

## Rainford High Attendance Policy November 2019

### Everyone Matter

We expect our community to be polite and respectful

### Everyone Helps

We expect our community to make sensible choices

### Everyone Succeeds

We expect our community to work hard

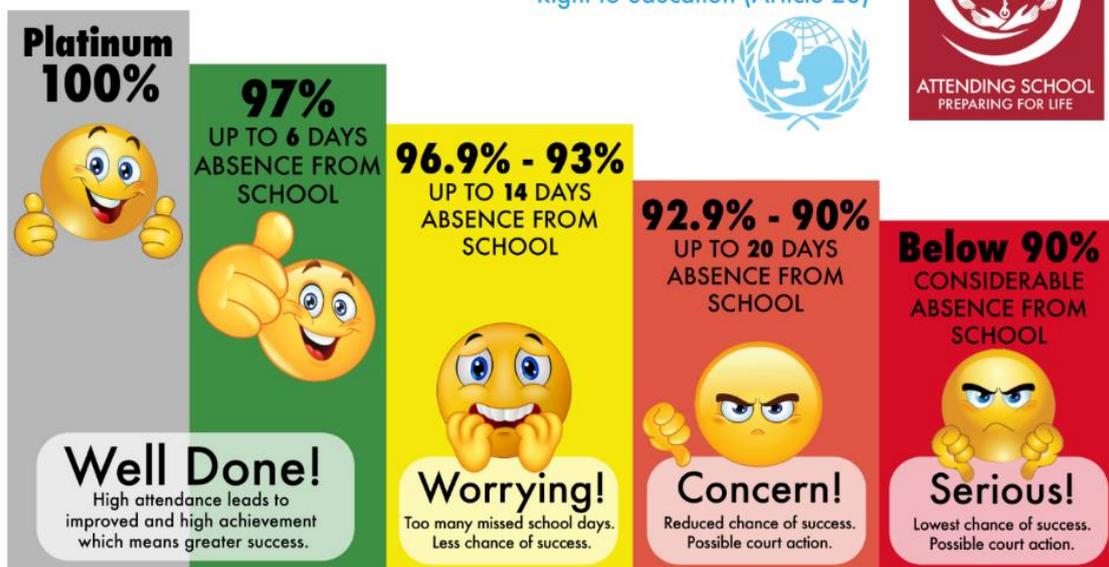
Our attendance target is 97% because we want all of our students to achieve their full potential. We want every student to attend Rainford to learn and thrive.

### Rationale

The aim is for all students to have an attendance rate above 97% as this will ensure attendance does not become a barrier to learning and achievement. We aim to support both students and parents/carers in helping them to achieve this as every student has a right to education (Article 28 of Unicef rights the child).

## WHAT IS YOUR ATTENDANCE?

Right to education (Article 28)



There are 175 non school days a year.  
That's plenty of time to go on visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.

## Rights and Responsibilities

### School

- Rainford High expect all pupils to attend regularly and to arrive on time in a fit condition to learn.
- Staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality with all pupils and will lead through personal example.
- The school employs a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and works closely with parents when attendance/punctuality gives cause for concern.
- Your child's Pastoral Leader is responsible for attendance improvement and is your first point of contact to discuss any attendance concerns. Please use the attendance phone line to report an absence.
- School use a text message service to alert you to your child's absence if we have not been notified of their absence prior to the registers being completed.
- School will regularly keep you up to date with what your child's attendance is

### Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend regularly and on arrive on time.
- Pupils will be encouraged to achieve and maintain a good attendance through assemblies, incentives and rewards certificates.

### Parents

- Parents are **legally responsible** for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents are responsible for informing the school, before 9am (or as soon as possible) on a day of absence, of the reason why their child is absent by phone call or personal visit.
- Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to support absences.
- Parents should avoid routine medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours unless it is a specialist appointment that cannot be arranged outside school hours. Students are expected to return to school after an appointment if it is in the morning and attend in the morning if the appointment is in the afternoon.
- Parents should inform school before an appointment and a copy of any documentation should be shown to the school office so that the absence can be authorised.
- Parents are expected to attend meetings on request if concerns arise about their child's attendance or punctuality, where initially an attendance support plan will be written.

We want every student to achieve their potential and for this to happen we require the below:

- 1) Students to attend school at all times unless absence is absolutely necessary

- 2) Students to catch up on all work missed due to absences so they don't fall behind their peers who have attended school. Once knowledge is missed, it has been missed, so catch-up is essential
- 3) Medical or dental appointments are booked outside of school hours and if this is unavoidable, students return to school or attend school before they go

## **Punctuality**

We expect our students to be punctual to school. If they arrive to tutor time after 8:50am then they will be marked late and they will receive a standards detention at lunchtime to discuss the reason for their lateness. If your child arrives to school after 10:30am then they will receive a U code, which is regarded as an absence for the morning session. Regular U codes can lead to a legal sanction, such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Parents of children who arrive late on a regular basis will be invited into school to discuss the issues and concerns around the punctuality of their child.

## **Attendance**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parent / carer) as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**.

This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a valid reason, such as genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Where a medical/dental appointment cannot be arranged outside school hours, parents/carers should ensure their child is absent for the minimum time possible. The school acknowledges that some students may have long term medical/health issues, and works to support students and families in minimising the impact of such issues on attendance. We will often refer to the school nurse for advice and support.

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and won't record as authorised.

This type of absence can lead to the school and the Local Authority issuing sanctions and/or legal proceedings such as Penalty Notices.

Examples of this type of absence include:

- Parents / carers keeping or allowing students to stay off school unnecessarily
- Truancy at any time during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Holidays
- Students who are absent with a cough, cold or sore throat.

Throughout the year you and your child will receive updates on their attendance figures and this can also be monitored at any time using the My Ed app.

Please be aware that if your child's attendance is below 90% or was below 90% at the end of last year, then all absences will be marked unauthorised until appropriate evidence is provided, such

as medical evidence, or unless authorised by the attendance manager, the Assistant Principal for Attendance or the Principal.

### **Illness**

We understand that at times pupils will become ill. However, it is unusual for a pupil to be regularly ill throughout the year we will request medical evidence and invite parents in for a meeting to discuss the concerns. We would look to involve the school nurse for support.

### **Medical Appointments**

We encourage parents to book non-urgent appointments outside of the school day so that their child does not miss learning time in school. However, if this is unavoidable then parents need to provide evidence of the appointment at least 24 hours before. This needs to be shown to reception. If evidence is not provided, then the absence will be unauthorised. Examples of evidence are appointment letters, appointment cards or appointment texts. We ask that students always attend school during the day as much as possible. For example, we would ask that students come to school in the morning before an appointment and return after appointments. We would expect all students to return to school unless the appointment is later than 2pm, but we understand circumstances may not always allow this. Please always keep us informed. If you have any queries, please contact school.

### **Tiered Approach to Support**

#### **Attendance below 97%**

On a weekly basis your child's form tutor will monitor student attendance in tutor time and students are encouraged to maintain an attendance of 97% or above. If your child's attendance is below 97% you will receive an email notifying you of this on a half termly basis, along with regular attendance updates throughout each half term.

Parents will be invited to contact a named attendance support person if they require any support to improve their child's overall attendance or if there are any specific issues that the school should be aware of.

#### **Attendance below 92% and above 90%**

Parents of students whose attendance has fallen below 92% may receive a letter inviting them to attend an Attendance Support Meeting with their Pastoral Leader, responsible for attendance improvement.

The purpose of this meeting will be to explore/discuss reasons for the current level of attendance and to draw up an agreed Attendance Support Plan, if it is appropriate to do so. Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence for any future absences in order for them to be authorised and the possibility of a fixed penalty notice being requested will be discussed if appropriate. The Attendance Support Plan will include weekly attendance targets together with a longer term attendance target.

In the case of students on Pupil Premium the need for additional support from the school will be explored.

#### **Attendance below 90% - Persistent Absence**

Students whose attendance has been a significant concern in the previous years, in particular those who have previously been identified as Persistently Absent (below 90%), will be closely monitored.

In order to fully support them, a “Back to School Meeting” will be arranged following a period of absence to discuss the reason and establish any further support that may be needed. This will be conducted through catch-up club. Parents will always be contacted when their child is absent. If necessary parents will be invited to this meeting. The attendance team will make use of home visits to support with attendance.

Every persistent absentee is monitored by either their pastoral leader or attendance manager, who is usually their Pastoral Leader, and will be discussed regularly in attendance/pastoral review meetings. If concerning attendance continues then we will involve the Educational Welfare service and the case may be referred to them. Fixed penalty notices or prosecution will be considered after discussion with parents.

All absences for a student who is persistently absent will be marked unauthorised, unless appropriate evidence is provided to support the absence, such as medical unless. Absences from the point of a student becoming PA will be marked as unauthorised.

Parents of students under 90% will also receive a weekly email alert notifying them of this until their child’s attendance increases above 90% again.

If we have continued concerns about attendance then we may request parents/carers to attend a meeting with the Principal and Trustees to discuss a way forward.

### **Absences of longer than 1 day**

If your child has been absent from school for more than 1 consecutive day, then you may receive a home visit from the attendance team to offer support in ensuring your child attends school the following day and offering wider support if required. These visits are usually pre-arranged but on occasions may be unannounced due to operational reasons.

### **Catch-up club**

#### **What is Catch-up club?**

Catch-up club is a compulsory after school club for students, who meet the criteria in the next section, to catch up on work missed due to absence. It is based in the school library and runs from 3:15 – 4:30pm.

In the catch-up club your child will have access to:

- 1) The full library resources
- 2) Computers for appropriate work
- 3) Academic text books
- 4) Catch-up support booklets
- 5) Pastoral staff, librarian and teaching assistants

Therefore, your child will have access to materials to support them in catching up. Your child is responsible for bringing their work to this session. They will need to ask their teacher for the work they have missed, but there are resources in the catch-up club to support this if they don’t manage to see their staff.

#### **Who is catch-up club compulsory for?**

We encourage all students who have been absent to attend catch-up club after they return, but it is compulsory for the below:

- 1) All students who take an absence that is marked as unauthorised
- 2) All students who have attendance of below 92% at the point of absence (or those that drop below this during their absence), as they are at risk of underperformance/falling behind their peers.
- 3) All students who had an attendance of 92% or below in the last academic year (meaning they were regarded as having persistent absence).
- 4) All students who have been on holiday
- 5) All students who have been absent due to an exclusion
- 6) All students who arrive considerably late to school and receive an absence late mark of the morning (after 10:30am)

Please note that if we are not given a reason for absence then we will automatically mark it as unauthorised.

### ***Illness***

***Absences due to common colds and sore throats will be marked as unauthorised. We understand that children are sometimes too ill to attend school, but we expect students to attend if they have coughs, colds and sore throats.***

Students who fall into one of these criteria will be required to attend catch-up club for the same number of nights as they were absent. E.g. if they were absent for 3 unauthorised days, then they are required to attend 3 consecutive catch-up clubs. This equates to 3 hours and 45 minutes focused time spent catching up on 15 hours of missed work. These will always take priority over detentions, whereby the after school detentions will continue after the catch-up clubs have finished.

If you take your child on holiday for 5 school days, then they will be required to stay for 5 catch-up clubs etc. to focus on the 25 hours of missed work.

This will help your child keep up with their peers.

### **How will this work?**

When your child is absent we will start marking your child's attendance accordingly. If your child meets any of the criteria stated above, then they will be highlighted as needing to attend a catch-up club on their return.

If your child does not fit the criteria for compulsory catch-up club, then your child is encouraged to attend catch-up club.

If your child does meet the criteria, then they will be given the first day back to settle back into school and find out what they have missed. The catch-up club will begin on the second day of return.

You will receive a text each day that your child is absent, to advise you that they meet the criteria for compulsory catch-up club.

You will be sent a text on their first day of return to remind you of catch-up club and each day thereafter that they are required to attend.

If your child misses a catch-up club, then they will be picked up the next day and they will be taken to lunchtime silent catch-up club for their lunch time. We will always follow this up, as we don't want them to fall behind.

### **Leave of Absence/Holidays during term time**

As a school, it is disappointing when parents decide to take students on holiday during term time as this removes them from the learning that their peers are receiving. Parents are not permitted to take their children on holiday out of school, during term time, without permission from the Principal. They will be marked as unauthorised holidays. All exceptional cases need to be discussed with the Principal and requests should be made in writing at least 28 days before.

If your child is taken on holiday, then the below will apply:

- 1) They will not be allowed to go on any rewards trips or events for 365 days after their first day of return
- 2) They will be required to attend catch-up club for the same number of consecutive days as they have missed due to the holiday E.g. 5 days off school due to holiday results in 5 catch-up clubs, to catch up on work
- 3) Parents may receive a fine for the holiday taken for each parent per child
- 4) If a student in Year 11 goes on holiday, then they will not be allowed to go to prom

We apologise for the long email, but we feel it is essential we explain this fully as we want your child to achieve their potential.

Excellent attendance is crucial for success. Students with attendance lower than 97% are at disadvantage compared to their peers, as they haven't received the same learning hours.

### **Persistent Absence/Approaching**

If your child has attendance below 92% then they will be ineligible for rewards trips unless there are exceptional circumstances, which will be reviewed individually.

### **Trips**

Each year we run the annual rewards trips. The criteria for these trips is 97%+. Therefore, we require very good/excellent/outstanding attendance (see the rewards table at the end).

We will review cases on a case by case basis and make decisions on eligibility on individual cases where appropriate. We also reserve the right to refuse an invite to a student who is regularly not following our school ethos.

### **Children with health needs who cannot attend school**

We understand that some students have health needs, which prevent them from attending school. In these cases, we will work collaboratively with school health and the relevant health professions involved with the case and other relevant agencies, such as CAMHS, to support students and families fully.. We will make use of alternative provision where appropriate to support students to continue their education. At appropriate times, we will then look at phased returns to school. All decisions and support will be set up with the best interests of the students and we will make appropriate of early help plans to support this. These cases will be overseen by the Assistant Principal for student support and the SENCO.

Please note: we will always require evidence of the health needs and advice from professionals stating that they can't attend school, before we are able to authorise any absences.

## Rewarding Positive Attendance

To encourage all students to maintain a high level of attendance and to promote positive competition between forms in each year group, the following reward system will be established:

- The attendance of all forms will be monitored on a weekly basis
- Weekly attendance graphs, with targets, will be displayed in form rooms
- A prize will be presented each term to the form with the best overall attendance in each year group
- Students in Years 7 to 10 with 97% or above attendance will be invited to the Annual School Rewards trip. In Year 11 students with 97% or above will be invited to prom (along with other criteria and as long as they haven't been on holiday)
- Students with a 100% attendance at the end of summer term will receive an individual certificate and be entered into a prize draw
- Every week students will compare their current attendance to their attendance at the same last year and they will see what their current attendance award is
- Every half term your child will be informed what attendance award they are currently achieving. The award categories are shown below:

Platinum Award	Outstanding	100%
Gold Award	Excellent	98.5% - less than 100%
Silver Award	Very Good	97% – less than 98.5%
Bronze Award	Good but requires improvement	96% - 97%
Stepping Stones to Bronze	Worrying, improvement needed	92% – 96%
Attendance Concern At or Approaching Persistent absence	Concerning Persistent Absence at 90% or below	Below 92%

Students who achieve Platinum/Gold/Silver will receive a letter and certificate from the Principal and Trustees.

All decisions regarding the authorising of absences will be compliant with the 2010 Equalities Act.

Agreed by trustees: November 2019

To be reviewed: November 2020