



## Attendance Policy

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The Richard Barnes Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its learners and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on 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.

The whole school community – learners, 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.

Our school 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 excellence. 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 unavoidable.

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 our learners 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.

## **1.2 Transition period for new Pupils**

To ensure a smooth transition for new pupils into RBA, we have a transition period of two weeks where pupils will have a bespoke timetable at this time to enable them to have a thorough understanding of the school and procedures.

## **2.0 Attendance Leader**

A senior member of our staff will oversee, direct, and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, learners, and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the Academy Committee half termly. They 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 school regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.



### **3.0 Why Regular Attendance is so Important**

#### **3.1 Learning:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

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.

#### **3.2 Safeguarding:**

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: -

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, learners, and all members of school staff.

#### **3.3 To help us all to focus on this RBA will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our reports to you.
- Report to you 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.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance.



#### **4.0 The Law relating to attendance**

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 fulltime education suitable:

(a) to age, ability, and aptitude

and

(b) to any special educational needs or additional learning needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’

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 learners to attend.

Under this judgement a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

Our expectation at the Richard Barnes Academy is that a learner’s attendance should not fall below 100%.

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 regards to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and learners under the age of 18.

#### **5.0 Understanding types of absence**

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

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which un-avoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable causes.

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

- 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 which have not been agreed.



This type of absence can lead to Peterborough City Council taking legal proceedings or using sanctions such as Penalty Notices.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with attendance are best resolved 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.

### **5.1 Persistent Absence (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the "PA" level **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

"PA" learners are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

## **6.0 Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School:**

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a period of any 8 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year).
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions).
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above.
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification.
- Learners identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

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.



## **7.0 Absence Procedures:**

### **If your child is absent, you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence; (telephone 01733 978224 option 3 this will go through to the school's Attendance Officer).
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.
- Or you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

### **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. This will be logged on SIMS.
2. The school will continue to make welfare calls if a learner is absent, and no reason has been received by the school. These calls will be completed by an identified member of staff and the outcome of the contact will be emailed to the Head & Deputy Head of Campus, and anyone else deemed appropriate. Communication will be logged on SIMS.
3. If there has been no response from phone contact, after 3 days of absence home visits will be undertaken by our Safe & Well Officer in order to identify the underlying cause of absence. Depending on the outcome of the home visit, an action plan may be drawn up and attendance will continue to be monitored. If we are unable to make contact on a home visit, this then becomes a safeguarding matter, and we may request that Police carry out their own safe and well check.
4. Invite you in to discuss the situation with us if there is a pattern of absences.
5. Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carer for each child.

## **8.0 Telephone numbers:**

There are occasions when we will need to contact parents/carers, this will include absence.

**To assist us in keeping you informed we respectfully request that you ensure school have at least 2 up to date contact number at all times (where possible please provide a 3<sup>rd</sup>)**



We will conduct regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year but would greatly appreciate your support in keeping us updated of any change in circumstance, to include phone numbers.

## **9.0 The School Attendance Officer:**

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

## **10 Lateness:**

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

Each Campus opens at **9.00am** and we expect your child to be in school after that time to be registered.

If they are not in school by **9.10 am** (Trinity Campus) they will receive a late mark.

If they are not in school by **9.20am** (Fitzwilliam Campus) they will receive a late mark.

At **9.35 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with Registration Regulations, if your child arrives after this time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an "unauthorised absence". This could lead to you facing the possibility of being issued with a Penalty Notice or being taken to court if the problem persists.

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.





### **11.0 Afternoon Register**

Afternoon registers will be marked from 1.00pm and registers will close at 1.15pm at all sites. If your child arrives after this time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This could lead to you facing the possibility of being issued with a Penalty Notice or being taken to court if the problem persists.

### **12.0 Part time/reduced Timetables**

It may occasionally be necessary for us to reduce your child's timetable, this may be for medical reasons, as part of an in-school support package, for significantly challenging behaviours, emotional or social needs or as part of a reintegration package. This will be agreed at a meeting between yourselves and the relevant Learning Centre, will be for an agreed amount of time, and reviewed on a regular basis with no more than 6 weeks between each review. An individual timetable will be agreed, and prompt attendance must be adhered to. Should your student arrive more than 15 minutes after the agreed start time then in line with Registration Regulations they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site but will not count as a present mark and will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This could lead to you facing the possibility of being issued with a Penalty Notice or being taken to court if the problem persists.

### **13.0 Breakfast Club**

Each Campus provides an optional breakfast for all learners as a way of settling in at the start of the day, before lessons start. Details of times for breakfast will be shared with you when you attend your child's enrolment meeting.

### **14.0 Leave of Absence**

Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstances 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 away in school time.

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.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence must be made at least 4 weeks in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, you can request a Leave of Absence Form from your child's campus reception or by contacting the Attendance Officer.



It is important that you understand that we will **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/ carer per child

### **15.0 Deletions from Register**

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

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

- (i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);
- (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause.

### **16.0 Responsible Persons**

Those responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Principal Richard Barnes Academy – Mrs Claire Everton
- Vice Principal – Mrs Erica Brown
- Assistant Principal – Mr James Fletcher
- School Attendance Officer – Miss Kirby Dron

**Telephone - 01733 978224**

### **17.0 Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.



All school staff are committed to working with parents and learners as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

I CAN CONFIRM I HAVE BEEN GIVEN A COPY OF THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY AND AM ALSO AWARE THIS IS HELD ON THE SCHOOLS WEBSITE. IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING ATTENDANCE, I WILL CONTACT THE SCHOOL ACCORDINGLY.

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

Print name.....(Parent/Carer)