



RAINHILL HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY





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STATUS	NON-STATUTORY
RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE	LOCAL GOVERNING BODY
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SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP

STEPHENSON

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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1. Introduction

Rainhill High School recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for students within our School to support learning and achievement.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our young people every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all students attend regularly and on time. Students should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all students to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation **all** students achieve at least 97%. **As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.**

Excellent attendance and punctuality are key factors both in learning and raising achievement as well as being important for lifelong learning.

It is therefore critical that parents and carers ensure their child attends school every day, on time.

2. Aims

- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Maximise the overall percentage of student attendance and punctuality at Rainhill High School
- Reduce the number of students who are persistently absent
- Raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the whole school community
- Support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for students.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- Promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. Promoting regular Attendance at Rainhill High School

To help us all focus on this, Rainhill High School will ensure:

- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Appropriate interventions are in place to deter poor punctuality.
- Students are provided with appropriate support to minimise disaffection from school.
- Students with SEND, Disadvantaged, Looked After students and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously.
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of students' attendance and punctuality through first day response, progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular student incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with students in tutorial time and at assemblies.
- Staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff ensure these are followed.

5. Why regular attendance is important

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect students' learning. Students who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to a student missing one half day of lessons per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

The DfE has published a strong link between poor school attendance and low levels of achievement:

Students attendance	Chance of achieving 5 good pass grades at GCSE
100% - 96%	73% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades.
96% - 94%	64% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades.
93% - 90%	55% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades
80% to 70%	Only 20% chance of achieving 5 good pass grades
50% and below	Only 6% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades

6. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

5.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

5.3 The Year Student Manager/Attendance Officer

The YSM/school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the year group/school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

5.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7. Expectations

Expectation of Students

- Ensure you arrive at Rainhill High School by 8.50 am with correct equipment and uniform.
- Be in year group area/form room by 8.55 am.
- Arrive to all lessons on time.
- Always attend every lesson.
- Never leave the school site without permission.
- Always use the signing in/out system when late or leaving school for appointments.
- Following any absence, complete any missed work that may be provided by your teachers.

Expectations of Parent/Carer

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.
- Ensure your child leaves for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are

made outside of school hours.

- If your child is to leave school during the day, they must be picked up by parent/carer. They will not be allowed to leave school on their own during the school day. If anyone other than a parent is to pick your child up, the school must be notified in advance in writing.
- Contact Rainhill High School by 8.00am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school. Contact to be made through Synergy
- If a message is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to this to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact Rainhill High School if the reason for absence requires a more personal discussion.
- **In case of emergency** we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers.
- Requests for leave of absence under exceptional circumstances must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for short absences.

Requests must be made in advance with as much notice as possible given to the school.

If a student is absent we will

- Telephone and text Parent/Carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.20am.
- If no response is received after three days unauthorised absence, we would consult the school Education Welfare Officer/School's Police Liaison Officer to organise a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a student's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent/carer will be invited to meet an appropriate member of staff in school.
- If absences persist a representative of the school will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

8.Understanding types of absence

Rainhill High School has to record every absence that a student takes from school and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by phone/email or phone on the first day of absence and in writing on the student's return

Authorised absence

Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school. Absences through illness may be authorised if appropriate medical evidence is provided to the school.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, weddings, to look after siblings
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Students who arrive at school too late to get their mark.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. Rainhill High School will issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 schools' days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer to case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

Persistent Absence

- Students are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before students reach a level of persistent absence. The school will work in partnership with parents to remove barriers that prevent attendance.
- Whilst we understand that students can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a student is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution
- Parent/Carers are asked to contact the Year Student Manager for their child's year group in the first instance.

Although an absence may be explained, it is ultimately the school's decision whether to authorise it. Extended periods of absence or persistent absence without medical evidence may not be classed as authorised.

9. Leave of absence during term time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in **truly exceptional circumstances** and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice fine for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively.

Headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Applications should be requested directly to the Head Teacher of the school before any expenses are committed. All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent. Parents who wish to apply for a leave of absence must write directly to the Headteacher and sent to the Headteacher's PA at least 3 months before the proposed absence (where possible).

10. Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Education Welfare Officer

Our Education Welfare Officer – provides support for parents/carer and advice on problems relating to attendance, and encourages good communications between home and school.

The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the student's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists, the EWO will be required to consider the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

11.Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving students disrupt lessons. A range of support and sanctions apply to students who arrive late.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts and registers are taken at 8.55 am by the Form Tutor and students receive a late mark if they are not in their Tutor Group by that time. School recommends that students arrive by 8.45 am at the latest.

- Students who arrive late to school will be met by a member of staff and will be instructed further on actions that will be taken.
- If a student arrives late to School parents/carers receive a message to inform them of their child's late arrival.
- A student who arrives late will receive an after-school detention that day.
 - If a student arrives after 9.30am, their attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code) for the morning session.
- If a parent/carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the Year Student Manager for their child's year group, who will offer support to resolve the problem.

12. Removal from the school roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are now required to:

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- Give the Year Student Manager/Year Progress Leader comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of 2 years by Lindsay Munro, Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

14. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy