendance is 100% children are rewarded with a sticker.
- Classes whose weekly attendance is 97% or higher are rewarded with an amazing attendance activity during the following Monday afternoon.
- Sharing attendance figures with parents on Class Dojo and weekly newsletter.

Each term, an attendance assembly is held where:

- Colour banded certificates for gold, silver and bronze attenders are shared along with tokens to exchange at our school toyshop.

At the end of the year, every child who has reached attendance of 97% and above is invited into school for an amazing attendance adventure.

### **Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality**

Rivers Primary Academy will monitor and scrutinise student absence, punctuality and attendance patterns on a daily basis.

Parents are:

- Responsible for ensuring that their children of statutory school age are receiving their entitlement to full-time education.
- Notify school on the first and every day of absence before 8.30 am by phone

Class Teachers will:

- Be primarily responsible for the recording the attendance on a day to day basis.
- Communicate with home to celebrate attendance using ClassDojo.
- Communicate with home when attendance drops below 97%
- Speak to parents at parents evening.
- Be responsible for promoting good attendance.
- Follow the academy's attendance policy and work with students where there are concerns.

Pastoral Team will:

- Make daily absence calls as required.
- Compile a less than 96% attendance report on a weekly basis.
- Produce a weekly attendance sheet.
- Make first day calls and safe and well checks carried out on the 3rd day of absence (first day for a vulnerable child).
- Update weekly newsletter attendance section.
- Update attendance board weekly.

Pastoral Lead will:

- Make first day calls and safe and well checks carried out on the 3rd day of absence (first day for a vulnerable child).
- Liaise with Walsall Council's Education Welfare Service.
- Begin children at risk of missing education processes.
- Lead attendance clinics.
- Monitors attendance data at academy and individual student level daily
- Follows the academy attendance policy to follow up with families where attendance drops or is not yet high enough, working with relevant academy staff and external

agencies.

SLT Attendance Lead will:

- Share attendance data to the Local Advisory Board
- Present attendance data weekly at SLT.
- Attend Walsall Council panels.

The Headteacher will:

- Meet with families with regards to term time holiday requests.

## Appendix A

### Absence and attendance codes

/	Present in school morning session
\	Present in school afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register has closed
<b>Present at approved off-site educational activity</b>	
B	Off-site educational activity
D	Dual registered
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sport activity
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
<b>Not Present in school</b>	
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
H	Holiday authorised by the school
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent from school without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
<b>Administrative codes</b>	
X	Not required to be in school
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure

## Appendix B

### APPLICATION FOR STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as:

- Leave for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Leave to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time. Students may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Leave for important religious observance but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- Leave which takes the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are return from long operation tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time. • Leave which makes reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Leave for families who may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

The Head Teacher will take into account a child's previous record of attendance when making decisions. The child's education will be paramount, the academy and local academy body are committed to raising standards and therefore the educational needs of the child will be critical in the decision making process.

This form should be completed and a meeting booked with the Head Teacher to enable them to decide whether to authorise the application for leave. If the leave is taken without the authorisation of the Head Teacher, a Penalty Notice will be issued. The Academy expects every student to achieve at least 97% attendance

<b>Name of Student</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Reason for Application</b>	
<b>Start Date:</b>	<b>End Date:</b>
Authorise the Leave / Unauthorise the Leave	
<b>Head Teacher's Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

## APPENDIX C



Dear [INSERT PARENT/CARER SALUTATION]

**Internal Formal Process**  
**[FIRST NAME] [SURNAME]**

As you are aware, we have been closely monitoring [FIRST NAME]'s attendance to school. At Rivers Primary Academy we expect all pupils to have a minimum of 97% attendance (or no more than 5 days absence) in order for them to achieve their full academic potential.

[FIRST NAME]'s current level of attendance is [INSERT ATTENDANCE % AND DAYS] and has fallen below 95% which is below our academy's target of 97%.

Due to the amount of learning that [FIRST NAME] has now missed we would like to meet with you to discuss this. I would like to invite you to meet with me to discuss the reasons for absence and how we can work together to improve [HIS/HER] attendance. All parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

This meeting is scheduled for:

Date of meeting: [INSERT DATE]

Time of meeting: [INSERT TIME]

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the academy office on 01922 710164 so that we can arrange a mutually convenient time.

Thank you for working in partnership with us to ensure that [INSERT NAME] achieves [HIS/HER] full academic potential.

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Lead

## **APPENDIX D**

Dear [INSERT PARENT/CARER SALUTATION]

### **Internal Formal Process - Stage 2 [FIRST NAME] [SURNAME]**

We were disappointed that you were unable to make today's meeting regarding [FIRST NAME]'s attendance.

The meeting was held in your absence and the minutes and action plan are enclosed with this letter.

We would like to reaffirm that we have [FIRST NAME]'s best interests at heart and believe that working together offers the best chance of success.

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Lead

## APPENDIX E

Dear [INSERT PARENT/CARER SALUTATION]

### **Internal Formal Process - Stage 3** **[FIRST NAME] [SURNAME]**

We remain extremely concerned about [FIRST NAME]'s attendance. At Rivers Primary Academy we expect pupil's attendance to be 97% in order for them to achieve their full potential. [FIRST NAME]'s attendance is currently only [PERCENTAGE AND DAYS].

[FIRST NAME] continues to miss a significant amount of learning. We have reserved an appointment for you to discuss this with a member of our academy's senior leadership team. All parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

Date of meeting: [INSERT DATE]

Time of meeting: [INSERT TIME]

[FIRST NAME]'s attendance will continue to be closely monitored. If attendance does not improve during this monitoring period we will be referring your child's case to Walsall Council's Education Welfare office.

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Lead

## **APPENDIX F**

Dear [INSERT PARENT/CARER SALUTATION]

### **Internal Formal Process - Stage 3 [FIRST NAME] [SURNAME]**

We were disappointed that you were unable to make today's meeting regarding [FIRST NAME]'s attendance.

The meeting was held in your absence and the minutes and action plan are enclosed with this letter.

We would like to reaffirm that we have [FIRST NAME]'s best interests at heart and believe that working together offers the best chance of success.

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Lead

## APPENDIX G

Dear [PARENT CARER NAME]

As you are aware, we have been closely monitoring [FIRST NAME]'s attendance. At Rivers Primary Academy, we expect all pupils to reach a minimum of 97% attendance (or no more than 5 days absence) in order for them to achieve their full potential.

[FIRST NAME]'s current level of attendance is [INSERT ATTENDANCE %] and has fallen below 90% which means they are now categorised as persistently absent.

Due to the amount of learning that [FIRST NAME] has now missed we would like to meet with you to create a plan to improve [HIS/HER] attendance.

All parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and as [FIRST NAME]'s attendance is below 90% Walsall Council's Attendance Officer will also join us at this meeting.

This meeting will take place at Rivers Primary Academy on:

Date of meeting:

Time of meeting: [INSERT TIME]

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the academy office on 01922 710164 so that we can arrange a convenient time.

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Lead

cc Attendance Officer, Walsall Council

Enc Registration certificate