

## Rainford High Attendance Policy November 2017

### 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.

### 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 to alert you to your child's absence if we have not been notified of their absence prior to the registers being completed.

#### 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.

#### 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.
- 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.

### **Punctuality**

We expect our students to be punctual to school. If they arrive to tutor time after 8:55 then they will be marked late. If your child arrives to school after 9:30am 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.

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 My Ed app.

## **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.

## **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.

### **Attendance below 95%**

On a half termly basis, parents of students whose attendance falls below 95% will be sent a letter or email alerting them to this fact. 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.

### **Attendance below 92%**

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, 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. In some circumstances 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.

### **Attendance below 90% - Persistent Absence**

Students whose attendance has been a significant concern in 2016/17, 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. 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 assigned a key worker, who is usually their Pastoral Leader, 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.

### **Leave of Absence during term time**

School cannot authorise time off for family holidays during term time and parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays. Parents can only apply for leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances.

Parents must apply in writing to the school Principal well in advance of the absence. The Principal will decide if the leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised.

If the Principal does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents decide to take the leave anyway, the absence will be unauthorised and the parents may receive Penalty Notice fines.

Penalty Notice Fines can be issued to each parent for every child concerned.

If parents take their child on a leave of absence, then this will impact on their attendance and their child will be an attendance concern. All attendance concerns will be monitored and supported as explained above, such as receiving concern letters, calls and possibly home visits for 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 and the best attending form in each year group will receive the Weekly Attendance Cup in assembly
- 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 Rewards trip. In Year 11 students with 97% or above will be invited to prom
- 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%

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

Agreed by Governors:

Signed:

To be reviewed November 2017.