

# **Rook's Nest Academy**



## **Attendance Policy 2020-21**

## ROOK'S NEST ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY

### AIM

There is a direct correlation between Attendance and Attainment. The aim of Rook's Nest Academy's Attendance Policy is to raise levels of attendance and punctuality for children and young people, therefore maximising their opportunities for improved attainment.

### OBJECTIVES

At Rook's Nest Academy we want to reduce absence and lateness, and raise awareness of the importance of Academy attendance. We believe that all Academy staff, parents, pupils and Governors should be included in Academy Attendance Matters strategies. We have a robust electronic data handling system, enabling Academy staff, the LA and DfE to access statistical data in order to work effectively in partnership.

We aim to work effectively with parents/carers and partner agencies, using a range of strategies to improve the attendance of individual pupils and the whole Academy.

### THE LAW

Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states that if a child of compulsory Academy age fails to attend Academy regularly the parent is guilty of an offence. Parents, therefore have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's Academy attendance. Failure can lead to legal action being taken by the LA in the Magistrates Court, or the need to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice where a parent **knowingly** allows their child to be absent from Academy. This offence can carry a fine or a custodial sentence for repeated offending.

### ABSENCE FROM ACADEMY

Any absence from the Academy is detrimental to a child's education and progress as it disrupts learning, routines and progress. Government research shows that 17 days lost learning in one Academy year can lead to a drop of one grade at GCSE and SAT level.

- Parents are expected to telephone the Academy on the first day of absence and inform the Academy of the reason for their child not attending. A message can be left on the Academy's 24 hr answerphone.
- The Academy will follow up unexplained absences by contacting parents/carers by 9.30 am on the first day of absence. In line with the Academy Safeguarding policy, we ask that all parents where possible provide an alternative contact number. If the Academy have not heard from parents with reasons for absence the alternative contact, number will be used.

- In line with the academy safeguarding procedures if no contact can be made with reasons for absence, the inclusion manager and a member of the SLT and /or pastoral team will carry out a home visit. Home visits will be recorded.
- The police/social care direct may be phoned with concerns over a child “missing in education”.
- Parents/carers may be invited into Academy to discuss attendance issues if there is a cause for concern. The Academy will agree with the EWS (Education Welfare Service) at what point a referral to the Service will be made.
- If we feel that, the reason given for a child’s absence is not genuine then you may receive a visit from the Educational Welfare Officer on our behalf.

## **AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

We are aware that some absences are unavoidable, usually due to illness, bereavement or difficult family circumstances. These absences should be supported by medical evidence where possible or a written explanation from the parent/carer. **The decision as to whether an absence is authorised or not lies with the Head teacher and/or Inclusion manager.**

### **DFE Guidance for re-opening of schools August 7<sup>th</sup> linked to COVID-19**

“Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should monitor engagement with this activity.” Absence codes will be recorded on school monitoring systems. Absence will not be penalised.

“Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.”

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

These are absences which are not permissible in Law, e.g. birthdays, shopping trips, days out and Term Time Holidays, and absences where no explanation has been received. The Academy will discuss unauthorised absence with the EWS. Parents may be invited into the Academy to discuss their child’s absence and further action may be taken if the situation does not improve.

The Academy does not authorise holidays to be taken in term time. Pupils have an entitlement to an education, not a term time holiday. If a child is reported as being absent through illness in the days preceding or following a planned holiday we may ask you to provide an address where the child can be visited to ensure that they are genuinely ill and not already/still on holiday. The EWS will impose a fixed penalty fine if holiday absence is longer than 5 full days, 10 sessions. This fine will be per child and is paid to the authority not the Academy.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENT**

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee if he/she has missed 10% or more of Academy for any reason and has an attendance of below 90%. The Academy will send a letter home informing of attendance percentages and/or invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation, and referrals may be made to the EWS. A range of Academy and LA strategies can be deployed to improve attendance, including the Fast Track to Attendance programme, Parenting Contracts and Fixed Penalty Fines.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

The Law states that children should arrive at Academy on time, every day. The Academy doors open at 8.45 am and the expectation is that pupils should be there ready to learn for that time. Poor punctuality and persistent lateness are unacceptable. A late mark will be given between 9.00 am and 9.20 am when registers close, and any arrivals after 9.20 am will be marked as unauthorised absence, leaving parents/carers at the risk of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## **ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **THE ACADEMY**

Rook's Nest Academy has high expectations for pupil attendance, and we monitor individual and whole Academy attendance on a weekly basis. We will identify causes of concern with regard to pupil attendance and make initial contact with parents where there is an unexplained absence. We will invite parents/carers into Academy to discuss the situation where there is no improvement. We work in partnership with the LA and the Education Welfare Service to address poor attendance and punctuality. We maintain electronic registration data systems effectively and deploy them robustly to facilitate presentation of reports and to enable us to provide attendance data for parents.

We promote attendance at all levels – within Academy, the community, the LA, regionally and nationally and celebrate excellent and improved attendance with weekly celebration assemblies, termly 100% attendance certificates and end of Year 100% attendance postcards sent home.

### **PARENTS/CARERS**

It is the responsibility of Parents and Carers to ensure pupils arrive at Academy on time every day and that routines are in place at home to support this. Please contact the Academy as soon as possible if absence is unavoidable and follow this up with a written explanation. We have a 24hr Answerphone so messages can be left.

It would also be of benefit to us if you could obtain evidence wherever possible to support medical absences.

Please avoid term time holidays, and attempt to minimise Academy time appointments. All children arriving late or being taken out of Academy during the academic day should be

signed in/ out at the Academy Office and copies of appointment letters/cards should be shown to the Academy staff. Please note that children returning for the afternoon session should not be returned to Academy until 1.00 pm.

When advising the Academy of absence due to a medical appointment it would also be helpful if you can indicate your child's dinner preference to ensure that they do not miss out on their choice of lunch.

## **PUPILS**

Pupils should arrive at Academy, on time every day with the correct equipment and ready to learn.

Pupils will be expected to comply with Academy regulations regarding attendance and punctuality.

Pupils may ask to discuss any concerns they may have with staff regarding attendance and punctuality.

## **Education Welfare Service (EWS) /Local Authority**

The EWS will work in partnership with the Academy to promote and facilitate improved attendance, at an individual level, either through a referral system or using the Fast Track to Attendance Programme; and at whole Academy level using proactive strategies and Action plans.

The EWS will work with children and families to ensure their Academy attendance and safeguarding is maintained.

The EWS will provide advice and guidance with regards to Children Missing in Education, Child Employment and Licensing.

The EWS will work in partnership with other agencies and will offer advice and signposting for referrals to appropriate organisations.

The EWS will undertake legal action on behalf of the Academy.

The Local Authority will support the Academy with networking and training events and with individual Academy Audits and Action Plans.

Date: September 2020

To be reviewed: September 2021