



## Attendance and Extended Leave Policy

### 1. Purpose:

The Reach Free School's Attendance Policy emphasises attendance to school as an important pre-requisite for achievement and attainment. Prolonged absence, irregular attendance and lack of punctuality can all serve to undermine educational progress and result in considerable long term disadvantage to pupils. As such, this policy sets out The Reach Free School's strategy to maximise pupil attendance and minimise absenteeism.

### 2. Principles:

- Pupils will enjoy attending The Reach Free School
- Pupils will arrive on time to The Reach Free School
- Full attendance will be aspired to and celebrated
- Signs of falling attendance will be recognised and rectified

### 3. Expectations:

It is important to The Reach Free School that the value it places on high attendance is understood by staff, pupils and parents, guardians and carers. All pupils and staff will strive to attend 100% of the time. However, as a minimum the school expects 97% attendance. High attendance links very closely to our ethos:

**Achievement** - High progress, achievement and attainment are closely correlated to high attendance

**Community** - The collective pupil community creates the success of the The Reach Free School by being here and contributing to its successful outcomes

**Enjoyment** - High attendance of pupils at The Reach Free School will be celebrated and rewarded

It is recognised that some pupils may have difficulties in attending regularly for a variety of complex and often interrelated reasons. These may include:

- The pupils' educational, social and emotional development
- The pupils' medical history
- Social, economic and cultural considerations within the family and community
- Factors operating within school
- Availability of appropriate support from statutory and voluntary agencies within the community

As such, The Reach Free School has adopted a positive approach which promotes access to education as part of an ethos which values its learners, promotes equal opportunities and encourages the involvement of all pupils and their parents, guardians or carers.

### 4. The Expectation of The Reach Free School:

- To create a welcoming atmosphere and maintain an ethos which pupils value and feel valued by
- To give high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To develop, review and evaluate procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention

- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences
- To develop, review and evaluate a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the Educational Welfare Office
- To meet the legal requirements set out by Government

## **5. Celebrating Outstanding Attendance**

**5.1** Pupils with outstanding attendance will receive a special recognition award for 100% attendance. For each successive half term, the awards will increase in value from special to bronze to silver to gold.

**5.3** Pupils will receive small weekly awards if their form class has a collective attendance of 98% or more.

**5.3** Pupils who demonstrate excellent timekeeping will be recognised through the Reach Points system.

**5.4** Pupils who attend every consecutive day for a week receive two Reach Points on a Friday afternoon.

**5.5** Termly attendance celebration events are held to promote and celebrate those with attendance above 98%.

## **6. Monitoring Attendance at The Reach Free School:**

**6.1** All pupils will attend a morning registration session at the beginning of the school day from 8.30am to 8.40am. Registers will close at 9.15am. Any pupils who arrive after 8.30am must sign in at reception and provide a valid explanation/evidence for their lateness.

**6.2** All pupils will attend an afternoon registration session at the end of the school day from 4.05pm to 4.15pm (3.15pm to 3.25pm on a Friday). Registers will close at 4.15pm. Any pupils who do not attend registration must sign out at reception and provide a valid reason/ evidence for their absence, eg. medical appointment card.

**6.3** Registers for all Electives will be completed online and cross-checked with PM registers.

**6.4** The Reach Free School will work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils but expects all pupils to attend 97% of the time as a minimum requirement.

**6.5** If a pupil's attendance drops below 97%, parents, guardians or carers will be contacted by letter, text or email to alert them to their child achieving below expected attendance.

**6.6** In the event that a pupil's attendance continues to decline to below 90%, parents, guardians or carers will be invited into the school for a meeting to discuss the reasons for this.

**6.7** An Individual Attendance Plan will then be devised with specific targets for that pupil to achieve before they can graduate from the plan.

**6.8** In the event that a pupil's attendance continues to decline, The Reach Free School will seek the support of the Hertfordshire Attendance team and potentially give notice of a penalty fine or court proceedings. The notice requires a payment of £60 within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each parent, guardian or carer is liable to pay a separate penalty and penalty notices are issued for each child to whom the absence relates. Failure to pay the penalty

means a parent, guardian or carer is liable to prosecution for the offence, by summons to appear before the local Magistrates Court.

## **7. Monitoring attendance to lessons at The Reach Free School:**

**7.1** Lesson by lesson attendance will also be tracked through class registers.

**7.2** This data will be recorded through the MIS and the Attendance Officer will be alerted to any pupil who was marked present in the morning but absent for a lesson.

**7.3** If it comes to light that the pupil was in registration but has not attended a lesson for a reason approved (found acceptable) by a member of staff, the attendance officer will report this to the Senior Leader on call who will inform parents, guardians or carers immediately.

**7.4** In line with The Reach Free School behaviour policy, a behaviour incident will be logged for the relevant Senior Leader to sanction and resolve.

## **8. Tracking punctuality at The Reach Free School:**

**8.1** Pupils who arrive after registration closes will be required to sign in at reception.

**8.2** The Attendance Officer will then record this pupil's late arrival to the school, so that the form tutor can keep the pupil behind at the end of the day.

**8.3** If a pupil is late three times in one week, the Attendance Officer will flag this to that pupil's form tutor who will then investigate the cause of this lateness with the pupil and their parents, guardians or carers and issue 'overtime' if appropriate.

**8.4** If lateness continues to be an issue, in line with The Reach Free School Behaviour Policy, this will be referred to the Head of House or Deputy Headteacher - Inclusion to resolve in liaison with the Attendance Officer and family of the pupil.

**The Reach Free School will register all pupils using the standard set of codes which are input into the electronic register.**

### **Code**

/ Present (AM)

\ Present (PM)

B Educated off site (Not dual registration)

C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/ description)

D Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)

E Excluded but no alternative provision made

F Agreed Extended Family Holiday

G Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)

H Agreed Family Holiday

I Illness

J Interview

L Late (before registers close)

M Medical/Dental appointments

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised absence

P Approved sporting activity

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

U Late (after registers closed)

- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience
- X Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
- Y Partial and forced closure or there is disruption to travel
- Z Pupil not on roll yet
- # School closed to all pupils

## **9. Notifying The Reach Free School of a Pupil's Absence:**

**9.1** In the event that a pupil has to take a day's leave of school, it is the expectation of The Reach Free School that parents, guardians or carers will make telephone or email contact with the school before 8.40am on the same day and each subsequent day of absence. On return to school, the pupil must hand in a letter to the Attendance Officer explaining their absence. If available, medical evidence such as an appointment card or prescription is expected.

**9.2** If the school has not received notice of a pupil's absence, a text message will be sent to the pupil's primary guardians, to notify them and request for them to explain why their child is absent from school.

## **10. Requests for Exceptional Leave from The Reach Free School:**

**10.1** Should a family wish their child to miss a day or days from school for exceptional circumstances, they will need to complete a 'Request for Exceptional Leave' form, available from reception, ten days in advance.

**10.2** This request will be reviewed by the Headteacher as to whether this period of absence should be authorised or not authorised, taking into account the pupil's attendance record to date and the impact the absence will have on that pupil's educational progress and social well being.

**10.3** Parents, guardians or carers requesting this absence will be informed of the decision by letter and will have the right to appeal.

**10.4** If necessary, The Reach Free School will seek the advice and guidance of the Hertfordshire Attendance team.

## **11. Expectations of The Reach Free School:**

### **11.1 Pupils:**

- To arrive to The Reach Free School no later than 8.30am
- To attend The Reach Free School every day
- To support other pupils in arriving to school every day and on time
- To act as role models for younger year groups, promoting excellent attendance and punctuality.

### **11.2 Form Teachers:**

- To record pupils' attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance and punctuality and reward and sanction in line with this policy and The Reach Free School Behaviour Policy
- To refer concerns regarding attendance and punctuality to school to their Head of House via email
- To reward and sanction attendance and punctuality in line with this policy and The Reach Free School Behaviour Policy

### **11.3 Class Teachers:**

- To record pupils' attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance and punctuality and reward and sanction in line with this policy and The Reach Free School Behaviour Policy
- To refer concerns regarding attendance and punctuality to lessons to their Head of Department/ Lead Teacher via email or at the department meetings

#### **11.4 Heads of House:**

- To address concerns from form and class teachers by exploring reasons for poor attendance and punctuality with the pupil and their family.

#### **11.5 Pupil Support Coordinator:**

- To address concerns from form tutors, class teachers and Heads of Houses relating to pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium grant by exploring reasons for poor attendance and punctuality with the pupil and their family
- To support families whose children are entitled to the Pupil Premium grant so that the attendance of their child(ren) improves

#### **11.6 Attendance Officer:**

- To address day-to-day pupil attendance matters including first day response
- To conduct home visits on pupils with attendance concerns
- To liaise with external agencies and the County Council relating to pupils with attendance concerns
- To collate evidence and refer pupils with low attendance to Hertfordshire Attendance Improvement Team
- To implement the Attendance Improvement Strategy

#### **11.7 Deputy Headteacher - Inclusion:**

- To line manage the Attendance Officer and Pupil Support Coordinator
- To oversee, review and revise the Attendance Improvement Strategy
- To liaise with Headteacher and Governing Body regarding attendance improvement

#### **11.7 Parents, Guardians and Carers:**

- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn; a reason should be offered for any lateness
- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To work closely with the school and Hertfordshire attendance team to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- To make dental or medical appointments for their child outside school hours
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special / exceptional circumstances.
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as examination periods
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements
- To be aware that children who do not attend school may be placed at considerable risk and in some cases, may be drawn into patterns of antisocial or criminal behaviour.

### 11.8 Governors:

- Hold The Reach Free School to account for attendance and punctuality rates
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy

### 12. Links with other policies

Behaviour  
Child Protection  
First Aid Policy  
SEND Policy

### 13. Monitor and Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Governing Body of The Reach Free School.

**The Reach Free School expects maximum attendance for the maximum achievement, cooperation and enjoyment of all of its pupils.**

**Created:** January 2013  
**Revised:** September 2018  
**Ratified by the Governing Body:** October 2013  
**Date of Last Review:** September 2018  
**Date of Next Review:** June 2019

<b>Change History</b>	<b>Change(s) Made</b>	<b>Change Author</b>
V1.0	Policy created	NSI
V1.1	Minor amendments to the policy to reflect changes in school procedures	RBO
V1.2	Added a bullet point about weekly awards in section 5, Included references to Heads of Houses and the Pupil Support Coordinator in section 11.	RBO
V1.3	Revised section 5.4 and added 5.5, revised 11.6 and added 11.7	RBO
V1.4	Revised section 6.8 to clarify the penalty payments for non-attendance and updated the 'Y' attendance code	RBO
V1.5	Minor amendments to the policy to reflect changes in school procedures.	RBO