



**RAINFORD
HIGH**

PART OF RAINFORD ACADEMIES TRUST

Rainford High Attendance Policy

Everyone Matters

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

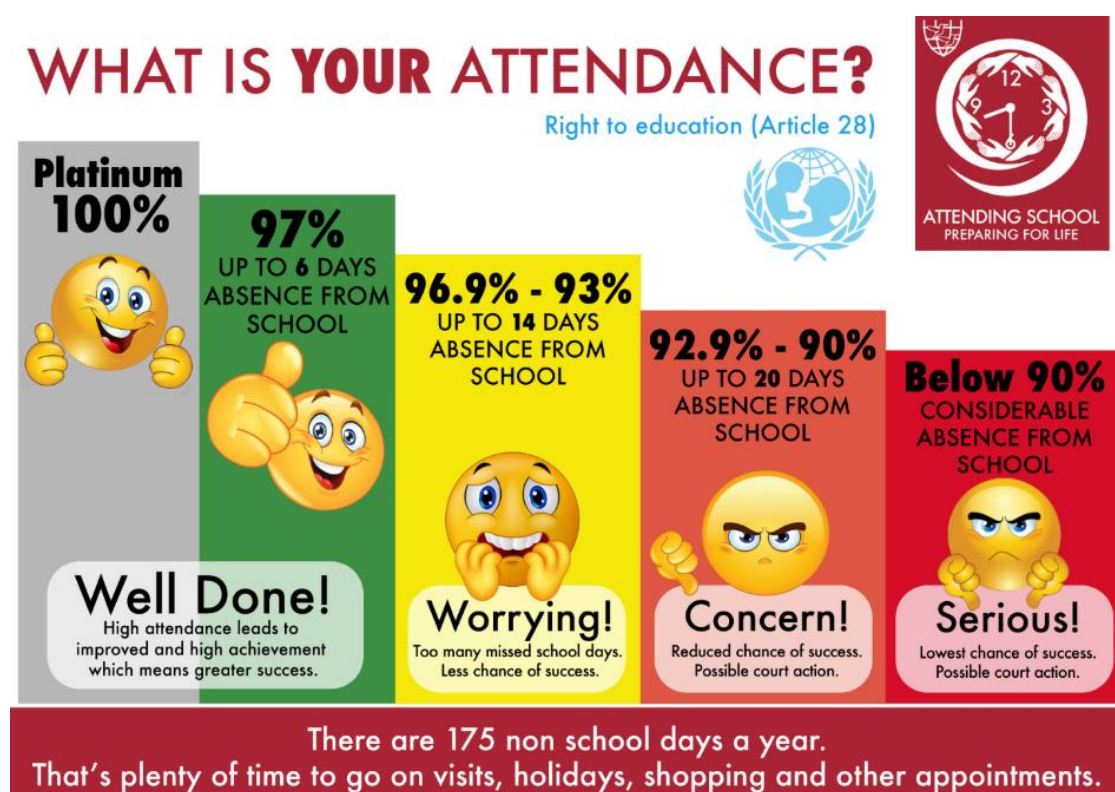
Policy Owner	Vice Principal Character and Culture
Scope of the Policy	This policy applies to all of the school community
Last reviewed by trustees	September 2021
Next review due	September 2022
Summary of key changes	Updated COVID guidance Updated contact information

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).

We recognise that following the COVID lockdowns some families will be struggling more than others to ensure attendance. As a school we work hard to engage families and we support and lead multi-agency responses to help families.



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 called Synergy to alert you to your child's absence if we have not been notified of their absence prior to the registers being closed
- School will regularly keep you up to date with what your child's attendance is
- School to react appropriately and promptly to reports of students with Covid-19 symptoms
- School to provide remote learning immediately in the event of a student being absent from school due to Covid-19 circumstances

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.
- Pupils to notify a staff member if they have symptoms of Covid-19

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.
- Parents will contact school as soon as possible if their child is showing symptoms of Covid-19
- Parents will contact school when they know they have a Covid-19 test result

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 break time 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 Synergy Portal APP.

Please be aware that if your child's attendance is below 92% or was below 92% 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 Principal or Vice Principal for Attendance.

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 and we would request that parent consent to a referral to the school nurse.

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 either before or after, then the absence will be marked 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.

If the absences appear unusual or are forming a pattern then the pastoral leader will contact home to invite parents into school for a meeting to set up an attendance support plan.

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 and the Attendance Manager, 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.

Students with attendance below 92% will be required to attend catch up to catch up on work missed after school under supervision.

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 the attendance manager, 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.

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/or 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 or if we have safeguarding concerns.

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 a computer room so students can access their lesson work online. It 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
- 6) Mentoring

Therefore, your child will have access to materials to support them in catching up. Your child is responsible for access their work for their lessons, which will be posted on google classroom and other platforms as appropriate, e.g. Matshwatch.

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)
- 7) Students who have not caught up on work following a COVID-19 absence

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

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. If your child has outstanding after school detentions then they will take priority and the catch up club will be delayed.

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.

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.

If the symptoms match the symptoms of COVID-19 then we will ask you to take your child for a PCR test before returning to school. Absences will be marked as X until the result arrives.

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 during your child's absence, 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.

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

Excellent attendance is crucial for success. Students with attendance lower than 97% are at disadvantage compared to their peers, as they have not 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.

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 professionals 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 use of early help plans to support this. These cases will be overseen by the Vice 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 cannot 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 Graduation event (if other criteria is met). 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:

Gold Award	Outstanding	100%
Silver Award	Excellent	98.5% - less than 100%
Bronze Award	Good but needs to improve	97% – less than 98.5%
Attendance Concern	Concerning	Less than 97%

At the end of the year each student will receive an award if they have attendance above 97%.

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

COVID-19 Information

This addendum has been written to provide clarity around attendance. This is part of our school policy. The above policy still applies from September 2021, but this explains the COVID-19 aspect of attendance.

The DFE have said:

From the 8th March pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- *parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil*
- *schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence*
- *the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct*

As a school, we will support families in ensuring children are back in school as it is essential students return. We will provide support on a case by case basis and we ask that parents communicate with school.

We understand that this is a challenging time, but the DFE are clear that students need to come to school and we must work together to support your children. We do expect your children in school and we will continue with our communication strategies of phone calls, letters and home visits as we would normally.

What happens if my child develops COVID-19 symptoms?

It is important that you communicate with school.

If your child develops symptoms of Covid-19 **in school**, then they will be **sent home as soon as possible** and you will need to **arrange a test**. Your child's attendance will not reduce until after the test result is received due to the exceptional circumstances.

If your child develops symptoms of Covid-19 **at home**, then **DO NOT** send them into school. **Notify school** of this no later than on the morning of their first day of absence and **arrange a test**. Your child's attendance will not reduce until after the test result is received due to the exceptional circumstances.

School will be in touch regularly to monitor the situation.

Negative result:

If your child's test is **negative**, then they can return to school as soon as possible. We do not require any evidence of this result prior to your child's return. If your child remains off school due to being ill, then this will be marked appropriately.

Positive result:

If your child's test result is **positive**, then they will be marked as absent due to illness (an authorised absence) until they are better. They must self-isolate for 10 days from the start of the symptoms. After this time if the only symptoms your child has are a cough and loss of taste/smell, they can return to school as

these symptoms can continue for several weeks. We will ask you to send evidence of the positive result to school so we can mark the registers as authorised due to illness.

Self-Isolation:

Your child is only required to self-isolate if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or if they have tested positive for COVID-19.

- If a member of your household tests positive for COVID-19 then your child can continue to attend school as long as they are not showing symptoms.
- If your child has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 then your child can continue to attend school as long as they are not showing symptoms.

What if my child tests positive for COVID-19 on a Lateral Flow Test?

If your child tests positive on a lateral flow test then you need to take your child for a PCR test to confirm the positive test result. Your child needs to self-isolate whilst waiting for the result. If negative they can return to school immediately. If positive then they must self-isolate for 10 days from the lateral flow test result.

During your child's absence, they will have access to remote learning immediately.

Shielding

If your child is shielding then you will need contact school to discuss this. You will be required to provide school with an NHS/PHE English letter or equivalent showing the instructions/advice to shield. Without this we will mark the absences unauthorised unless local government guidance instructs otherwise.

If there are any other exceptional reasons why you feel your child needs to shield, then please contact covid@rainford.org.uk to discuss further.

Quarantine

If your child has been instructed to quarantine after returning back from another country then please inform school of this with the appropriate dates. We will need to see evidence of this request to mark the period of time accordingly.

Support:

We want to help families with the return to school. As a result we will be in regular contact with families and we take a multi-agency approach to achieving positive outcomes for every child.

Please do not hesitate to contact school with any concerns.

If you have any queries about your child's attendance, then please contact:

Mr Taylor – Attendance Manager – d.taylor@rainford.org.uk

Keeping mentally and physically well

This has been a challenging time and we understand that it is difficult to self-isolate.

Students can access emotional support through school via emails and phone calls and they can contact online support via www.kooth.com.

If you require further support on how to support your child during this time, then please contact your child's pastoral leader using the below email address.

Year 7 – c.lawrenson@rainford.org.uk

Year 8 – a.moore@rainford.org.uk

Year 9 – a.mccartney@rainford.org.uk

Year 10 – l.sheedy@rainford.org.uk

Year 11 – l.greenall@rainford.org.uk

Year 12/13 – m.pendlebury@rainford.org.uk