

## Academy Policy

# Trust Attendance Policy

CEO approval:	Sean Kelly	
LGB Cluster ratification		
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## 1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 We intend to work in partnership with the Local Authority and parents/carers to support pupils in attending their education within the Raleigh Education Trust. We intend to support and encourage pupils to attend their education across all academies within the Raleigh Education Trust or at one or more of our approved Alternative Providers by providing a relevant curriculum and pastoral care. We recognise that it is our responsibility to do everything possible to raise parent/carers' awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality and that it is a legal requirement to attend school regularly.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. The Department of Education states that any pupil with 90% attendance or below is a persistent absentee from education. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.
- 2.2 Parents of compulsory school-age (5 to 16 years old) children have a legal duty to ensure their children receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at school (this includes home education). If a child is registered at school, parents have the responsibility of ensuring that their child attends regularly.

## 3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 To continue to raise levels of achievement and participation by maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- 3.2 To build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have appropriate support in place to attend school.
- 3.3 To keep an accurate and up-to-date record of attendance.
- 3.4 To inform parents/carers of punctuality and attendance issues.
- 3.5 To identify the cause of non-attendance and reduce absence including persistent and severe absence by early identification and appropriate intervention.
- 3.6 To ensure all pupils have access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- 3.7 To ensure all staff understand their roles in the monitoring and recording of attendance.
- 3.8 To maintain and improve attendance across the Raleigh Education Trust and associated academies and alternative providers and ensure clear expectations are shared.
- 3.9 To monitor and evaluate the processes regularly.

## 4. Attendance Legislation

- 4.1 Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring any child of compulsory school age receives full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and also to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or education otherwise.

- 4.2 If a child who is of compulsory school age (5-16 years old) who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 and may be prosecuted.
- 4.3 These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
- a) Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
  - b) Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
  - c) Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
  - d) [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
  - e) [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Full Trust board has overall accountability for attendance across all academies. Local Governing Bodies have been delegated responsibility for local oversight of attendance. Local Governing Bodies will:
- a) Set high expectations for all academy leaders, staff, pupils and parents
  - b) Make sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - c) Make sure each academy records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - d) Make sure each academy works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
  - e) Recognise and promote the importance of attendance across the academy's policies and ethos
  - f) Make sure each academy's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
  - g) Make sure each academy has high aspirations for all pupils and adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
  - h) Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping academy leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
  - i) Work with academy leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and provide support and challenge
  - j) Monitor attendance figures for each academy and repeatedly evaluate the effectiveness of each academy's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupil's needs
  - k) Where the academy is struggling with attendance, work with academy leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

- l) Make sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer so that they understand:
  - i. The importance of good attendance
  - ii. That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - iii. Each academy's legal requirement for keeping registers
  - iv. The Trust's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- m) Make sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including interpreting and analysing attendance data
- n) Hold Principals to account for the implementation of this policy.

5.2 The principal is responsible for:

- a) Implementation of this policy.
- b) Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- c) Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- d) Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- e) Issuing fixed penalty notices, where necessary.
- f) Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- g) Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- h) Communicating the academy's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

5.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (known as the Senior Attendance Champion) is responsible for:

- a) Leading, championing and improving attendance across each academy
- b) Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- c) Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- d) Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- e) Regularly monitor and evaluate progress in attendance alongside the Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead.

- f) Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- g) Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed in support of the Trust Attendance and Welfare Team.
- h) Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- i) Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers alongside the Trust Attendance and Welfare Team.
- j) Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

5.4 Each academy has a linked Senior Attendance Champion. Please see section 16 for each academy's senior attendance champion and contact details.

5.5 The Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead is responsible for:

- a) Leading attendance across the trust in liaison with each academy Senior Attendance Champion and SLT.
- b) Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- c) Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- d) Having oversight of data analysis.
- e) Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data across all academies within the trust.
- f) Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues alongside the Attendance and Welfare Officers and Senior Attendance Champions.
- g) Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- h) Sharing and analysing attendance data across all academies to support and target areas of concern. Reporting concerns about attendance to the designated Senior Attendance Champion responsible for attendance, and the principal
- i) Advising the principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead: **Sarah Astle**  
 Tel: 07957200273 Email: [sarah.astle@raleightrust.org](mailto:sarah.astle@raleightrust.org)

5.6 The Attendance and Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- a) Monitoring and analysing attendance data. (see section 7)
- b) Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- c) Providing regular attendance reports to school staff.
- d) Working with Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) to tackle persistent absence.

- e) Conducting home visits/safe and well checks.
  - f) Arranging meetings with parents and other agencies to address attendance concerns.
  - g) Referring to Education Welfare Services.
  - h) Referring to other relevant services.
- 5.7 Each academy has a linked Attendance and Welfare Officer. Please see section 15 for the Trust Attendance and Welfare Team.
- 5.8 Class teachers are responsible for:
- a) Recording attendance on a daily basis before the registers close via Arbor (Trust MIS)
  - b) Ensuring the correct codes are used to record pupil attendance
  - c) Raise any issues with academy leadership ASAP if they are unable to record pupil attendance e.g. system failure
- 5.9 Alternative Provision
- a) For pupils that are educated offsite at one of our approved alternative providers, their attendance will be recorded by a dedicated Trust Attendance and Welfare Administrator, who will input the relevant attendance code twice daily. All attendance marks must be submitted to the Trust Attendance and Welfare Administrator by 11 am and 2 pm each day.
- 5.10 Parents
- a) Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the academy and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:
    - b) All natural parents, whether they are married or not
    - c) All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
    - d) Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. live with and look after them)
  - e) Parents are expected to:
    - i. Make sure their child attends every day on time.
    - ii. Notify their child's academy to report their absence before 9:30 am on the day of the absence and every subsequent day of absence. Parents should advise the academy the reason and when they expect their child to return.
    - iii. Provide the academy with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
    - iv. Ensure where possible that appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
    - v. Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the academy and/or local authority

## 6. Recording Attendance

### 6.1 Attendance register

6.1.1 Every child's attendance is recorded on the Trust wide MIS – Arbor.

6.1.2 The attendance register is completed twice daily; morning and afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- a) Present
- b) Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- c) Absent
- d) Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

6.1.3 Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- a) The original entry
- b) The amended entry
- c) The reason for the amendment
- d) The date on which the amendment was made
- e) The name and position of the person who made the amendment

6.1.4 Please see appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

6.1.5 Each academy will also record/report:

- a) Whether the absence is authorised or not
- b) The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- c) The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

6.1.6 All attendance registers and marks will be kept for a total of six years from the date of entry.

6.1.7 Due to the nature of the schools across the trust, start times for pupils will vary. Therefore parents must familiarise themselves with their child's academy's start time (see below). Pupils must arrive at school before the registers close on each school day:

- a) Ambleside Academy
  - i. Registers for **Ambleside Academy** will open at **9 am for all compulsory school age children and will remain open for a further 30 minutes**. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.
- b) Denewood Academy



- i. Registers for **Denewood Academy** will open at **9am and remain open for a further 30 minutes**. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.
- c) Unity Academy
  - i. Registers for **Unity Academy** will open at **9am and remain open for a further 30 minutes**. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.
- d) Westbury Academy
  - i. Registers for **Westbury Academy** will open at **8.50am and remain open for a further 30 minutes**. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.
- e) Woodlands Academy
  - i. Registers for **Woodlands Academy** will open at **8.55am and remain open for a further 30 minutes**. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after the register has closed.

6.1.8 Parents of pupils who are repeatedly late, especially after the registers close, will be invited to meet with the Trust Attendance Officer to discuss what barriers are preventing them from attending on time and what support can be implanted to help reduce the amount of lates they accrue.

## 7. Reporting Pupil Absence

### 7.1 Unplanned Absence

- 7.1.1 Pupil absence must be reported by 9:00 am on each day of absence to your child's school. This can be done via telephone and select the attendance line when prompted. Please see section 19 for all academy attendance contact details. Parents/carers whose child attends an alternative provision must contact the provider to inform them of any absences. Due to the difference in start times for some providers, parents must familiarise themselves with the attendance procedures for each provision. Reporting absences can be done either by telephone or email. Failure to report absence will result in the Trust Attendance Team or a member of staff at the alternative provider your child attends, following up with telephone calls, texts and home visits.
- 7.1.2 Absence due to physical or mental illness will be recorded as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- 7.1.3 Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- 7.1.4 If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.
- 7.1.5 If there has been no contact made concerning the absence, a member of the Trust Attendance Team will conduct a Safe and Well visit. This will be triggered on day 3 of absence. However, should there be safeguarding concern(s), a visit may be triggered earlier than the specified 3 days.

## 7.2 Planned Absence

7.2.1 Parents are encouraged to avoid taking holidays during term time. However, should a leave of absence be taken during the term, parents are required to complete a Leave of Absence request, providing as much notice as possible. Please see section 17.

7.2.2 Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

## 8. Reporting to Parents

8.1 Parents will receive half termly updates regarding their child's attendance and absence levels.

8.2 Pupils with good and improved attendance will receive certificates and/or rewards.

8.3 Any attendance concerns will be communicated via letter or telephone call. Parents/carers may also be invited to attend meeting(s) with a member of the Attendance and Welfare Team and the Senior Attendance Champion for their academy, if these concerns continue.

## 9. Attendance Monitoring

### 9.1 Monitoring attendance

- a) Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and early across each academy and at an individual level.
- b) Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a concern.
- c) Each academy has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.
- d) Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.
- e) Each academy will benchmark its attendance data at whole academy, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

### 9.2 Analysing attendance

- a) Analyse data and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- b) Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- c) Conduct a thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends

### 9.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

- a) Provide half-term attendance reports to parents/carers and school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- b) Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.
- c) Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- d) Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- e) Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- f) Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

## 10. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

### 10.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

- a) Pupils who are presenting with significant barriers to attendance will be offered a range of supportive strategies to help them access school. The trust adopts a whole family approach to ensure that all parties are signposted to the most relevant support agency whether that be an external agency or a recognised service within each academy or the trust. The Trust Attendance and Welfare Team works closely with all stakeholders both internally and externally to ensure that any identified barriers are addressed and specified actions implemented. Any interventions are reviewed regularly with pupils, parents, school staff and external agencies where appropriate and alternatives are offered, should they fail to show a sustained improvement.

### 10.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

- a) Where a pupil has an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan and concerns arise regarding attendance, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that are related to the pupil's needs, the academy will contact the parents and any other agencies involved where appropriate, to ascertain the best course of action/support. This in turn will be communicated to the Local Authority, responsible for holding their EHCP, with a detailed agreement and regular review periods to ensure that the interventions are working effectively, and all stakeholders are happy with the outlined plan. Temporary changes to timetables may be considered to help alleviate any concerns.

### 10.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

- a) Any pupils who have been absent for a prolonged period will be offered a bespoke transition package to enable them to access their education to prevent any further barriers. This will be done in collaboration with the academy, parent and pupil. Any changes to pupil timetables will be documented using a PEAP (Personalised Education and Attendance Plan), which will be signed by both school and parent. This contract will then be shared with the local authority if the pupil has an EHCP. Any changes to a pupil's timetable will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that

any implemented interventions are appropriate and effective. Referrals to any relevant agency to request support will also be implemented to ensure that all possible avenues of support are proportionate and appropriate to the needs of the family and pupil.

## 11. Sickness

11.1 If your child has had Gastroenteritis, Norovirus or any gastrointestinal virus resulting in sickness or diarrhoea, we would advise that they remain off school for 48 hours. However, if your child has had no further bouts of sickness/diarrhoea during the 48 hours and you feel that your child is well enough to return please send them back to school. If at any time your child becomes ill we will monitor them and contact parents to gain permission to send them home if necessary. If we cannot contact parents the pupil will be monitored by staff until such time contact and permission are obtained.

## 12. First-day Contact

12.1 Raleigh Education Trust operates a “first-day contact” system. This means that if your child is absent and we have not been informed, a text/telephone call will be made to ascertain the reason for absence on the first day and the subsequent days' absence.

12.2 If we have attempted to make contact but received no reply and absence continues, further action will be taken by either the Attendance Team or the Attendance Officer at your child’s provision.

12.3 This will include:

- a) Home visits
- b) Contacting any agencies involved
- c) Following the 10-Day Rule.

## 13. The 10-day Rule

13.1 If a pupil is absent for 10 days and there has been no contact made with parent/ carer and home visits have been unsuccessful a referral to Child Missing in Education will be made and further welfare services may become involved.

## 14. Attendance Registration

14.1 Attendance at our academies is recorded using Arbor- MIS system, using the approved DfE attendance codes. Each academy/alternative provider is responsible for completing registrations each day, in line with statutory guidance. The Trust Attendance & Welfare Administrator will monitor all registration sessions, as well as update with any known pupil absence and contact parent/carers for any unknown absence. The Trust Attendance & Welfare Administrator will make daily contact with all alternative providers to check on absence and any other issues that may have been raised in regards to attendance.

## 15. Raleigh Education Trust Attendance & Welfare Team

15.1 The Attendance & Welfare Team consists of 7 staff members. All Attendance Officers, including the Attendance Lead are DSL trained and can support with safeguarding matters. If you require any information or support, please contact the following members of staff on the contact details listed:

- a) Mrs Sarah Astle - Trust Attendance and Welfare Lead [sarah.astle@raleightrust.org](mailto:sarah.astle@raleightrust.org)

- b) Mrs Dawn Mansbridge - Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer [dawn.mansbridge@raleightrust.org](mailto:dawn.mansbridge@raleightrust.org)
- c) Mrs Sue Matthews - Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer [sue.matthews@raleightrust.org](mailto:sue.matthews@raleightrust.org)
- d) Mrs Selina Martinsons – Trust Attendance Administrator [selina.martinsons@raleightrust.org](mailto:selina.martinsons@raleightrust.org)
- e) Ms Vicky Brown – Trust Attendance Administrator [vicky.brown@raleightrust.org](mailto:vicky.brown@raleightrust.org)
- f) Miss Sarah King - Trust Attendance Administrator [sarah.king@raleightrust.org](mailto:sarah.king@raleightrust.org)
- g) Ms Vicki Askew – Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer [victoria.askew@raleightrust.org](mailto:victoria.askew@raleightrust.org)

## 16. Academy Senior Attendance Champions

- 16.1 Ambleside Academy – Mrs Louise Marsh – [l.marsh@ambleside.raleightrust.org](mailto:l.marsh@ambleside.raleightrust.org)
- 16.2 Denewood Academy – Ms Rebecca Jones- [r.jones@denewood.raleightrust.org](mailto:r.jones@denewood.raleightrust.org)
- 16.3 Unity Academy – Courtney Chambers - [courtney.chambers@unity.raleightrust.org](mailto:courtney.chambers@unity.raleightrust.org)
- 16.4 Westbury Academy – Mr John Richardson – [j.richardson@westbury.raleightrust.org](mailto:j.richardson@westbury.raleightrust.org)
- 16.5 Woodlands Academy- Ms Joanne Doidge – [j.doidge@woodlands.raleightrust.org](mailto:j.doidge@woodlands.raleightrust.org)

## 17. Persistent Absence

- 17.1 Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% (19 days) or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the Trust’s strategy for improving attendance.
- 17.2 Each academy will:
  - a) Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
  - b) Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
  - c) Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - i. Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - ii. Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - iii. Explain the help that is available
    - iv. Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - v. Review any existing actions or interventions
    - vi. Implement attendance contracts with both parents and pupils

- vii. Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- viii. Consider support/intervention(s) that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- ix. Implement sanctions, where necessary
- x. To identify pupils at risk of falling into this category, weekly meetings will be held with the Trust Attendance Lead, Senior Leaders and the DSL of each academy. This core team of staff will use the attendance data from the whole school to look for trends within the cohorts to identify those at risk early and implement the appropriate level of intervention.
- xi. Attendance letters will be sent to all pupils (mainstream) who fall below the national expectation of 95% as an advisory to parents that attendance is falling and help to identify any arising concerns.

## 18. Home Visits

18.1 Home visits will be conducted for many reasons:

- a) Unable to contact parent/carers
- b) Safe and well checks – any pupil that we have not managed to see or who has not attended the academy or provision for 3 days, will receive a home visit to establish contact and to confirm a visual sighting of the child. If this is unsuccessful the process will be repeated until a visual sighting is made. If a pupil has not been seen for 10 days we will follow the procedure for Children Missing in Education. We work collaboratively with providers, who also conduct home visits to establish contact.
- c) Check addresses and contact details

## 19. Leave of Absence

19.1 The principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

19.2 The principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- a) Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- b) Attending an interview
- c) Study leave
- d) A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- e) Exceptional circumstances - leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the principal's discretion and will be decided on an individual basis taking account of any contextual information provided by the parent/carer. The principal's decision will be final and communicated

in writing to the parent. Parents are invited to contact the Academy Principal should they feel that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the requested leave

- f) A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- g) We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unforeseen circumstances completely out of parental control.
- h) Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.
- i) As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.
- j) The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
- k) Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, 3 weeks before the absence. Leave of absence request form can be accessed via the school's reception, or an email/ letter directly to the academy principal.
- l) Parents have the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Local Governing Body (LGB) Chair within 5 days of the decision. Any appeal must outline reasons for reconsideration. LGB appeals will be heard within 15 days of receipt.

## 20. Vulnerable pupils

- 20.1 Social workers, as well as parents/carers, will be contacted in the event of an absence. This primarily applies to children on an active Child Protection Plan or Child In Need plan and will be triggered on the first day of absence. Any failure to make contact will also result in a home visit.
- 20.2 Pupils with an allocated youth justice worker will also be contacted if they fail to attend school.

## 21. Sanctions

- 21.1 All academies will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.
- 21.2 Penalty notices
  - a) The principal (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.
  - b) If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.
  - c) Before issuing a penalty notice, the academy will consider the individual case, including:
    - i. Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
    - ii. Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

- iii. Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
  - iv. Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate
- d) A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (as notified by the academy).
  - e) Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.
  - f) The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.
  - g) If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
  - h) If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
  - i) A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### 21.3 Notices to improve

- a) If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
- b) Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.
- c) They will include:
  - i. Details of the pupil's attendance record and the offences
  - ii. The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
  - iii. Details of the support provided so far
  - iv. Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
  - v. A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
  - vi. A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period



- vii. The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period
  - d) Prior to any request for support from the local authority parents will receive at least one warning letter and will also be invited in for an attendance meeting to discuss the concerns we have regarding attendance. Raleigh Education Trust aims to resolve attendance issues by being as flexible and supportive as possible with pupils' various needs and concerns.
- 21.4 The Attendance and Welfare Team will provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

## 20. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

### 20.1 Authorised Absences:

- a) The Trust Attendance and Welfare Team and associated academies will authorise absences, but this will depend on the circumstances of the absence. Authorised absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence. All periods of authorised absence will be determined by the Academy after sufficient reason and explanation have been established.

### 21.5 Illness (including mental illness), medical and dental appointments:

- a) Any absences due to medical appointments will be authorised on the production of a medical appointment card/letter.
- b) If a child presents as ill whilst at their academy or their provision and is sent home due to illness, their absence will be authorised. If the child fails to return to the academy or provision the following day due to the illness presented on the previous day, that day will also be authorised. Any further days of absence, that run concurrently will require a parent to contact the academy and give an expected date of return.

### 21.6 Days of religious observance:

- a) This absence is set aside for any day exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. This includes religious festivals. The academy will be sensitive to requests and parents are encouraged to give advanced notice.

### 21.7 Suspensions or exclusions:

- a) Any pupils that have received a suspension will remain on roll, with the absence authorised. If for any reason a child attending a provision, loses their placement or the placement breaks down, the period of absence will be authorised until a suitable alternative placement can be established.

### 21.8 Family bereavements:

- a) In the case of a family bereavement, the academy will be sensitive and look at each case on an individual basis and have discretion when authorising such absences.

### 21.9 Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes:

- a) This covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and this has been agreed with the school.

21.10 Other reasons the academy may allow a pupil to be absent, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- a) Attending an offsite-approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the academy.
- b) Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- c) Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- d) Attending work experience
- e) If there is any other unavoidable cause, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the academy premises are closed

## 22. Note to parents

22.1 The Education Welfare Service work to raise achievement levels by working with pupils, parents, schools, other agencies and the community, to improve the attendance of city pupils. They also work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

22.2 Your child's school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the LA. Most local authorities employ Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) to monitor school attendance and to help parents meet their responsibility. If your child is not attending school regularly, an Education Welfare Officer may visit or write to you. EWOs work with parents to address difficulties with their child's attendance.

22.3 As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to ensure your child attends school regularly, this includes your child missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being taken to court.

## 23. Linked Policies/Procedures

23.1 Trust Safeguarding Policy

23.2 SEND Policy

23.3 Relationships & Positive Behaviour Policy

23.4 RET Attendance Procedures

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil’s travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes

Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## Appendix 2

Research suggests that when communicating with parents, it is important to ensure they understand the information being shared and are comfortable with it. The below points are listed as a guide to help support when communicating with parents regarding their child's absences:

- a) Absences will be tailored to each individual child ensuring it is relevant and appropriate to the parent.
- b) Ensuring that absences are related to lessons missed rather than days/weeks, will help parents understand the amount of lost learning their child has accrued. This can help parents better understand that missed lessons cannot be easily caught up as the subject moves at pace.
- c) Absence impacts not only the child's academic progression but also their social and emotional well-being. Emphasising this may lead parents to reconsider any further absences.
- d) Making clear expectations around illness and absences by referring to the policy and NHS guidelines, can remove barriers surrounding what is acceptable for parents. In turn, this will support parents to understand the importance of good school attendance and the legal implications that can occur should school attendance become a concern.
- e) Discussions should be factual and personalised to the child. It is important not to make parents feel they are not concerned about their child's attendance. Showing an understanding of the family and their circumstances can ensure that the most appropriate support is implemented.
- f) Personalising our approach when speaking with parents helps to establish good working relationships. Showing an understanding of each individual case allows parents to express their views. By avoiding generalising children as "all have the same needs and experiences" we can ensure that parents are not alienated especially parents with SEND children, leaving them dismissive.

## Appendix 3

### Effective school attendance improvement and management

