



Attendance Policy

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Written flowing guidance in the DFE:

- [Working together to improve school attendance](#)
- [Summary table responsibilities for school attendance](#)

Revision date	Page no	Significant changes made
10/11/18		Updated no of days re Religious festivals, funerals, inserted missing in education Croydon link
15/10/2019 Not full revision – updated a timing	3	Updated parents time to call school from 9.30 to 8.30
Sep 21	5	Updated Covid information
Sep 22		Updated throughout due to 2022 DFE guidance
Jan 23		Throughout - changed reporting absences to through WeDuc only

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Ridgeway Primary School.

At Ridgeway, all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential, therefore developing a whole school culture which promotes the benefits of high attendance. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website. Ridgeway encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. 'At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard.' DFE 2022

Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

Responsibility of the School

The head teachers are responsible for the strategic management of attendance and can be contacted through the school office.

- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Maintain accurate recording of attendance and absence.

- Have robust day to day processes to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality which are rigorously applied across the school.
- Track attendance and where attendance is a concern, arrange to meet with parents / carers to explore how to work together to improve their child's attendance.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Responsibility of Parents/Carers

To support your child's attendance through ensuring they are attending school in line with school policies and the Home School agreement.

"It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.' DFE 2022

Punctuality

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive to school on time KS2 doors open at 8:45am until 8:55am. Rec and KS1 have staggered entry times between 8.45am and 8.55am. This is sufficient time for all pupils to get to their classroom.
- To ensure children who are late after 8:55am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:20am (KS2) and 9:25am (KS1) will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the admin before 8:30am or as soon as possible via WeDuc.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am.

Illness/Medical absences

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc. The school may request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.

Absence for Holidays

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education. If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Co-Heads, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).
- To provide any information regarding flights etc. as requested by the school.

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Co-Heads' authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. **Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent.** The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice

Absence for Other Reasons

Absences for reasons such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement *may* be authorised by the Co-Heads. These requests must be put in writing to the school office.

- Authorised absences for religious observations will be in line with guidance set by the DFE: 'As a general rule, we would interpret 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' as a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.'
- Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

Unexplained Absence

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

Persistent Absences

If a child's attendance has been identified as a concern or if they are classed as persistent absence the following process will be followed:

- School office will discuss individual cases with the co-headteachers.
- Written reminders will be sent to families regarding the child's attendance %. Depending on the situation, a verbal conversation may precede this.

- School will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. This should include a conversation to discuss the reasons for the repeated absence and to agree a plan of action to improve the child's attendance at school.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, school will encourage all partners to work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them.
- Where absence intensifies the school will work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners:
- Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils.
- If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, schools should be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Role of the Education Welfare Officer

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

Children Missing in Education

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority. Link for form below:

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/attendance/child-missing-education>

Persistent Latecomers

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8:55am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children. In addition, the Education Welfare Officer does unannounced gate checks.

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after 9:20am (KS2) and 9:25 (KS1) are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.