

The Federation of Riders Infant and Junior Schools

Attendance Policy



At the Federation of Riders Infant and Junior Schools we believe that regular attendance at school is essential if pupils are to benefit from their time at school. Valuable learning time is lost when pupils are absent or late. Optimum levels of attendance can only be fully achieved when responsibility is accepted and shared by all concerned: pupils, parents, school staff, governors and the local community.

Pupils should be at school on time, every day that school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent.

Absence

Every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information regarding the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for genuine illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to obtain a mark

Lateness Procedures

- Pupils arriving after the registers have been taken must be marked Late (L) by the office staff.
- AM registration is marked in at 9.10am (Infants) and 9am (Juniors)
- PM registration is marked at 1pm.
- Pupils arriving after the morning register has been taken and before 9.30am (Infants) and 9:20am (Juniors) will be marked as Late.
- Pupils arriving after 9.30am (Infants) and 9.20 (Juniors) will be marked as Unauthorised (U) for the morning session.
- The school attendance officer, Home School Link Workers and the Headteacher will discuss pupils with persistent poor punctuality and appropriate action to be taken.

Communication

- On the first day of absence, school expect parents to inform them of the absence.
- An e-mail or telephone call is an acceptable way of communication.
Email: adminoffice@riders-inf.hants.sch.uk
Email: adminoffice@riders-jun.hants.sch.uk
Telephone: 023 92475 342

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Attendance Policy



- Reasons for absence are recorded by the Attendance Officer. All letters from parents regarding absence should be sent to the school office.
- In the event of absence, a text will be sent after 9.30 am if no contact has been received.
- On the second day of absence, if no contact has been made or the reason given is unacceptable, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents via phone or the Home School Link Workers will endeavour to contact the parents by visiting the home address.
- At the end of every week, if the school has received no explanation as to the pupil's absence, they will write to the parent asking for the reason for absence.
- If the school receive no response and no acceptable reason is then given, the school will record this as an unauthorised absence.
- The School Office will send a letter when attendance is below 90% or there is a continued pattern of lates. Parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Home School Link workers and/or the Headteacher to discuss this.
- A Penalty Notice Warning letter will be sent if attendance does not improve.
- In some instances it may be appropriate to refer the family to the Attendance Legal Panel (ALP) for advice regarding improving attendance and further action.
- The Home School Link Workers will, with the parent's permission, liaise with the child's GP or refer them to the school nurse if poor attendance seems to be linked to medical problems.
- If attendance continues to be poor, then a Penalty Notice will be issued without further warning.
- Each Penalty Notice fine is £60 (if paid within 21 days of the date of posting) or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within the specified time period, then the matter will be referred to the Attendance Legal Panel who will decide whether to commence Court proceedings. If proceeding are taken and parents are convicted of this offence, there are a number of possible sentences which include a criminal record, fines of up to £2,500 and/or a period of up to three months imprisonment.

Holidays in term time

Holidays in term time will NOT be authorised unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The decision to authorise absence is at the Headteacher's discretion based on their assessment of the situation. Leave of absence must be requested at least 5 days in advance using the appropriate form which can be requested from the school office. Notification is given on the form that if the absence is unauthorised, we may refer the matter for consideration of legal action.

A Penalty Notice for non-attendance can be issued when a pupil has unauthorised absence due to a holiday that has been taken without permissions.

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Attendance Policy



The Role of the School

When a pupil is absent without explanation, the schools will endeavour to contact the parent as soon as possible. Notes, records of telephone calls and medical certificates/evidence will be kept on file and referred to as and when appropriate. E.g. If legal action is required. The School office will closely monitor the attendance of all pupils with less than 90% attendance. The Headteacher, Home School Link Workers and Attendance Officer will work closely together to identify pupils at risk of becoming Persistent Absentees (PAs) and will offer support to parents as appropriate.

The Role of the Parent

Whatever efforts are made by the school staff, it is ultimately the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If parental support is not forthcoming, strategies to encourage good attendance may fail.

It is the parents' responsibility to inform school of the reason for a pupil's absence as promptly as possible and to provide any further information which may be required.

Parents are expected to attend meetings with school staff in relation to their child's attendance and take an active role in improving their child's attendance. Where pupils have individual targets for attendance, parents are expected to work with school staff.

Parents should:

- Contact the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence, giving reason and anticipated length of absence.
- Make every effort to ensure Medical/Dental appointments are made for out of school hours and evidence of appointment supplied. If an emergency appointment is made, evidence must be brought into the school office following the appointment.
- The school reserves the right to "unauthorise" any time taken for medical/dental appointments.
- Seek approval in advance for Holiday Leave, by completion of the relevant form.

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Attendance Policy



Role of Home School Link Worker

- Meet with and offer support to parents whose children have attendance/punctuality issues.
- Carry out home visits if a pupil is absent and school have been unable to contact the parent and obtain a reason for absence.
- Liaise with other agencies.
- Liaise with school nurses if attendance issues are related to illness.
- Meet weekly with the School Attendance Officer to discuss poor attendance.

The Role of the School Attendance Officer

- Endeavour to make telephone contact with the parent/carer on the second day of absence where no contact/reason for absence has been supplied.
- Send attendance letters to parents to include issuing Fixed Penalty Notices if appropriate.
- Monitor pupils whose attendance is below 90%.
- Meet weekly with the Home School Link Workers to discuss poor attendance.

Rewards

- **Weekly** attendance cup for the class with the highest attendance for the week.
- **Termly** 100% attendance = Certificate and a small prize for pupils and a certificate for the parent.
- **Annually** 100% attendance = Headteacher's Certificate for pupils and parents and an invitation to a 100% attendance Family Celebration.

Strategies for Maintaining and Improving Attendance

- Verbal praise, encouragement and acknowledgement
- Parent and pupil awareness as to the importance of good attendance.
- Nominated member of staff (Attendance Officer) responsible for providing attendance data and monitoring records across the whole school.
- Nominated member of staff (Attendance Officer) ensures rewards and certificates are available
- Weekly meetings between Home School Link Workers and Attendance Officer.

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