



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Ravensthorpe Primary School

Mel BARNES

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ravensthorpe Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the Policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.
- 1.3 Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve their best as they progress through the school. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.
- 1.4 All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all of our children are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2. Staff Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Attendance Officer, Ms Christina Clarke (who is appointed as Attendance Officer for the PKAT Trust and working directly with Ravensthorpe Primary School from September 2021 will oversee, direct and coordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Attendance Officer will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with Mrs Bowyer (Head of School) and/or Mrs Burgess (Deputy Head and Acting EYFS Phase Leader)
- 2.2 Data will be made regularly available to all staff, students/students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. The Attendance Officer will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

- 2.3 Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are: (a) everyone at Ravensthorpe Primary School is responsible for promoting and monitoring attendance, however to discuss any attendance issues you may have in relation to your child(ren), please refer to the following staff: (i) your child’s classroom teacher, (ii) Mrs Burgess – Deputy Head and Acting EYFS Phase Leader, (iii) Mrs Bowyer, Head of School (iv) Ms Clarke who is appointed as Attendance Officer for the PKAT Trust and working directly with Ravensthorpe Primary School from September 2021

3. Why Regular Attendance is so Important - Learning

- 3.1 Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.
- 3.2 Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

4. Why Regular Attendance is so Important - Safeguarding

- 4.1 Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- (a) Attendance
- (b) Behaviour Management
- (c) Health and Safety
- (d) Access to the Curriculum
- (e) Anti- bullying

- 4.2 Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.
- 4.3 Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, students and all members of school staff.
- 4.4 To help us all to focus on this we will:
 - (a) Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
 - (b) Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
 - (c) Celebrate and reward good attendance;

5. The Law relating to Attendance

- 5.1 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:
 - (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
 - (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

- 5.3 The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend.
- 5.4 Under this judgement a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

6. The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

7. Understanding types of absence

7.1 Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

7.2 Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

7.3 ****Please note****: We expect any non-urgent medical or dental appointments to be made outside of school hours, wherever possible. Where that is not possible, the authority to be absent from school for that appointment will only be for time to attend the appointment itself: All morning/all afternoon/all day absences for a medical/dental appointment will not be authorised. We are determined to ensure that students are able to participate in lessons and the wider teaching programme generally, and extended hours of absence is unacceptable and will be marked as 'unauthorised'

7.4 There is now an extended hours GP service provided by the Greater Peterborough GP Hub, with appointments available to registered patients between 6.30pm – 8.30pm Monday-Friday, and from 9am till 5pm at weekends and Bank Holidays. This service offers access to appointments outside of school hours, so your child does not need to be taken out of school for GP appointments and therefore does not miss any education. Additionally, this service ensure that working parent/carers do not have to take time off work to take their child to the Doctors, and therefore do not have issues with their employer when their child is poorly, which reduces the stress of having a poorly child.

7.5 For more information visit www.greaterpeterboroughgps.nhs.uk or speak to your GP surgery reception.

7.6 When a medical appointment is taken within the school day, please note that we authorise the time away from school for the medical appointment only – we expect students to attend school before/after appointments, allowing, of course, for transport/travel times. We do not authorise an entire day absence for one short appointment.

7.7 Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. These include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance.
- This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

8 Other Reasons for School Absence

- 8.1 Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.
- 8.2 A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.
- 8.3 We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.
- 8.4 PA students are tracked and monitored carefully and parent/carers are informed of any concerns at an early stage with an invitation to talk over any problems and be part of the solution.

9 Absence Procedures

- 9.1 If your child is absent you must:
- (a) Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence; Call the school on the following days where that absence goes on for longer than just one day
 - (b) You MUST provide a medical appointment card, a screenshot of a text or letter from that medical professional/ practice.
 - (c) Telephone school Main office, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.
- 9.2 If your child is absent we will:
- 1 Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
 - 2 Conduct a home visit if absence is persistent and/or ongoing and we have been unable to reach you by telephone and have not heard from you;
 - 3 Invite you in to discuss the situation with us; this may take place virtually on Microsoft Teams
 - 4 Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carers for each child.

10 Parental Contact Details

- 10.1 Where a child is absent from school without explanation there is a serious concern about the child's whereabouts and it could be that a child's welfare is at risk. Please make it a priority to call the school and explain a child's absence so that we can establish the whereabouts of the child. 10. Telephone numbers
- 10.2 There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number/ contact details and including if someone is no longer a contact due to illness/ deceased/ other reason – if we don't then something important may be missed and we may send information to someone who is no longer a contact and this may cause distress, particularly if they are deceased. It is the family's responsibility to make us aware of all changes in a timely manner

11 Where Attendance Problems Have Arisen

- 11.1 Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff in resolving any problems together. Similarly, the school may contact the parent/carers if levels of attendance fall to a level that causes concern.
- 11.2 Early intervention in attendance issues is nearly always successful. Please contact Mrs Mackereth in the first instance. In practical terms, a chat with parents/carers (when any problems can be discussed together with ideas for solutions) can often resolve problems before they escalate.
- 11.3 Where an attendance problem cannot be resolved under 11.2 above, the school may consider taking enforcement action where the attendance issue remains unresolved. The Attendance will continue with attempts to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the School can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

12. Lateness

- 12.1 Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss important work, and do not spend time with their class teacher/form tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- 12.2 How we manage lateness:

The school day and lessons starts at different times according to Year Group:

Reception	8.50am	3.00pm
Year 1	8.50am	3.00pm
Year 2	9:00am	3:10pm
Year 3	8:50am	3.00pm
Year 4	9.00am	3.10pm
Year 5	8.50am	3.00pm
Year 6	9.00am	3.10pm

- 12.3 We expect your child to be in class at that time, not walking into the building, as it may take them an additional 5 minutes to get to their lesson.

- 12.4 Where a child is over 30 minutes late from close of registration, that child will be marked with a U code which represents an unauthorised absence and may affect an attendance percentage meaning the parent/carer could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- 12.5 If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

13. Leave of Absence

- 13.1 Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstance in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time, particularly for holidays, when there are 175 holiday days in order to do this.
- 13.2 Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.
- 13.3 There remains no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.
- 13.4 All requests for Leave of Absence must be made **at least 4 weeks in advance**. While considering whether to authorise this leave of absence, the Head of School will consider the circumstances of each application individually. Parents must not ask class teachers or other staff for permission to take time away from school, as the only member of staff who authorises absences is Mrs Bowyer, the Head of School
- 13.5 It is important that you understand that we may only authorise such absences in exceptional circumstances. Please note; in order to make an informed decision, we are required to request evidence for your request for leave of absence. The form makes it clear what we require as evidence.
- 13.6 Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/ or different (i.e. extended from leave requested) from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice fine, per parent/carer, per child.

14. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School

- 14.1 A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria are met:
- 1 The level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of 10% or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (a maximum of two penalty notices may be issued in any academic year); it may then be referred to court proceedings by the LA
 - 2 A single unauthorised absence event of at least 3 consecutive school days (6 consecutive sessions, e.g. 3 morning/ AM and 3 afternoon/ PM sessions);
 - 3 Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contributing to a level of unauthorised absence at 10% or above;
 - 4 Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification and prior agreement by the Head of School, Mrs Bowyer.

5 Students identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

14.2 For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website

15. Deletions from Register

15.1 Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

15.2 This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies:

under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and:

(a) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);

(b) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;

16 Version History

Version	Action	Responsible	Date
1.0	Draft Compiled	Christina Clarke	22 September 2021
	Approved Head of School	Victoria Bowyer	1 November 2021
	Approved by Governors	Joe Smith	10th November 2021
	Published	Melanie Barnes	11th November 2021