



Ridgeway Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

September 2018

Principles

Ridgeway Primary Academy expects good attendance from its pupils in order that they take full advantage of the learning experiences provided for them and aims to support pupils in developing positive attitudes towards punctuality and attendance. Pupils should be made aware that their presence is important by both parents and staff.

Parents of registered students of compulsory school age are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays at school; they risk prosecution if they fail in this duty. Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a good reason for absence.

Parents should be aware that absence from school may have a detrimental effect on their child's education. Learning is a complex process in which knowledge, skills and understanding are developed and built on systematically. Interruptions to this process can lead to gaps in a child's knowledge and understanding, missed stages in the acquisition of a new skill and lost opportunities to share in and grow from new experiences. If parents insist on taking their child out of school during term time then they must accept that they bear the responsibility for the consequent effects upon their child's education. The school cannot influence a child's education if the child does not attend school.

Absence

There are two types of absence:

- **Authorised** (where the school approves pupil absence)
Absence will be authorised for occurrences such as:
 - pupil sickness;
 - serious or critical illness of a close relative;
 - unavoidable medical/dental appointments;
 - exceptional short term domestic circumstances;
 - religious observance;
 - bereavement;
 - wedding of immediate family member;
 - attendance at or in connection with a Children's Hearing or Care Review;
 - approved activities for sports and the arts.
 - travelling (where ascribed to the Traveller Community).

- **Unauthorised** (where the school will not approve absence)
Absence will not be authorised for events such as:
 - shopping trips;
 - birthday or other day trips;
 - non-medical appointments;
 - closure of a sibling's school for training days;
 - family holidays.

Procedures

If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.30am stating a reason. The parent should do this daily unless they have informed the school of a longer absence due to hospitalisation/post-operative care.

We take our safeguarding duties very seriously. If we have not been informed by 9:30am on the morning of a child's absence, we will ring you to ask the whereabouts of your child. This system is known as 'First Response' and is in place in many schools across the country. By doing this we are secure in the knowledge that all our pupils are safe and are where they should be. This will also enable us to enter the correct attendance code in the register. (see Appendix A)

The school will decide whether to authorise an absence. If no explanation is given for an absence and office staff are unable to contact a child's parents/carers, they will be contacted by email for an explanation. If the school is still unable to ascertain a child's whereabouts or has concerns as to the child's absence the Head of School /Exec Head will contact appropriate authorities.

Unauthorised absence

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if there is no telephone/written explanation received from parents.

Holidays or other non-essential absence will also be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Registration

Registers are a legal document and provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils. The class teacher is responsible for marking the register at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.

It is a statutory requirement that numbers of authorised and unauthorised absences are reported to the Department for Education. Absences are recorded electronically, with daily and weekly attendances figures completed.

Children should arrive at school by 8.55am The register is sent to the office at 9.05am. Children who arrive in school after 9.05am must go directly to the school office where their time of arrival and reason for lateness is recorded in the Late Book. They are then marked as late (L) in the register. Arrivals after 9.30am will be considered as absences and require authorisation. The register is taken at 1.10 p.m. for the afternoon session.

Family Holidays in Term Time

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. A pupil's absence in term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days that they are away, but they are

also less well prepared for the lessons building on this when they return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement which we should seek to avoid.

From 1st September 2013, the amendments to the Education Regulations in relation to absence from school give NO entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in **exceptional circumstances** and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave (for example, in the case where a family holiday is judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events or the holiday might be a unique, one-off never-to-be-repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested).

Parents must notify the Head of School/Exec Head in writing if they wish to apply for exceptional leave of absence from school for **any** reason using the appropriate form (see Appendix C) Each request will be considered individually, case by case, taking into account the circumstances and the child's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

The following will not be deemed as exceptional circumstances:

- The availability of cheap holidays or desired accommodation;
- Holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term;
- Holidays booked by a third party.

Parents are strongly discouraged from applying for leave of absence which coincides with the start of the school year, as the first few weeks of the school year are very important for learning routines, establishing relationships and expectations, and building friendships.

The school reserves the right to withdraw authorisation should a child's attendance deteriorate between the leave of absence application and the time when the absence is due to occur.

The school recognises that parents' circumstances (financial position, working commitments etc) vary enormously but the Head of School/Head teacher is nonetheless required to ensure that children only miss school if it is absolutely unavoidable.

Punctuality

It is important to foster positive attitudes to arriving at school on time. Children who arrive late miss vital information given at the beginning of lessons and can also feel self-conscious about arriving in the classroom after an activity has started.

Statutory Testing

Parents of pupils in Year 6 are made aware of the fact that statutory testing takes place annually in May and cannot be taken at any other time.

The Head of School/Exec Head is **unable** to grant Leave of Absence permission for Year 6 pupils during the week of the statutory tests.

Levels of attendance / attendance giving cause for concern

At Ridgeway, whilst encouraging 100% attendance, we recognise that there are circumstances in which attendance may not be possible. It is our expectation that all pupils will achieve attendance of 95% and above. Attendance is monitored closely. Parents will be contacted if their child's attendance falls to 92% as the child may be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.

Parents of pupils with attendance below 90%, which is considered to be persistent absenteeism, and with a high level of unauthorised absence, are at risk of fixed penalty notices. It is highly unlikely that the headteacher will authorise exceptional leave of absence in cases such as these.

Where there is no significant improvement in attendance the parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the situation.

Frequent medical absences

In the case of a child with a large number of absences for medical reasons (e.g. over 20 sessions) the school will require medical evidence in order to authorise future absences of this nature.

Monitoring and Improving Attendance

Ridgeway is committed to promoting a strong attendance ethos.

Attendance is monitored through regular scrutiny of attendance registers.

It is the school's intention to resolve any problems regarding a pupil's attendance as early as possible, in consultation with parents/carers.

It is the responsibility of the Head of School/Exec Head to monitor attendance. If a child is regularly absent/late, the Head of School/Exec Head will contact parents to notify them of the school's concern and to emphasise the parents' legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance. If persistent absence continues and the school's efforts to improve attendance are unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority Pupil Services Court Team.

Date policy updated September 2018

Next review date: September 2021

Appendix A

School Register - Attendance Codes

Present at school:

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm
Present in school during registration

L Late arrival before the register has closed

Authorised:

B Off-site educational activity
C Leave of absence authorised by the school
D Dual registered – at another educational establishment
E Excluded
H Holiday authorised by the school
I Illness (not medical/dental appointments)
J At an interview with prospective employers/or at another educational establishment
M Medical or dental appointment
P Participating in a supervised sporting activity
R Religious observance
S Study leave
T Traveller absence
V Educational visit or trip
W Work experience

Unauthorised:

G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher
N No reason yet provided for absence
O Absent from school without authorisation
U Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes:

X Not required to be in school
Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z Pupil not on the admission register
Planned whole or partial school closure

Appendix B

**Ridgeway Primary Academy
Request For Exceptional Leave**

Please note: the school expects that all parents/carers will ensure that their child attends school as often as possible. Good attendance is an important factor in a child making good progress at school.

I understand that there may be exceptional circumstances where a parent has to request a child's absence during term time. (for example, in the case where a family holiday is judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events or the holiday might be a unique, one-off never-to-be-repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested). In these circumstances, I am able to authorise absence. If agreed I will then determine the number of days that will be authorised.

Children's Names	Class
.....
.....
.....
.....

I am requesting permission for my child/children to be granted authorised absence for the following reason

.....

from..... toa total ofdays

Signed.....Date.....

Exceptional Leave Reply

Names of child/children:

.....class..... Percentage attendance

.....class..... Percentage attendance

.....class..... Percentage attendance

.....class..... Percentage attendance

Reply from the Headteacher

I am able to give permission

The amount of days granted are ___ from to

I am unable to give permission