Rook's Nest Academy

Attendance Policy 2026-27

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 school regularly the parent is guilty of an offence. Parents, therefore have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's school 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 school. This offence can carry a fine or a custodial sentence for repeated offending.

Improving school attendance is everyone's business and, to tackle the challenge we face, we need to work together. From 8 January, the Government launched a national campaign to remind of the importance of school attendance. The campaign strapline is "**moments matter, attendance counts".**

ABSENCE FROM THE 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 school 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. (We request details are given so this can be recorded**, unwell, or ill is not sufficient details**.)
- In some circumstances parents may e-mail the academy with reasons for absence or to provide appointment information. E-mail contact is: contact@rooksnestacademy.co.uk

- 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 will carry out a home visit. Home visits will be recorded.
- The police/social care direct/EWO may be phoned with concerns over a child "missing in education".
- Parents/carers may be e-mailed through Arbor, receive an attendance letter or be invited into the Academy to discuss attendance issues if there is a cause for concern and to discuss what support can be given.
- The pastoral team will aim to support any families and children with transition difficulties coming into school, personal plans may be put in place to support punctuality and attendance.
- 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. **The decision as to whether an absence is authorised or not lies with the Head teacher and/or Inclusion manager.**

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. This fine will be per child and is paid to the authority not the Academy.

With the introduction of the New National Framework for Penalty Notices, changes will come into force on 19th August 2024

https://www.rooksnestacademy.co.uk/

The National Framework will introduce a national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered from the 19th August 2024.
The threshold **is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.**
This can **be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence**, such as 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes, all taken within any **10-school week period.**
The unauthorised absence sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).

Further changes:

- An increase to the rate of a penalty notice from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days, and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- An additional rung to the ladder of escalation, with any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period being charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

PERSISTENT ABSENCES

The school day is split into two sessions – one session counts as a morning or afternoon spent in school. Pupils who have missed more than 10 per cent of school sessions are considered persistently absent, while children who have missed more than 50 per cent of school sessions are referred to as severely absent.

The Academy will send a letter home or through Arbor 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.

SEVERE ABSENTEE

The Academy will refer any pupil with an attendance below 50% to EWS to then work with parents and the academy to improve attendance and form an education plan.

(Exceptions will be taken into consideration of children receiving medical attention, with medical needs or with an allocated social worker.)

PUNCTUALITY

The Law states that children should arrive at school on time, every day. The Academy gates open between 8:30 and 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. All children arriving after 8:45 when the gates are closed will need to go through the main office. A late slip will be given between 8:45 am and 9.00 am.
Any arrivals after 9.00 am will be marked as (U) late after registers close, leaving parents/carers at the risk of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
Any children arriving after 8:30 for Pre-school and nursery children, and 9:00 for all other children will need to be signed in on the electronic system in the entrance with a reason for lateness.

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.

PARENTS/CARERS

It is the responsibility of Parents and Carers to ensure pupils arrive at school 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. We have a 24hr Answerphone so messages can be left. **(01924 870700)**

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 the Academy during the academic day should be

signed in/ out at the Academy Office on the electronic system 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 the Academy until 12:30 for EY or 1.00 pm for children from year 1 to 6.

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.

If you are unsure if your child is "**too ill for school**" copying the following hyper-link and referring to the following may be of help: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS

PUPILS

Pupils should arrive at the 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 2026 to be reviewed: September 2027