

Redland Primary School Pupil Attendance, Punctuality & Absence Policy



REDLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPIL ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY & ABSENCE POLICY

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Rationale

Redland Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them

Redland Primary School values the role that high attendance has in learning by:

- Contributing to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Promoting progress and achievement in learning for all pupils.
- Enabling children to maintain friendships and develop socially.
- Allowing children to develop a positive pattern of attendance and punctuality.

Aims

We believe that the foundation for good attendance is based on a strong partnership between school, parents and the child. This includes clear communication with parents and pupils regarding our expectations of what is required to secure excellent attendance for pupils at our school.

At Redland Primary School we will:

- Provide regular information about attendance through communications such as newsletters/ website/letters/emails.
- Include attendance information in reports about your child's performance in school and how any absence may be affecting their attainment.
- Work with you and your child to achieve maximum attendance.

At Redland Primary School we expect:

- Pupils to arrive at school every day on time, ready to learn.
- Parents to work with the school to ensure that their child attends regularly.

Expectations and Procedures

School Day Timings: 8.30am to 3.00pm

- All children are expected to arrive at school by 8.30am.
- Parents should report any pupil absences to school through the absence line 01249 651623 by 8.30am. Absences should be reported to school on the first and any subsequent days of absence.
- Tell the school if their child is going to be late, the reason why and expected time of arrival.
- Lateness - Pupils who arrive after 8.35am will be recorded as late.
- Lateness - Pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.
- We ask that medical or dental appointments are arranged outside of school hours when possible.
- If a child has not arrived at school, parents will receive a text message/phone call to clarify the reasons for absence.
- If we cannot speak directly with parents/carers then we will contact the nominated emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence; this is in line with school safeguarding procedures.

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- If after 3 days of absence, a child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, the school may consult with the Integrated Front Door (social care) and the Education Welfare Service.
- After 10 days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the well-being and safety of the child.
- Absence which has been unvalidated/unexplained will be recorded as unauthorised and repeated unauthorised absence may trigger a referral to the Education Welfare Service.
- Parents requesting leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances must complete an Application for Leave of Absence Form at least 3 weeks before the intended absence date. The form must outline reasons for absence, and will be only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Legal Framework

The law says that ensuring a child receives education is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). Parents/carers who do not secure their child's regular attendance at school may be referred to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service for a formal legal intervention. We will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance.

5 school days off each year	97%	Good
11 school days off each year	94%	Improvement needed
20 school days off each year	90%	Concerns – persistent absence
30 school days off each year (a whole term)	85%	Serious concerns

School Actions

- Communicate attendance rates of individual pupils and classes to parents.
- Regularly monitor pupil's attendance rates, and identify attendance concerns through the following:

AT REDLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPECTED ATTENDANCE IS 97% AND ABOVE

- ❖ If attendance falls below 94% a letter will be sent to parents to inform them.
- ❖ If attendance continues to fall, a further letter will be sent to parents to offer advice, guidance and support to improve attendance.

ATTENDANCE THAT HAS FALLEN BELOW 90% IS CLASSED AS **PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

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Persistent absence will trigger a series of school attendance meetings with parents to outline actions and set targets to improve attendance.

If there are more significant attendance concerns or no improvement has been seen following a school attendance meeting, the school may implement the following:

- Request for proof of illness if frequent absence is recorded as illness.
- Referral to the school nurse.
- Referral to the Education Welfare Service following 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.
- Referral to the Education Welfare Service, who may pursue a Local Authority attendance meeting with parents.
- Referral to relevant agencies (e.g. Integrated Front Door/social care) for further advice and support.

Collecting your child from school

We ask that all parents/carers ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3pm. If parents are unable to collect their child as usual then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements they have made with the school, in order for us to release them at the end of the day.

If children remain uncollected from school, the protocol is to call parents or other emergency contacts. If we are unable to make contact, the school may need to contact the Integrated Front Door team/social care at the local authority.

If a child is repeatedly collected late from school, they will go to the after-school care club, and a charge may be applied.

Monitoring attendance

Weekly monitoring of the registers will be made by the Senior Attendance Champion and/or the attendance officer, to analyse overall absence for each pupil and identify pupils with low attendance, a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence (SA).

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year and as a severe absentee if they miss more than 50% of schooling for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level hugely impacts on a child's education, and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it.

Pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. Persistent absence for whatever reason disadvantages a pupil by creating gaps in his or her learning. The Senior Attendance Champion, together with attendance office/pastoral manager will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern.

Requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

In accordance with Department for Education statutory guidance, leave of absence from school may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Absence for the purpose of a holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

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Parents are required to complete a leave of absence form which must outline the exceptional circumstances for which the leave has been requested.

Leave of absence request forms must be completed in advance of the dates requested. We require 3 weeks' notice unless the absence is related to an emergency. We do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised.

Requests will be considered by the headteacher, and parents and carers will be advised if their request is agreed.

Any pupil who has taken a term time holiday may be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school or if the absence is immediately before or after a designated school holiday period.

Parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.

The National Framework for Penalty Notices

The Department for Education has issued a national framework and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which govern how and when penalty notices may be used.

All local authorities and schools must work within the new framework.

This means that whenever a pupil accrues 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period, a school must inform the local authority and subsequently a penalty notice may be issued. The unauthorised absence can relate to unexplained absence, absence that the school has not agreed to, including for a holiday in term time, or a pupil being late after the register closes. See below:

- Where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks that is NOT related to a holiday in term time, the school will engage with parents to improve attendance. If support is not working then we will refer the matter to the local authority who may decide to issue a penalty notice.
- Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period as a result of a holiday taken in term time, the absence will be notified to the local authority who may issue a penalty notice without further warning.

Each parent can receive a penalty notice for each child that has unauthorised absence. For example, 2 parents with 2 children who take a holiday in term time can expect to receive 4 penalty notices.

The new framework allows for parents to receive a maximum of 2 penalty notices for each of their children in a 3 year period.

The first penalty notice issued in respect of an individual child will be in the sum of £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second penalty notice issued in respect of the same child within 3 years shall be in the sum of £160.

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If the national threshold is met on a third or subsequent occasion in 3 years then the local authority may present the matter to the magistrates' court.

or

The local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, imposition of orders such as Parenting Orders or even imprisonment.

or

In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

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APPENDIX A

PENALTY NOTICES FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

EDUCATION ACT 1996

Information for Parents and Carers

With effect from 19 August 2024

The Education Act 1996

Section 444A and section 444B of the Education Act 1996 give powers to the local authority (LA) to issue penalty notices where the parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

Why are Penalty Notices used?

Reducing pupil absence from school is really important.

Missing school reduces a pupil's educational attainment chances.

Absence from school makes a child more vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and other crime.

A child is less likely to get a job or training when s/he leaves school if they have been regularly absent from school.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution and is used to try and improve a pupil's school attendance without the need to appear in court.

If the fine is paid, a parent or carer cannot be fined or prosecuted again for the period covered by the penalty notice.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent for each child and payment is required for each penalty notice issued.

Who issues them?

The Local Authority through the Education Welfare Service.

How are they issued?

By post to your home.

What are the costs?

If this is your first penalty notice then payment of £160 is required within 28 days of receipt of the penalty notice; this sum is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. If this is the second penalty notice to be issued to you in respect of the same child within 3 years of the first penalty notice, payment of £160 is required within 28 days of receipt of the penalty notice. If the penalty notice is not paid in full within 28 days the LA is required to start proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for your child's poor school attendance. If you plead guilty, or are found guilty, the courts have a wider range of options which could include a maximum fine of £1000. In addition, a Parenting Order could be imposed.

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Can I be prosecuted if I pay the penalty notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the penalty notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect.

However, legal proceedings might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the penalty notice.

When are they used?

- When a parent/carer continually fails to provide a reason for a pupil's absence in accordance with school's procedures
- Following notification from a school to the LA that a pupil has had an unauthorised leave of absence
- When a pupil is referred to an Education Welfare Officer and fails to achieve the required improvement in attendance.

In most cases a pupil will have had a minimum of 10 school sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence during a 10 week period before a penalty notice is considered.

Unauthorised absence is where the school has not given permission for the absence or where no justifiable reason has been given to the headteacher or when a child does not register either in the morning or the afternoon before the school register is closed.

Why have I received this leaflet?

Either – you have received a Notice to Improve School Attendance warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued as your child has had at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10 week period.

Or – your child has unauthorised absence which has not been agreed by the school but support is not deemed appropriate (eg for a family holiday). You will not have received a Notice to Improve School Attendance in this situation.

What can I do now?

- If you have been issued with a Notice to Improve School Attendance due to unauthorised absence, you should make sure that your child does not have any more unauthorised absence from school.
- You should make contact with the school and arrange to discuss the support available to help improve your child's attendance.

Can I get help if my child is not attending school regularly?

Yes, talk to your child's school.

The Education Welfare Service may also help:

Please email: EWS@wiltshire.gov.uk