



THE
**ROBERT
NAPIER**
SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

(Students)

*Amended: **Spring 2024** Next Review date: **Spring 2025***

*Reviewed & Approved by Headteacher: **Mrs J Tomkins***

This Policy represents our commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achievable, and achieved by many children. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor Attendance and Punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022](#) states that attendance to school is “essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances”.

There is a [parents guide for DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

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- At The Robert Napier School, the attendance lead role is fulfilled by our Attendance Officer.
- The Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance to school is Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour, Attitudes & Safeguarding.

Students will achieve most by attending school on a regular basis. Our core aim is to encourage and support students and their families so that student attendance is as close as possible to 100%.

Aims

- 1) To improve the overall attendance percentage of students at school.
- 2) To make attendance and punctuality a priority so that students achieve their maximum potential.
- 3) To provide support and guidance to students and parents/carers in matters relating to attendance and punctuality.
- 4) To provide a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and interpreting attendance and punctuality data.
- 5) To provide and regularly review the system of rewards and sanctions.
- 6) To work closely in an effective partnership with the Attendance Advisory Service in addressing attendance/ punctuality problems.
- 7) To work in an effective partnership with parents/carers.
- 8) To provide a text message home for absent students.
- 9) To provide a school ethos in which students' attendance is valued and their educational advancement recognised as a prime motive amongst all those associated with the school.



Objectives

1. The attendance policy aims to work with parents/carers in helping students maintain an excellent school attendance record.
2. To provide students with an awareness of the link between good attendance and good progress.
3. To demonstrate the benefits to students of good attendance.
4. To promote knowledge of school attendance and the law.
5. To promote a school ethos, which celebrates excellent attendance.
6. To encourage, through excellent attendance, full participation in school life.

Attendance System

- We operate a computer-based attendance system overseen by the Attendance Officer, with a dedicated phone line and answering machine so that parents can make contact concerning student absence 24 hours a day. Our Pastoral Managers monitor attendance on a regular basis and report to the Assistant Head teacher attached to their Year group and via them to the Headteacher.
- All staff will take a class register at the start of each lesson, or form time.
- The Pastoral Manager will contact parents as soon as a student is absent.
- House Managers discuss and analyse attendance statistics weekly and share good practice within the Student Services team so that appropriate action is taken to improve student attendance.
- The Attendance Advisory Practitioner will issue Penalty warning notices and Penalty notices for students whose attendance falls below 90%, due to unauthorised absence, at the direction of Attendance Officer.
- Continued and regular unauthorised absences with no satisfactory explanation will result in a referral to Robert Napier School's appointed Attendance Advisory Practitioner.
- Random attendance checks will be operated during the day as a deterrent for unauthorised absences from lessons by the House Managers/Directors of Learning and other concerned members of staff.
- Attendance and punctuality are reported termly to parents through the progress review report
- If students miss registration, they must sign in and bring a note for the form tutor explaining their lateness.
- Attendance clinics will be held with students who are persistently absent, and plans put in place by the Attendance Officer/House Manager to support improved attendance using the Student Services Attendance guidelines.
- Persistently absent students will be regularly reviewed by the Attendance Officer/Pastoral Managers in liaison with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner.



Authorised and Unauthorised absence

- The law of the UK is quite clear about absence from school. In the school register schools must differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be out of school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences must be treated as unauthorised (ref. DFES 0628-2003).
- Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence, only schools can do this. However, parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the school to consider.
- Parentally condoned unauthorised absence can be a problem as it means disruption to a child's education. School staff need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence whether written, telephoned or given in person. Penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised absence.
- The Robert Napier School Attendance Officer/House Managers will closely monitor attendance and punctuality. Ongoing concerns will result in telephone contact and/or home visits being made to them. Should attendance/punctuality not improve, a referral will be made to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner at an early stage.

Illness, medical and dental appointments

- As far as possible medical appointments should be made outside school hours.
- Medical appointments count as authorised absence.
- Medical appointments do not necessitate a full day of absence unless substantial travel is required. Proof of time and place of appointment may be requested.
- If the authenticity of illness is in doubt the Attendance Advisory Service may in certain circumstances consult the School Health Service, or the student's GP.

Lateness to School

- All students are required to be punctual to school. Punctuality to school is a legal requirement.
- Morning - Students must arrive at school at 8.40 a.m. for registration. Students who arrive after this time will be marked 'late.' Registers will close at 9.15 a.m. Students who arrive after 9.00 a.m. will receive an unauthorised mark for the morning session. The main gate will be closed at 8.40am. Students arriving after this time will need to sign in at Reception.
- Afternoon - After lunch, students will register in lessons at the start of period 5.
- Both attendance and punctuality will be monitored regularly, and concerns will be actioned by the Pastoral Team in accordance with their own procedures and, if necessary, reported to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner.



Rewards

At the Robert Napier school, we recognise and reward the students with good attendance and support those students who find school challenging.

Good attendance is recognised on an individual basis:

- Students with 100% attendance are recognised weekly. An Intouch message of congratulations and encouragement to maintain perfect attendance is sent out every Monday morning.

Students with 100% attendance for a term are identified and a letter from the Headteacher is sent home, students are issued a certificate.

Students who have 100% attendance for a full term:

T1= Bronze badge and a certificate

T2= Silver badge and a certificate

T3= Gold badge and a certificate

Students with improved attendance term on term will also be recognised with a letter home and a certificate.

Group rewards:

Tutor groups with the best weekly attendance will be awarded a certificate and an appropriate reward weekly.

At the end of the Term, if a Form has been issued with several certificates during that Term, they will be rewarded with an appropriate reward.

A word cloud is created termly with the names of all students with 100% attendance and displayed on their Form board.

Guidance to Parents

Parents must inform school on the first day a student is absent (by email or phone).

First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. Parents are requested to inform the school before 8:30am if their child is too unwell to attend school. If the school does not receive notification, it will text/telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived, as quickly as possible. If the child is still



too unwell to attend the following day, parents will need to telephone the school again before 8:30am to inform them of this second day of absence. If a child is absent for longer than 3 days due to ill health, medical evidence will need to be provided in order that the school can authorise the absence. On return to school, the parent must put in writing the reason for absence in addition to telephoning the school on the days of absence.

Continuing Absence Procedures

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and contact has not been made with the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit may be made by the school or other local authority professional, to ascertain the safety and well-being of the child and in addition to the reason for absence from school.

Parents are asked not to take students out of school during term time; this seriously affects their learning.

If a child is taken on holiday without permission this will count as an unauthorised absence and will be reported as such on all reports and references. In addition, the child will be referred to the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA) in order for a penalty notice to be issued against each resident parent/carer. (The costs of this will be £60 per notice, if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine isn't paid, then this would proceed to court).

In years 7,8,9,10 and 11 parent/carers will receive a penalty notice when their child has incurred 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a six-week period. Penalty notices will be issued to each parent/carer of £120 each if paid within 28 days or £60 each if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in the case of non-payment being prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

If a Parent/Carer requests for a term holiday is refused, but the holiday taken, it will be classified as unauthorised absence and may be subject to a penalty notice being served to each parent/ carer that resides with the child by Medway's Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA).

Please note: any child who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences during the remainder of the academic year. Any absences due to ill health either directly before or after a school holiday will need to provide medical evidence for the school to authorise the absence.

In the case of all unauthorised leave of absences, incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days), an application for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made to the local authority.

From February 2004, new measures introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence from school amounting to 10 sessions (5 days) can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. These Penalty Notices require



the recipient to pay a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Penalty notices will be issued to each parent/ carer that resides with the child.

Persistent Absence

If a student's attendance is 90% or below with ten or more unauthorised Absences, this is termed as persistent absence. The School works closely with families to ensure that their child does not fall into this category. However, if they do there is a stepped response to support the family to improve their child's attendance.

Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence from school which is unavoidable and regarded as exceptional circumstances and must be requested in writing directly to the Headteacher.

Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

Regular monitoring of the registers will be made by the Attendance Officer, to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA). The Attendance Officer will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an Attendance clinic with the relevant staff or outside professionals. However, if the pattern continues the school will make a referral to the Local Authority. The AAP and the Attendance Officer will communicate regularly to discuss any attendance and punctuality concerns the school may have and review any current cases referred to the Local Authority.

Parents/Carers of children whose attendance drops to below 96%, will receive a percentage information letter. In the event that there is then further absence from school, a letter to parents will now request that medical evidence is provided by the parent to enable the school to authorise any further absences due to ill health. Further unauthorised absence will result in a parental meeting to allow a plan of support to encourage regular attendance. Further unauthorised absence totalling 10 or more unauthorised sessions where support is not successful, or not engaged with, will result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice/Court action.

Medical evidence may be any of the following:

- Hospital discharge letter
- Note from your GP
- Copy of your appointment card from your GP
- Copy of the prescription or copy of the medication label
- Note from a pharmacist
- Note from any other health care professional (e.g. physiotherapist, optician, podiatrist etc).



Reluctant attenders/school refusal

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can now be issued for a range of attendance-related offences, including unauthorised term-time holidays, poor attendance and poor punctuality.

Guidance to Students

Students are encouraged to monitor their own attendance too and ensure this is as good as possible.

Roles and Responsibilities – Staff & appropriate agencies

The Robert Napier School works closely with appropriate agencies and may convene Pre-Proceedings panels to which parents/carers and students are invited, in the event of attendance problems. The Local Authority has powers under the Education Act 1996 to instigate legal proceedings whenever necessary.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for ratifying and reviewing the school attendance policy and regularly monitoring attendance and punctuality data.

The Headteacher

is responsible for:

- implementing the school's attendance policy.
- ensures that the policy is notified to all staff and complied with at all levels.
- ensures that the policy is made available to all staff appointees and to parents/carers who request to read it.
- ensures that the policy is regularly reviewed and, where necessary, revised.
- authorises termly attendance reports to the DFE.

The Attendance Officer/Pastoral Manager(s)

is responsible for:



- the day-to-day management of student attendance for Years 7-13.
- communicating with parents/carers in the event of unauthorised absence.
- meeting weekly with the AAP and keeping a record of the meetings.
- producing attendance data or reports as required by the AAP, link Assistant Headteacher (House) or the Headteacher.
- producing attendance and punctuality data for the Governing Body.
- ensuring that attendance data is updated as a matter of priority on a daily basis.

The Form Tutor(s)

is responsible for:

- Notifying any attendance and punctuality concerns to their Head of Year and Pastoral Managers.
- Taking appropriate action within current guidelines to counteract lateness to class.
- Discussing with their Head of Year/Pastoral Managers or the Head of Department any student(s) in danger of or actually missing out on the benefits of a fulltime education.
- Celebrating good attendance and punctuality to lessons.

*Amended: **Spring 2024***

Review Cycle: Recommended annually

*Next Review date: **Spring 2025***

*SLT Responsibility: **Assistant Headteacher Behaviour, Attitudes & Safeguarding***

*Approval Level: **Headteacher***

*Reviewed & Approved by: **Headteacher Spring 2024***

