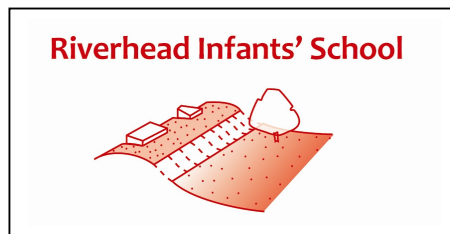


Riverhead Infants' School

Attendance Policy



Agreed by the Board of Governors

Signed:



Chair of Governors

Signed:



Headteacher

Date:

October 2011

Next Review Date:

October 2013

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

SYNOPSIS

Riverhead Infants' School is committed to working in partnership with parents, pupils and other professionals to provide effective educational programmes for all pupils. This Policy reflects that we recognise that every pupil has the fundamental right to receive an education as well as benefit from education through regular school attendance. It identifies the role of the school in developing strategies to support pupils in achieving maximum possible attendance and deal with school based problems impeding full attendance as soon as possible. The school will work with parents/carers and outside agencies where there are issues not related to school impeding a pupil's ability to learn and or attend school. Attendance rates are regularly overseen by the Educational Welfare Service.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To maintain the profile of attendance within the school and with pupils and parents/carers.
2. To ensure that attendance is as high as possible
3. To ensure punctuality of pupils
4. To keep unauthorised absence to an absolute minimum.
5. To ensure that any ongoing issues affecting the ability of pupils to maintain high levels of attendance are addressed either through school resources or referred to appropriate outside agencies, such as the Education Welfare Service.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.0 PARENTS OR CARERS

- 1.1 Riverhead Infants' School wishes to work in partnership with parents/carers to achieve good school attendance. The target attendance for a pupil at Riverhead Infants' School is at least 96%.
- 1.2 Parents/carers sign the Home-School Agreement, which includes a statement that they will ensure regular attendance at school.
- 1.3 Parents/carers of registered pupils at Riverhead Infants' School are legally required to ensure that they attend school regularly and punctually. Lateness in law can be seen as absence and pupils arriving after the close of registers could be recorded as unauthorised absent.

- 1.4 Parents/carers should contact the school by 9.30am on the first day of a pupil's absence. They should state the reason for absence and the date on which the pupil can be expected to return. On return, the parent should provide Class Teacher with a dated note confirming the reason for absence.
- 1.5 Appointments for medical reasons should be made, whenever possible, outside of school time. Where this is not possible, a letter should be written to the Headteacher
- 1.6 Parents/carers should ensure that on arrival at school, their child is properly equipped and fit for the learning environment.
- 1.7 Parents/carers are expected to arrange family holidays out of term time unless there are **exceptional** and unusual circumstances.

2.0 THE GOVERNING BODY

- 2.1 The Governing Body has a responsibility for attendance with other stakeholders and will be familiar with the current legislation in relation to school attendance, which includes exclusion.
- 2.2 They will be acquainted with the registration system in the school.
- 2.3 The Governing Body requires the Head Teacher to report on attendance each term at a Full Governing Body meeting in order to monitor attendance.

3.0 THE HEAD TEACHER

- 3.1 The Head Teacher has the day-to-day responsibility for attendance and will ensure that the school meets the legal requirements, sets required targets for attendance, oversees unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures each term in her termly Report to the Governors..
- 3.2 The Head Teacher will ensure that parents/carers are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission and at regular intervals throughout the year. The signing of the Home-School Agreement will support this.
- 3.3 The Head Teacher has a duty under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make returns to the LA and DfE as and when requested. In addition she is required to report to the LA and individual pupils who have been absent for more than two weeks or who have developed a poor pattern of attendance. In such cases, the Headteacher will ask for further written clarification of reasons for absence from the parents/carers and explain the reason for seeking this information.

4.0 THE CLASS TEACHER

- 4.1 The Class Teacher has a vital role to play in the monitoring of attendance and punctuality of individual pupils in our school.
- 4.2 The Class Teacher will ensure that the registers are called promptly and correctly in order that the school conforms to statutory requirements and that data is available for health and safety requirements and information and data reading processes.
- 4.3 Class Teachers will be responsible for welcoming back pupils on their return from absence. They will also notify other relevant staff members if a pupil is experiencing particular difficulties at home or school.
- 4.4 If a pupil about whom there are Child Protection concerns is absent, the Designated Child Protection Officer should be informed on the first day of absence. The Headteacher and Child Protection Officer will decide if any further action need be taken to ensure the safety of the pupil.

5.0 ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

- 5.1 When a pupil of this school has a poor attendance record, it is the duty of staff to consider possible causes. When considering reasons they should bear in mind factors that could relate to Child Protection, Behaviour Management and the Anti-Bullying factors. The Class Teacher will have a particular role to play in identifying reasons for absence and addressing such issues and keep the Headteacher fully informed.
- 5.2 The school has clear systems for following up absence through letters home if absence fails to be explained. If a child's attendance drops below 85% in a year, parents/carers are informed by a letter from the Headteacher and requested to provide a **written** explanation for the poor attendance.
- 5.3 All pupils with attendance below 80% are discussed with the Education Welfare Officer. School based strategies will include contact with home by the Headteacher, meetings with parents/carers and letters informing parents/carers of concerns about levels of absence, support for the pupil and explanation of expectations.
- 5.4 Court action can only be taken by the Education Authority in cases where pupils' absence from school is unauthorised. By authorising absence the school is giving the pupil leave to be absent and there is therefore no offence being committed by the parent/carer.

5.5 The parents/carers of pupils who accrue 10 or more unauthorised absent sessions in a term could be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice Fine from the LA on receipt of information from the school that indicates that;

- There is overt truancy
- That the absences are condoned by parents/carers;
- That parents/carers are taking a pupil on excessive holidays in term time;
- That there has been excessive delayed return from an extended holiday without prior agreement;
- There has been persistent late arrival - after the Register has closed.

6.0 HOLIDAYS AND EXTENDED HOLIDAYS

6.1 Under regulation 5 of The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, there is a discretionary power for leave to be granted for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. The Headteacher will consider carefully any applications made at least two weeks in advance. Application forms are available from the school office. Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be approved for a period in excess of two weeks, and will be granted only once during the school year whether it is a half day or the maximum period of ten days. Parents/carers are encouraged to take family holidays during school holiday periods but it is accepted that this is not always possible.

6.2 Applications for all family holidays must be made in writing at least two weeks before the proposed period of absence to the Headteacher. If it is for a period in excess of two weeks application must be made to the Head Teacher at least four weeks in advance. Parents/carers will be required to explain the nature and purpose of the trip and whether this event is likely to occur again. The Headteacher will then decide, taking into consideration the pupil's attendance pattern and the impact of the pupil's education, whether leave of absence for the whole period will be granted.

6.3 Where a pupil has a holiday in school time approved, it is expected that wherever possible school holiday periods will be included. Although it is recognised that it is not always possible, the family should discuss with the Headteacher possible times to take holidays that will have less impact on the pupil's education.

6.4 Should a pupil fail to return from holiday without any further contact with the school, the pupil may be taken off the school roll after 10 days (Education [Pupil Registration] regulations 1995).