

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

2025-2026

Statutory	No
Responsibility	Assistant Headteacher, Mrs Mc Inerney
Approval Authority	Governing Body – Standards and Quality Committee
Approval Date	Autumn 2025
Next Review and Frequency	Autumn 2026 (annually)
Monitoring and Evaluation	Governing Body – Standards and Quality Committee
Author	Assistant Headteacher, Mrs Mc Inerney
Availability	Website, Every
Version	Final
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Raynes Park High School maintains the highest expectations for achievement and progress in all areas of school life. The school wants all students to achieve their potential and we know good attainment results from regular attendance. The Governing Body and the school expect 100% attendance but we do understand that there may be occasions when students cannot attend school. Students whose attendance falls below 95% will be monitored. We will do all we can to encourage and support students to ensure they attend regularly and that any issues that affect attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Aims

- To help every student achieve excellent attendance and punctuality to enable them to reach their full potential and prepare them for the world of work
- To provide clear and concise guidelines on what we expect of students, parents, staff and governors
- To work with the Attendance Team to implement any changes and to promote the importance of good attendance

Responsibilities of the Local Authority, Staff, Students, Parents and Governors

Regular, punctual attendance is encouraged and promoted in school. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that a register is taken both morning and afternoon (any member of staff not taking the register daily and on time will be followed up by a member of the Attendance Team) and it is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that the child in their care attends school and registers on time. If parents/carers are aware of concerns that are affecting the attendance of their child, they should contact the school to resolve and address these issues as soon as possible. The first point of contact for parents/carers should be the Form Tutor.

Headteachers are required to tell the Local Authority if a student fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days, and the absence is treated as unauthorised.

Governors will ensure the Headteacher is held accountable for implementing this policy

Attendance Target

Raynes Park High School agrees attendance targets with the Education Welfare Team and the Governing Body; implementing a range of strategies to support students in achieving this target. We promote the value of good attendance with all students so that they aim high and we expect parents/carers to support the school and ensure their children achieve personal attendance targets as close to 100% as possible.

Procedures

Attendance Codes

Please refer to the LB of Merton website and Local Authority Attendance policy.

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/school-attendance-welfare-and-support/overview>

Absence

Parents are expected to contact the school by 8.30am on each day of an absence by completing the absence form via the SIMS parenting app. Students should return to school as soon as they are well enough or able to return. Reasons for absence or medical appointments can be written in the student's planner or provided as a document submitted to the Attendance Team. We may request reasonable medical evidence; a copy of a prescription, medical appointment card should a student's attendance become a cause for concern.

Should parents not advise the school of the reasons for their child's absence or fail to respond to a phone call, email or text asking parents to contact the school, we will automatically code the absence as unauthorised. If contact is unable to be made, Education Welfare may be informed and if there have been three days of absence, a home visit may be conducted by a member of the Attendance Team. If a student has an allocated Social Worker, they will also be informed of any absences.

Authorised Absences

Absences can only be authorised by the school. They will only be authorised when school has received notification from parents/carers and are satisfied that absence is justified – this might be for reasons such as sickness or medical/dental appointments.

Supervised approved educational activities that take place outside school are regarded as authorised absence and include the following:

- Field trips and educational visits both here and abroad
- Participation in, or attendance at, approved sporting activities
- Interviews with prospective employers, further and higher education establishments
- Dual registered students receiving part/all of their education off-site at another location

Authorised absences also include the following: ***Illness, medical and dental appointments***

Where possible appointments should be made outside of school hours and we will ask to see sight of an appointment card. The Attendance Team and the Education Welfare Officer, with the consent of the parent/carer and if appropriate the student, can consult the School Health Service or the student's GP if we feel we need more information or to verify the authenticity of the student's illness. Medical appointments will only be authorised for AM or PM sessions. Students are expected to attend school before or after an appointment, unless evidence has been provided for an entire day's absence. Documentation should be provided where possible within 5 days. If a parent cannot provide any written evidence, a conversation should take place between the parent and the school or the absence may be marked as unauthorised. Regarding illness, we do not have a 48-hour policy for sickness and/or diarrhoea. If absences are frequently due to these reasons, we may refer the student to the school nurse to ensure they receive the appropriate care.

Ten days' Unauthorised Absence and Fifteen Days Attributed to Illness

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to ensure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a student moves too far from Raynes Park High School to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad, parents must complete a school leavers form, available from the Attendance Team. This will provide us with the student's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the student will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

Children who cannot attend school because of health needs

The Attendance Team will work together with the Local Authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons. Please see Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information.

Days of Religious Observance

Absence to take part in any day set aside for religious observance, will be authorised for one day. Parents must inform us in advance that their children will be absent.

Unauthorised Absences

The school will not authorise absences if they do not feel that they are reasonable or justified and may ask for further proof such as medical evidence to authorise the absence, otherwise it will remain unauthorised. A referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service when a student's attendance falls below 85% and following a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer, it is expected that attendance improves. If attendance does not improve following this meeting, further actions could include a referral to outside agencies for support and/or issuing of a Penalty Notice and consideration of legal proceedings which may include prosecution.

Absence Requests during Term Time

The school strongly advises against parents taking their children out of school during term time. The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a student can be away from school if leave is granted. Parents/carers must request leave of absence as far in advance as possible by completing a 'Leave of absence due to Exceptional Circumstances' form, available on the school website. An application for a Leave of Absence must be made in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of leave of absence, this will be responded to in writing within 7 days.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the student can be away from school. The school is unable to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

If we have not agreed the absence request and a student still takes the leave of absence, it will be unauthorised, and may result in a penalty notice. If an absence has been approved but the student fails to return to school on the agreed date any further absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We are able to remove a student's name from the school roll if they fail to return to school within 20 school days of the agreed date of return unless there is a good reason for the continued absence and, in agreement with the Local Authority, after reasonable enquiries have been made.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices may be issued as a result of Unauthorised Absence including Unauthorised Leave of Absence. They may be issued per parent per child where a student has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week period.

A session is defined as an AM or PM mark, and 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

First notice within 3 year rolling period

- Penalty Notice paid within 28 days: £160.00
- Penalty Notice paid within 21 days: £80.00
- Failure to pay may result in prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996. Upon conviction a fine maybe levied up to £1000. Conviction will lead to a criminal record.

Second notice within 3 year rolling period

- Penalty Notice paid within 28 days: £160.00
- No reduction in fine for early payment
- Failure to pay may result in prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996. Upon conviction a fine maybe levied up to £1000. Conviction will lead to a criminal record.

Third offence in a rolling 3 year period

- After 2 Penalty Notices in a rolling 3 year period, per parent per student, the next offence will usually be subject to prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996. Upon conviction a fine maybe levied up to £2500. Conviction will lead to a criminal record.

Penalty Notice fines for unauthorised absences, are issued to those with legal parental responsibility and/or day to day care of the child.

Please refer to the LB Merton website showing the code of Conduct and LA Attendance Policy for examples of when a Penalty Notice might be issued.

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/school-attendance-welfare-and-support/overview>

A Notice to Improve will be sent to parents to give them an opportunity to engage in support and improve attendance in line with processes set out in the Code of Conduct for LB Merton.

Truancy

If a student truants school or lessons, the parent/carer will be contacted at the first opportunity. The student involved will then be expected to sit a sanction in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

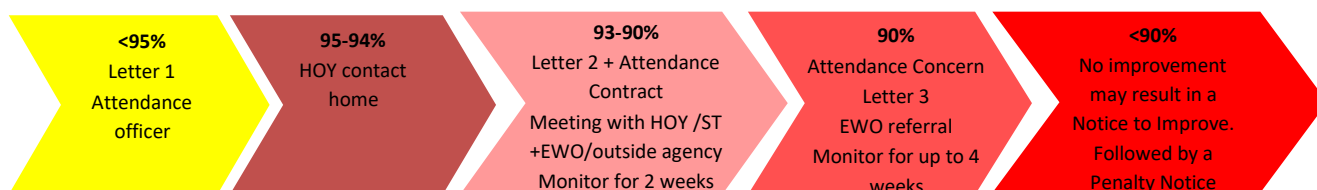
Broken Attendance

The school works closely with Education Welfare to monitor attendance and any student with a regular pattern of broken attendance will be discussed with the Head of Year and Form Tutor in an effort to identify and resolve issues that might be affecting attendance.

Every term the school will send a school report home showing the percentage attendance and number of late marks. The parents will be asked to contact the school to discuss measures for improving attendance when the attendance % falls below 95%. If there is still cause for concern, parents/carers will be invited into school to meet with the Head of Year/Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Officer to discuss the situation, and complete an Attendance Contract. If there has been significant improvement in 1 month the contract can be closed. Attendance Contracts do not have a minimum or maximum duration. Each individual Attendance Contract will set out the duration it will be in place. The school will implement this as a supportive measure. Should there still be no improvement in attendance, these students may then be referred to Education Welfare for further support.

Attendance Actions Flow Chart

Attendance actions are addressed on a case-by-case basis, if attendance is a concern at each stage and improvements have not been made.



*if student has incurred 10 sessions within this monitoring period the school may issue Penalty

Notice under new guidance for unauthorised absences

Registration

- AM Registration is taken from morning registration (8.40am)
- PM Registration is taken from period 4 (12.30pm)

Suspension from school

Any student who has been suspended from school and does not attend provision, where this has been arranged, shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school (please see also the penalty notice section).

Part-time Timetables

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a

student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the student and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

Punctuality

Lateness before the close of registration

Students are expected to be on school site from 8.25am. Registration runs from 8.30am – 9am. Any student arriving after 8.40am will be marked L – late. At this time, students will be met by the Senior Teacher at the front of the school and admitted through the Student Reception. ‘Late arrival’ runs until 9.30am. After this time, students will be coded as ‘U’ for the entire morning session, which is considered an unauthorised absence (unless medical evidence is produced).

If a student is late to school/registration they will attend an afterschool detention from 3 pm to 4 pm the same day. Should a student fail to attend the late detention, they must attend the SLT detention (3.00 – 4.30pm) on a Friday. If the student is absent on the day of the detention, they are automatically put on the detention for the day of their return to school. Parents will be notified by text if a student is required to complete a late detention or SLT Detention due to being late.

Persistent Punctuality Concerns

Lateness is deemed persistent where a student is late on 5 occasions over a half term. In this case, the student will be referred to their Head of Year or School EWO and a meeting will be arranged with parents/carers to discuss concerns; barriers to punctuality and plan any support if necessary.

If there is no improvement following this, persistent lateness could result in loss of social time. Failure to comply with this sanction, could result in a referral to the Inclusion Centre.

Rewards

Celebration assemblies are held at the end of each term. Rewards for attendance and punctuality are given for outstanding attendance and a prize draw is held during the whole school End of Term assembly. The prize is a gift card and, in the lower school, students receive a certificate. Students who have attended whilst struggling against illness may also be rewarded for their endeavours. Postcards/Letters are sent home half termly/termly in addition to tutor group awards.

Legislation and Guidance

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 Acts 1996 and 2002](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)

- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- The Education (Information about Individual Students) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and [1963](#)
- The Equality Act 2010

Equality Impact Assessment

Policy	Attendance Policy
EIA completed by:	Hannah Mc Inerney
Contributors to EIA:	
Policy will affect	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Governors <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors
Date completed:	05/01/25

Impact analysis

- Indicate what type of impact this policy will have for each group, and explain why
- If a policy doesn't impact a group, tick the 'neutral impact' column and record this
- Remember that a policy may impact a group in multiple ways. For example, your curriculum policy may positively impact BAME students by promoting British values of mutual respect and tolerance, but negatively impact BAME students by failing to promote material that highlights a variety of cultures and ethnicities

GROUP	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEUTRAL IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT	WHY WILL THE POLICY HAVE THIS EFFECT?
Example Protected characteristic	✓			Explain the impact you have recorded, and provide evidence for this, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultations ▪ Student data ▪ National data, reports, and best practice advice
Sex		✓		
Race		✓		
Religion or belief		✓		
Sexual orientation		✓		
Gender reassignment		✓		
Pregnancy or maternity		✓		
Age		✓		

Disability		✓		
Marriage or civil partnership		✓		
Additional contextual groupings				
EAL		✓		
LAC		✓		
Families with separated parents		✓		

Outcomes

CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Include details of any internal or external consultation done, and its outcomes: Policy has been written in consultation with Senior Teacher – Attendance. Policy has been shared and agreed by school governors.

FINAL DECISION ON POLICY

Please tick the appropriate decision:

- Remove the policy (if it's not statutory)
- Adapt the policy to address the equality issues you've identified
- Keep the policy without change