

RAVENSCOTE JUNIOR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2023 - 2024



Date of Approval		Date of Review	
22 nd September 2023		20 th September 2024	
Signed	Amy Wells Headteacher	Signed	Emily Gibson Chair of Governors



RAVENSCOTE JUNIOR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All schools in the Surrey Heath Learning Partnership are committed to developing and implementing policies and practice which supports improved attendance, in partnership with parents/carers, children and governors, with relevant departments within Surrey County Council and borough councils, and with other organisations who have an interest or are affected by school attendance.

Further information on encouraging attendance and individual school procedures can be found in individual school policies and procedures which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

We firmly believe that all children benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Children will be expected to achieve excellent attendance but when absence is unavoidable through sickness, the school should be notified on each day of absence. Parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity for any other absence.

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

In line with the Education Regulations (Child Registration) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. In addition, schools are required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the DfE and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

Expectations

We expect that all children will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers and persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children will:

- Encourage regular school attendance by supporting the values of good attendance during education at home and to be aware of their legal responsibilities.



- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day (including extra-curricular activities) and have completed any homework they have been given.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- Contact the school office by 9am on the first day of a child's absence, and every day thereafter, giving the reason for the absence.
- Discuss with the class teacher or Headteacher any problems preventing their child/children from attending school.
- Provide evidence, if required where the length and frequency of absence through illness is giving cause for concern.
- Complete a Ravenscote Junior School 'Leave of Absence' form when required.

We expect that school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children, as required by current legislation.
- Monitor every child's attendance.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Be alert to early signs of disaffection or a child's worries about school which could culminate in non-attendance and report these concerns as soon as possible to the Headteacher.
- Encourage good attendance.
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any parent or child's concerns and offer support or work with other agencies as appropriate.
- Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of children who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached Educational Welfare Officer.
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all children.
- Fulfil, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

In order for this Attendance Policy to be successful, **every** member of staff in every school must make attendance a high priority and convey this to children at all times. Parents/carers should also need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Children leaving during the school day

- Children are not permitted to leave the Ravenscote Junior School site during the day without prior permission from the school and then must be accompanied off site with a parent/carer.
- Children must be signed out by a parent or carer when leaving the school and sign back in on return.



- Parents must let the school know in advance of any appointments.

Dental and medical treatments

Whilst Ravenscote Junior School will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the Ravenscote School office should be notified of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Lateness

Please note that if children arrive after the Ravenscote Junior School start time (8.45am) they will be recorded as late. Individual school procedures outline the time at which registers are closed and children arriving after this time will be recorded 'as late after close of register' which counts as an unauthorised absence for that session. The child's name will be recorded in-line with school procedures in case of emergency procedures/fire drills etc.

Persistent lateness before the close of register- and after- will be followed up by the school and Surrey's Inclusion Officer.

Children who are absent from education

"Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and or on repeat occasions." (KCSIE, 2023).

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation (CSE). The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority particularly where children go missing on repeat occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day, in conjunction with 'Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities' (2016). Staff are alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. The DSL discusses patterns and trends for vulnerable pupils with the Attendance Officer, as per DFE guidance on Working Together to Improve Attendance, 2022, page 10.

Changing Schools

It is important that if a family decides to send their child to a different school, they inform Ravenscote Junior School as soon as possible prior to the move. The student will not be removed from the Ravenscote Junior School roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- Date the child will leave the school to start the next
- Address of the new school
- New home address if appropriate

An in-year transfer form is available to download though the Surrey County Council website and should be completed by the parent and Headteacher prior to transfer.



Children's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above, the family will be referred to Surrey County Council's tracking officer and Inclusion Officer.

Requests for leave of absence during term time

No parent/carer can demand a leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion and will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**.

If a family needs to request an absence in term-time, then a form requesting a **Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances** must, *wherever possible*, be submitted to the Headteacher at least two weeks prior to the leave date. The Headteacher will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately.

Unauthorised Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. (The amendment has not defined 'exceptional circumstances' and therefore headteachers will be responsible for deciding what they consider to be 'exceptional circumstances')

Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and will be used in the following circumstances:

1. Children identified by police and inclusion officer engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences; when a student comes to the notice of Truancy Patrol, a child's pattern of attendance will be investigated which may lead to a warning letter or Penalty Notice.
2. Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days or equivalent). In such cases the Headteacher will request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice. Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised. **Each parent** is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for **each** child. Days do NOT have to be consecutive. If unauthorised leave of absence is taken at different times throughout a rolling 3-month period and the number of days off total 5 days or more, a penalty notice may be issued.
3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a parent is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer. This will be considered if attendance is below 90% and there are 7 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous half term, which may include a child arriving late after the close of registration (for example after 9.15am.)



4. In-line with guidance from DfE leave of absence during GCSE's, SAT's, mock examinations and other external exam periods will not be authorised by the school and a penalty notice may be issued, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice, rising to £120 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the Local authority must consider a prosecution against the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

