



**Policy name: Student Attendance Policy**

**Designated Person: Veronica Preston**

**Designated Person Signature:**

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**Date Ratified by Academy Trust:**

**Trust Signature:**

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At Red House Academy we demand the highest level of attendance from all our students so they may develop their full potential during their time at school. It is our aim to maintain a culture of excellence in attendance and punctuality. Missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities. Everyone associated with the school – students, parents, all teaching and support staff and external agencies must do all in their power to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality. By doing so we are ensuring students not only are the best possible placed in terms of outcomes in public examinations but that they also develop the lifelong habits that will make them reliable employees of the future.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

### **Interventions Director**

- Oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality, initiating whole school policies as required. This will be achieved by liaising with the Senior Leadership Team and other relevant members of the Pastoral, Inclusion and Learning Support Teams.
- Support the Year Managers, Form Tutors and teaching staff in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Liaise with the Attendance team and Year Managers (YM) to devise any necessary re-integration programmes for students who are persistent absentees (PA) or at risk of long term absence.

### **Attendance Team**

- Oversee and monitor attendance and punctuality for all year groups (including the monitoring of relevant sub-groups).
- Liaise with form tutors and highlight problems that require action.
- Liaise with the Local Authority (LA) where there are concerns about individual students.
- Meet regularly with the LA to sustain good communication and identify and intervene with individual students who are PA or at risk of becoming PA. Refer students if they are a persistent problem or have reached triggers.
- Act on daily information from staff concerning student absences or habitual lateness.
- Inform parents of any students whose attendance and/or punctuality are a cause for concern by following the school's attendance and monitoring procedure.
- Intervene early to arrange and attend meetings with parents and relevant staff where there are attendance issues (e.g. subject truancy).
- Promote good attendance through assemblies and updating of Year Group Attendance Boards.
- Offer support and work closely with the parents/carers of students who are persistent absentees or at risk of becoming so. **NB** this is defined as being of equal to or greater than 10% of school sessions as from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.
- Conduct home visits when there are issues with punctuality and/or school refusal.

### **Form Tutor**

- Encourage all students in their form to maintain excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Direct any correspondence from parents/carers with regard to absences to the Attendance Team.
- Liaise with Year Managers to regarding rewards (house points) to promote excellent attendance.

## **Subject Teachers**

- Take an electronic register at the start of each lesson.
- Pass on any concerns about absentees from lessons to the Attendance Team as soon as possible.

## **Academy Attendance Team**

- Compile all attendance data and information for relevant staff.
- Make contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence for all students where the reason for absence is unknown.
- Work closely with the Year Managers, SENco, Alternative Education Provision, Local Authority to monitor students who present concerns.
- Monitor Students' reintegration after long term absence.
- Liaise with Outside Provisions i.e. Returners Unit, Young Mums, External Exclusion Unit.

## **Local Authority**

- Work closely with relevant staff to establish caseload and feedback information on work in progress.
- Liaise with Attendance Team to ensure communication is up to date.
- Attend school attendance meetings organised by Attendance Team to monitor individual students' attendance.
- Organise PACE meetings where necessary.
- Carry out home visits.
- Issue fixed term penalty notices.

## **Student registration requirements**

There are four broad classifications in attendance registers:

**Present** – the student is on the premises at the time of registration.

**Approved Educational Activity** – the student is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site, for example field trip, educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.

**Authorised Absence** – an absence authorised by the school which includes illness, medical appointments, bereavement or other circumstances where the school deems attendance to be appropriate.

**Unauthorised Absence** – an absence where the student does not have good cause to be missing from school. Unauthorised absence can be defined in the following ways:

Truancy – this is action by students who fail to attend school when they should, including leaving the Academy premises after registration. It also includes action by parents/carers who initiate unauthorised absence by students or who collude with it. Shopping trips, day trips, holidays or absence to look after someone else would all constitute examples of unauthorised absence.

School refusal – this is chronic non-attendance over a period of time, usually an indicator of wider family, psychological or behavioural problems.

The school will aim to highlight and resolve any difficulties regarding a student's attendance as early as possible, using our rigorous monitoring and intervention procedures and pastoral support programmes to help solve any problems.

### **Persistent Absence:**

As from 1st September 2015 the Dept of Education defines Persistent Absence (PA) as being any child who is absent for, or more than, 10% of the school year. Reaching this threshold will result in increased monitoring and if necessary, referral to the Local Authority for action.

## **Attendance Procedures**

### **Registration**

- Registers must be taken promptly at the start of each lesson and during form time. Staff must contact the school Attendance Team as soon as possible if there are any concerns about absentees.
- Anyone taking students out of school for any reason must supply the Attendance Team with a list of names.
- Staff must inform the Attendance Team of any students taking part in events in school that require students to be off timetable.

### **First Day Contact**

The Attendance Team will organise first day contact when reasons for absence are unknown. This will involve telephoning/texting/emailing all parents/carers when contact hasn't been made. There will be occasions when school staff visit homes when we have concerns about persistent or sporadic absence.

### **Outstanding Absences**

Any outstanding or unexplained absence will be followed up by the Attendance Team via contact with parents. Until contact is made, absence will remain unauthorised.

### **Exit/Entry to School During The Day**

Students who need to leave during the school day must bring a letter from home and/or an appointment card. Students should bring the note from home to the Attendance Team when it is time for them to sign out and sign back in at the Attendance Office on their return. We would encourage all appointments to be made after 2.40pm, so as not to impact on your child's learning.

### **Late arrivals**

Students who arrive at school once registration has closed must report to the Attendance Office before going to their lesson. A member of the Attendance Team will record students arriving late during registration. Once recorded, any lateness will result in a detention on the same day.

All these procedures are very important as in the event of a fire drill it is vital there is an accurate record of who is on the Academy site at that time. It is equally important that all Red House Academy staff sign in and out using the electronic registration system located in reception.

### **Attendance Concerns**

- The Attendance Team meet weekly to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns at ELM. The Attendance Team track the attendance of all students within the academy and use the school's Attendance Protocol.
- **Long term absence** – students who are long term absentees for whatever reason, often find the return to school problematical. There are both academic and social difficulties which students may need time to overcome. For some students this may involve a personalised re-integration programme. The programme will be devised by the appropriate YM and may include use of the Bridge Unit, a partial timetable, pastoral support from the behaviour support team, ELM or other member of staff. Parents/carers will be involved throughout the reintegration process and staff will be informed by the YM.

**Holiday Absence –Will not be authorised** in advance except when due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Bereavement and life threatening illness are considered to be exceptional circumstances. Please note that the cost or availability of holidays does not constitute 'exceptional circumstances'. Leave of absence forms can be downloaded from the school website or obtained from the school office. Where a parental request has been refused, and parents/carers continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The school responds to all holiday requests with a letter to inform parents/carers of the school's decision. Please be mindful that unauthorised absence can result in Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

### **Rewards and Incentives**

Good attendance is acknowledged in form tutor periods, assemblies, celebration events and at award evenings. Attendance is monitored termly and students achieving above targets are recognised with house points, prizes and certificates, encourages students to monitor their own attendance and punctuality.

We are also keen to acknowledge the support of parents/carers in working with us to maximise outcomes for our young people.

## **Attendance Guidance for Parents/Carers**

### **Raise your child's attendance - Raise their chances!**

At Red House Academy excellent attendance and punctuality is our aim for every student. Full attendance maximises learning opportunities and parents/carers have a vital role in promoting good attitudes in attendance. Evidence shows that students who attend school regularly make better progress both academically and socially. We ask for support from parents/carers to:

- Ensure that their children are present at every opportunity
- Arrive on time
- Avoid allowing children to stay at home unnecessarily
- Avoid taking them out of school without authorisation.

We monitor attendance closely and will follow up unexplained absence with parents/carers, by telephone or by letter. The Department for Education's threshold at which a student is defined as 'persistently absent' is 10% (down from 15% previously). Where a student's attendance record reaches a concerning level, we will contact you to discuss ways in which the school can support you and your child.

The school attendance target of 95% is the minimum that we expect for all students. Every lesson counts and it is this commitment to learning that will have a positive impact on attainment and progress

### **Reporting Absence**

#### **What to do if your child is ill:**

If your child is too ill to attend school, parents/carers should contact the School's Attendance Team before 8.30 on telephone number 5615511 Extension 40201.

Please give your child's name, Year Group, the reason for the absence, and how long you expect the absence to last. We ask that you contact us each day that your child is absent unless you have given us an indication of how long the absence will last. On your child's return following an absence, we request that parents/carers write a brief note explaining the absence. The student should hand the note in at the Attendance Office.

#### **What to do if your child has an appointment:**

We ask that, where possible, you make routine medical and other appointments out of school time. If this is not possible, we require notification in advance. Please telephone, email or provide a note from home or appointment letter/card to confirm the appointment. In most cases, your child should attend the Academy before the appointment and return to the Academy afterwards wherever possible. Students should bring a note from home to the Attendance Office when it is time for them to sign out and should sign back in on their return. The Academy will not allow a child to leave school with any adult who is not listed on school records as a person of contact

### **Automated calls to parents/carers:**

We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously. If the Attendance Team has received no reason for absence a Groupcall message will be sent, a telephone call home or home visit will be carried out. Calls are made on a daily basis, even where your child has been absent due to illness on previous days. We cannot assume that your child is still ill unless you have notified us. We would not wish to put your child at risk by failing to contact you. Please ensure your child realises the importance of attending registration on time and getting their present mark. Parents/carers can also help by ensuring that we hold up to date contact details.

### **Punctuality**

All students are expected to arrive to school on time and be ready and punctual to lessons. This is a minimum expectation. Students should arrive for 8.20am. Students are expected to be in registration by 8.30am ready to start learning. Any student arriving late must sign in at the Attendance Office. After 8.30am, students will be marked as late and will receive a same day detention. We would be grateful for your support in ensuring that your child arrives on time.

### **Holidays in term time**

All children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at a school must attend that school regularly and punctually. Should a child fail to attend regularly and punctually the school may refer to the Local Authority for consideration in relation to prosecution for an offence under the Education Act 1996. This may result in the Local Authority taking legal action in the Magistrates Court in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Schools are no longer allowed to authorise holidays during term time, unless a special leave of absence is granted for 'exceptional circumstances.'

Examples of what constitutes 'special circumstances' would include, for example, a parent in the armed forces who is currently on leave. No leave of absence may be granted under any circumstances during examination sessions or exam preparation time.

Any parent taking a child on an unauthorised holiday will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. This may result in a fine by the Local Authority.

### **Leave of absence for other reasons**

Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as shopping for uniform, birthdays, day trips, etc. If parents/carers wish their child(ren) to be absent for other reasons, such as compassionate leave, special family events, or to participate in sporting or musical competitions etc, application should be made in writing, in advance where possible, or by telephone/email to the Attendance Team. It may be necessary for parents to apply for a performance license in such circumstances.

### **Elective Home Education**

Parents/carers wishing to home school are required to notify the Academy in writing of their intention to educate at home. The school has a statutory duty to inform the Local Authority. A guide for parents considering home tuition is also available to view at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/EHE](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/EHE) and copies are available in school.

### **Missing in Education**

The national definition of a child missing from education is: “All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being education otherwise (e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more)”.

### **Academy Procedures**

Should a child leave without the Academy being advised by the parent/carer as to which new school the child is transferring to, the Academy will immediately notify the Local Authority.

Should the child be the subject of a Child Protection Plan or should the Academy have child protection concerns, the Academy will notify the Initial Response Team.

As Children missing in Education raise potential safeguarding issues the Academy will follow the Locating Missing Pupils procedures set out by the Local Authority.