



Rainford High Attendance Policy

Everyone Matters

We expect our community to be kind, 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 2022
Next review due	September 2023
Summary of key changes	Removed references to COVID Added escalation procedures in Updated the processes and criteria for catch up club Included severe absence. Additional references to agency support.

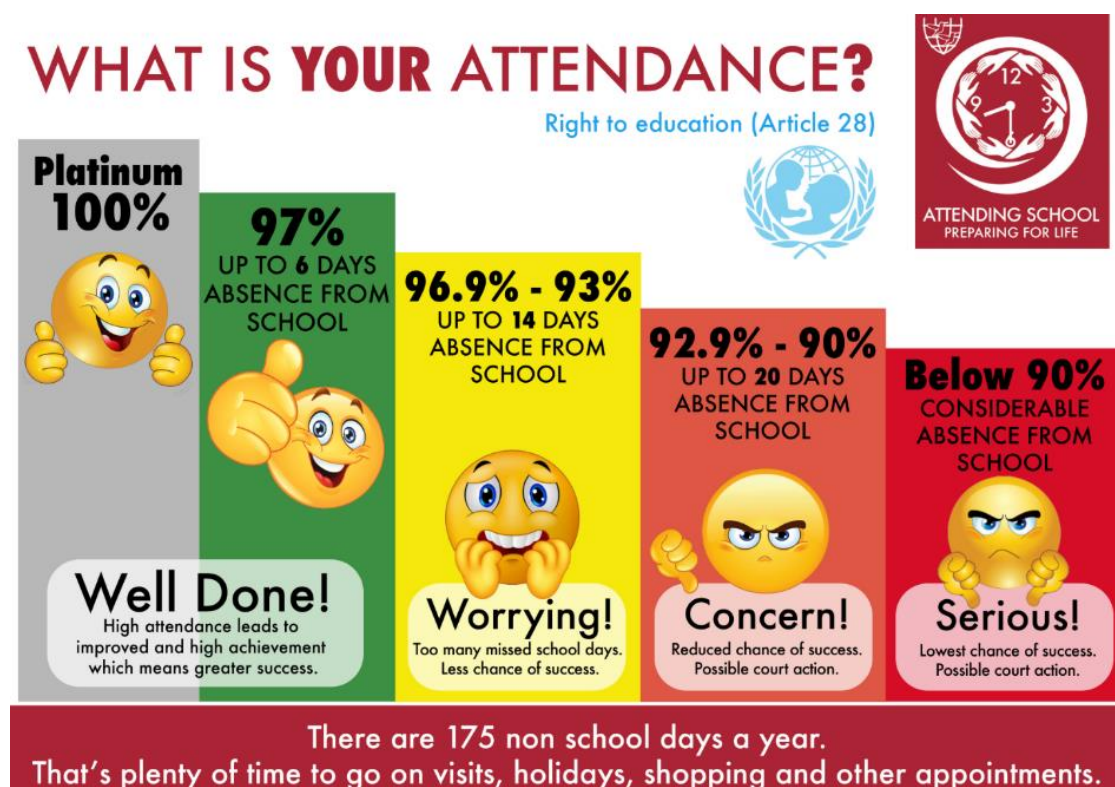
Attendance Policy

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. This means that students must not have more than 5 days off in a year.

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 send letters and alerts home to raise awareness of concerning attendance and challenge this.
- School to request meetings with parents to discuss, support and challenge attendance.
- School to follow the local procedures for fixed penalty notices for attendance.
- School to carry out home visits to check on student welfare

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend regularly and on arrive on time.
- Students are to achieve 97+% attendance (no more than 5 days absence per year)
- Pupils will be encouraged to achieve and maintain 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 to ensure their child attend school every day where possible, ensuring that their children achieve a minimum of 97% attendance (no more than 5 days off in a year).
- Parents are responsible for informing the school, before or 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. Absences due to medical appointments are still recorded as absences.
- 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 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
- Students are who saying they do not want to come to school

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.

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 monitored closely as a priority.

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.

If a student is absent regularly for medical appointments then we will invite parents/carers in to discuss this.

Data Analysis and Use

We track attendance data closely both at a student and sub group level so we can target interventions to support students in improving their attendance. We have developed a tiered system shown below that monitors all students’ attendance and ensures it is reviewed by the most appropriate leaders at the correct time. The designate safeguarding lead has oversight of the attendance system and is the attendance lead for the school.

The data will be used to work with the lead for disadvantaged students, the lead for students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and young carers, so that vulnerable groups are monitored and supported.

We use data to identify and sign post concerns to the key staff in school but also to support referrals and sign posting to external agencies, such as the educational welfare service and social services.

Tiered Approach to Support

At Rainford we focus on the number of days absent that a student has had. The more sessions (half days) that have been missed the more learning is lost and the more concerned we become.

Please see below our escalation process for attendance moving forwards

Number of days	Level of Concern	Intervention	Maximum attendance your child can achieve this year
EVERYONE MATTERS EVERYONE HELPS EVERYONE SUCCEEDS			

EVERY DAY MATTERS			
1	1	As a standard procedure for absence pastoral staff will make contact.	99.5%
2	1		98.9%
3	1	Letter 1 – 3 day awareness letter – raising an initial concern with your child’s attendance and offer of support	98.4%
4	2		97.9%
5	2	Letter 2 – We are writing to you to let you know that you have met the limit for the target attendance no further absences will be authorised without medical evidence. Catch up club will also now apply to your child. Offer of support made and contact. Fixed Penalty Notice Awareness letter.	97.3%
6	2	Absences unauthorised without medical evidence.	96.8%
7	3	Letter 3 – Attendance Support Planning Meeting to be arranged with Pastoral Leader and/or Learning Leader. Consideration of a multi-agency approach discussed. Offer of an early help assessment and consideration of further internal support. Home visit Absence Watch List	96.3%
8	3	Absences unauthorised without medical evidence.	95.7%
9	3	Absences unauthorised without medical evidence.	95.2%
10	4	Letter 4 - Meeting to be arrange with Attendance Manager and Senior Pastoral Leader for a Senior Attendance Support Plan. Student placed on priority home visit list. Offer to be made of external agency support or review of current early help plan in place.	94.7%
11	4	Priority home visit and student support. Absences unauthorised without medical evidence.	94.1%
12	5	Letter 5 – Warning Letter from Mr Kenyon, Vice Principal and Safeguarding Lead and Invite for a meeting to meet with Mr Kenyon and a member of the attendance team Consideration for a fixed penalty notice.	93.6%

		Discussion of further support and possible consequences of continued absences.	
13	5	Priority home visit list. Absences unauthorised without medical evidence.	93%
14	6	Priority home visit and student support. Letter 6 – Warning Letter – High Concern Meeting to be arranged with Mr Kenyon and Mr Young Principal. Discussion of further support and consequences of further absences. Consideration for a fixed penalty notice.	92.5%
15	6	Priority home visit and student support.	92%
16	7	Priority home visit and student support. Letter 7 – Warning Letter – Meeting invite to meet with the school trustees to explain the reasons for the absences and next steps. Further discussion around support. Consideration for a fixed penalty notice/prosecution	91.4%
17	7	Priority home visit.	90.9%
18	7	Priority home visit. Attendance monitoring Senior Leadership Team and Senior Pastoral Staff	90.4%
19	8	Priority home visit. Continue deep work and exploring other options. At this point your child is now regarded as a Persistent Absentee.	89.8%

Please note that we work hard to support families but it is important that all parents and students understand that attendance is compulsory and students should only be off school when it is absolutely necessary.

Severe Absentees

Students who have attendance of 50% or less are regarded as having severe absence. We will be looking to involve external agencies to support school in helping severe cases of absence return to school.

We will consider early help referrals and assessments, social services, educational welfare and other agencies to seek further support. We will also consider looking at alternative provisions to support the reintegration of a student back into school.

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.

Catch up is compulsory and sanctions will be implemented a student does not attend.

Who is catch-up club compulsory for?

As you will have read above our target attendance is 97% for the year. This means no more than 5 days off in a school year.

When a student has been off for 5 days then they become eligible for catch up club and all future absences will be marked unauthorised pending medical evidence. Regardless of the subsequent reasons for absence catch up club will apply to support your child in staying on track through supervised study. This is because we know excellent attendance is what is needed for children to achieve their potential. Students who have had 3% of the year off (5 or more days) already are already falling behind and therefore need to spend time in catch up club following all future absences to catch up.

Students who feel they have caught up on their work already will be required to complete further independent study to embed their learning.

Once your child is eligible, they will be required to attend catch-up club for the same number of evenings as they were absent for all future absences. You will receive texts informing of this.

E.g. if they were absent for 3 further consecutive 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 detentions then catch up club will take priority first.

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 your child has a confirmed case of COVID then they are required to stay off school for 3 days but these absences will still count as absences and catch up club will apply when their absences has reached 5 days in total.

How will this work?

When your child is absent we will start marking your child's attendance accordingly. If your child has had 5 days off then they will be placed on the catch up club eligibility list, which means for all future days off they will need to complete an evening of catch up club for each day off to help stay on track.

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.

We are unable to move catch up days unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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.

We understand many people have had holidays delayed, moved and cancelled but education needs to be the priority and all holidays need to be taken out of term time.

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 rewards events, unless behaviour prevents them doing so.
- Students with a 100% attendance at the end of summer term will receive an individual certificate and be entered into a prize draw
- 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.