

The Raleigh School Attendance Policy

Agreed January 2021

Next review 2024

This policy follows Surrey County Council guidelines. We are committed to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

We firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Good attendance at school is important for a child's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. All absence figures are reported to the MAT, the LA, the Department for Education (DfE) and attendance figures are celebrated and discussed half termly in class and during assembly, on the newsletter, at parents evening and are recorded on a child's annual report and discussed at Parents' evenings.

The School aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school
- make parent/carers aware of their legal requirements.

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect parents/carers to:

- to make their child's attendance at school a high priority and share this belief with them
- contact the school promptly whenever any problems occurs that may keep the child away from school
- make the office aware by leaving a message on the automated system which is available 24/7 whenever their child is unable to attend and notify the office in advance of dental and medical appointments using a standard form
- ensure their child arrives in school no earlier than 8:40am prepared, fed and rested to cope with the school day
- collect their children on time.

We expect that school staff will:

- make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents on that day when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain reason for the absence
- encourage good attendance
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance using a system of standard letters
- follow up concerns over attendance of children in their class with the Office Manager/Deputy Headteacher. If no note or telephone call is received from the parents, the school will contact the parent/names on the contact list requesting them to return their call. If this doesn't happen/there is a pattern of poor attendance, the school will contact outside agencies such as the Home School Link Worker or Inclusion Officer.

Positive measures to encourage good attendance and punctuality

- regular monitoring of children's attendance by the Deputy Headteacher and Office Manager on attendance and punctuality and reported to the Local Governing Body and the MAT.
- A weekly class certificate is issued for the class with the best attendance.
- Class half termly attendance figures are shared with the children in class, during assembly and in the school newsletter.
- Children that have achieved 100% in a half term are awarded with a house point each and those that achieve it for the whole academic year are awarded with 39 house points each (one for every school week).

Medical Appointments

- Where a child misses more than half the morning or afternoon because of medical appointments this will be recorded as 'authorised absence' in the register.

Parental Requests for Holidays during Term-time

(see also Appendix 1 - Absence from School - a Raleigh Policy – a letter to parents)

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we expect parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. If a family holiday in term time is unavoidable, a request form must be obtained from the school office and returned to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may, at her discretion, request further information supporting the application. An absence during term time for exceptional circumstances may be authorised if

- the holiday is important for the well-being and cohesion of the family following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events
- evidence is provided by an employer that leave cannot be accommodated during school holidays without significant consequence.

Where holidays are taken which do not fall into the 'exceptional circumstances' category, these will be recorded on a child's attendance record as 'unauthorised absence'.

When a pupil is withdrawn during term time there is disruption to the learning process that can result in the pupil falling behind his/her group. There is a belief, amongst some parents, that this time can be made up by the school providing 'work' for the pupil to complete during the holiday period. However this does not have the desired effect since the pupil has missed out on quality teaching time. In general terms it is our policy that it is not possible to provide a child with the work which is planned for his/her group during this period of absence.

Other absence during term time

Permission for absence in term time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances for example extra-curricular examinations, religious observance, funerals or medical appointments, such absence will be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. Permission for absence in term time for private tuition or coaching on a one off or long term basis will not be authorised.

Punctuality/Lateness

We lay a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day but it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching.

At 8:50am the register is taken and then sent to the office. Teaching commences at 9am and the registers will be 'closed' by the school office at 9:30am. Children who arrive late before the register is 'closed' at 9:30am are marked with an 'L'; for the school's statistics this mark signifies that the child is present. However, children arriving after the register has closed at 9:30am will be recorded in the register with a 'U'; for the school's statistics, this mark signifies an unauthorised absence. The 'L' & 'U' marks are entered in the registers by the admin team.

When children have 3 late marks a letter is sent home outlining the schools concerns about the child's punctuality. Further late marks result in an additional letter being sent home.

A house point is deducted for every late mark recorded each half term.

Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform The Raleigh School as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received in writing (maybe an email) and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- the address of the new school
- the new home address, if it is known

The paper copy of pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and a receipt required. The electronic copy of the pupil's school records is uploaded to the DfE Secure Website for onward transmission.

Appendix 1

Dear Parents,

Absence from School – A Raleigh Policy

There is a growing local and national concern regarding absence from school, for whatever reason. Any absence from school can be very disruptive for the pupil, not only in terms of the lessons missed, but also in their social development. The Department for Education (DfE) has asked schools to tighten up on children taking holidays during term time. Consequently, we would ask parents to act responsibly when thinking of taking their child out of school during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to expect schools to authorise absence for reasons of family holidays, since the school is closed for approximately thirteen weeks annually.

In response to this, the Governors have approved this school policy, in that the Raleigh will not authorise absence for holidays during term time; and therefore any such absence will be unauthorised.

However, in exceptional circumstances, for example extra-curricular examinations, religious observance and funerals, such absence may be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher.

May I remind you that an Absence Request Form must be completed for all absences and that these can be obtained from the School Office.

Thank you for working with us to improve attendance and raise standards for your children.

Yours faithfully,

Fiona O'Neill
Headteacher