Richard Lee Primary

Attendance Policy 26-27

Local Level Policy

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Attendance Policy

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1. Rationale Statement

Richard Lee Primary School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential.

At Richard Lee Primary School, we believe that:

- Pupils need to attend school every day so that they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.
- Poor attendance rates and persistent lateness undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.
- Children who attend school every day make better progress and have better life chances.

Richard Lee Primary School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with and support students and their families to ensure each student attend school regularly and punctually.

Richard Lee Primary School will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards acknowledging the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Richard Lee Primary School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

2. Our Aim

To ensure that children receive their full entitlement to teaching and learning opportunities at Richard Lee Primary School through the achievement of punctual and maximum possible attendance.

1. To improve the overall percentage of pupils at Richard Lee Primary School.
2. To act early to address patterns of absence to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
3. To ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
4. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with Richard Lee Primary School including students, parents, teachers and governors.
5. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
6. To implement a system of rewards for excellent attendance to promote good attendance
7. To promote effective partnerships with external agencies, our local hub and with other services and agencies.
8. To recognise the needs of the individual child when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

3. Context

The government expectation is that all primary school children will achieve a 95% level of attendance. This is deemed to be the level of attendance needed to give children the greatest opportunity to achieve to the better of their potential, both academically and socially. Anything less than 95% attendance will give us, at Richard Lee Primary School, a cause for concern.

In such circumstances, The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or Attendance Lead will contact parents to discuss the concerns regarding attendance and punctuality. Where no satisfactory outcome is achieved, the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or Attendance Lead recognises the need for a multi-agency approach to support the attendance and welfare of children and also recognises the need to find varied and differing means of support in the interests of social inclusion.

The School has an Attendance Lead who monitors attendance of children with less than 90% attendance – or where there are frequent absences:

- Where there are no firm medical reasons for absence.
- When absence is unauthorised.
- When absence or lateness gives cause for concern.

Parents are contacted either by telephone, email, letter, home visit or by invitation to an attendance meeting involving all relevant agencies, when strategies for improvement are put in place.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Deputy Head Teacher (designated senior leader responsible for attendance) The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Vicky Darnley and can be contacted via 02476 658800

Attendance Lead

The school Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Ensuring 'First Day Absence' calls for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9.20am have been conducted
- Monitoring and analysing persistent absence
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advising when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via Arbor (Attendance monitoring system) to the school office within the agreed time frame. Class Teachers are responsible for raising concerns around attendance and arriving late to the Attendance Lead and designated senior leader for attendance. Class Teachers promote 'Attendance Heroes' (Here Every day, Ready Ontime) and instil that they should attend school every day, on time and that everyday counts.

School Admin staff

School Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and inform the Attendance Lead

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:30am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and ensure that addresses and parent/carer details are kept up to date by informing the School Admin Staff of any changes.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

The governing board

The governing board and link governor for attendance is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

5. Registration and Reports

The legal status of school registers is regularly stressed to all school staff and meticulous effort is made to ensure they are accurately kept. New Staff are provided with training in both the detail of accurate register marking and methods and strategies for encouraging children to be punctual and regular in their attendance.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. We will take our attendance register at 8:55am for the first session of each school day and once to begin the second session at 12:50pm. Nursery attendance is taken at 8:30am for the first session, and 12:30pm for the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will also record:

- Once a child starts Reception, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register on Arbor will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

School Staff are reminded that the authorisation of absence is at the discretion of the Head teacher, not the parents.

- Individual attendance and punctuality data is recorded on pupils' reports.
- The Head Teacher will report on attendance as part of their termly report to governors.

6. Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the year in which they reach the age of 16.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.

7. Leave of Absence (Holidays in Term Time)

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove reference to 'Family Holidays' and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

There is no automatic right to any holiday in term time.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school.

Parents/carers should attempt to make any medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the

minimum amount of time necessary. Parents/carers should show the appointment card to school to confirm the appointment.

Leave of absence must be requested from and agreed by the Headteacher in advance of any absence. If approved, the absence is registered as authorised and if not approved but still taken, as unauthorised.

8. Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised.
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

Amendments have been made to the 2007 penalty notices regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure that his/her children's regular attendance at school.

From September 2024, penalty notices will be £80 for parents who pay within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Parents who do not pay a fine within 28 days may be prosecuted.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol.

9. Categorising absence

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Illness

Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness.

Medical / Dental Appointments

Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents/carers should show the appointment card/letter/email/text message to school to confirm the appointment.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Religious Observance
Richard Lee Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside holiday periods or weekends. Consideration will be given to authorising absence or special leave for religious observance. Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to Richard Lee Primary School if they intend their child to be absent.

It is reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance or festival. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may request that a Penalty Notice is issued.

Traveller Absence
The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity or dual registered when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced.

10. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
- The death of a pupil.
- A pupil has transferred between schools.
- A pupil is withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- Failures to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
- 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence have occurred, and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.
- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

The school will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

11. Attendance Protocols

Absence procedure for Richard Lee School

If a child is absent from school, the following will be initiated by the Attendance Team:

- Arbor/email correspondence will be sent to parents/carers requesting a reason for absence for their child. Followed by 'First Day Absence' call.
- A 'First Day Absence' call will be made for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9.20 am.

Expected absence procedure for parent/carer

A parent/carer has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken.

If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents/carers are expected to:

- Contact school by telephone call before close of register at 9.20am on the first day of absence, identifying the exact reason for absence (not just 'ill' or 'unwell') and the expected date of return.
- An email can be sent to the Attendance email address (rlp-attendance@castlephoenixtrust.org.uk) for subsequent, linked absences e.g. a second day with an upset stomach.
- If no reason is provided the absence will be marked as unauthorised (O) until a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received. Safe and wellbeing Home Visits will be conducted where unauthorised absence occurs with no contact from parents/carers or there is a cause for concern around the number of days a pupil has been absent from school.

Late arrival at school

At Richard Lee Primary School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year.

Following an informal entry period where doors open to welcome children at 8:40am, our school day begins at 8:50am and the register is taken at 8:55am. We advise all parents/carers to ensure their child is on site by 8:50am. All pupils arriving after this time will be expected to report to the main office and are required to sign their child in on our Inventry system. Their arrival will be recorded as late on the register.

The school register will officially close at 9.20 am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as absent for the morning session.

All pupils who arrive late or after the close of registration will be asked to provide an explanation for their lateness, and, where necessary, parents/carers will be contacted in respect of the late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in a referral to the school's Attendance Lead/Pastoral Lead and may also result in a request for a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings to be considered. considered. From 19th August 2024, a new national framework has come into effect to tackle poor school attendance and punctuality. The new framework states that all children arriving more than 30 minutes late for school must be recorded with a U code (late after registration has closed). ***U codes are considered an unauthorised absence; therefore, fixed penalty notices and/or prosecution can be used for persistent late arrival after the register has closed.***

12. Attendance Monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The Attendance team will use Arbor (Attendance tracking system) to monitor attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance.

We will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- meet weekly to discuss each year group, discuss key groups of children and evaluate the current strategies in place

Pupil-level absence 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Summaries of Attendance rates are prepared annually for all children in years R-6 showing:

- the total number of pupils on roll at any time during the period
- the total number of possible pupils' sessions
- the number of authorised absences and the number of children affected
- the percentage of pupils' sessions lost by authorised and unauthorised absences.

Year on Year Summaries are retained for comparison and class registers are retained for a minimum of three years.

An Attendance report is drawn up outlining the attendance and punctuality within school and reported to Governors.

13. Reducing persistent and severe absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops below 90% for any reason. Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

All pupils who are PA, or are considered to be on track to becoming PA, will be referred to the school's Attendance Lead/Pastoral Lead and may also be referred to appropriate external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section (1) offence and a £2500 fine and up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section (1a) offence.

Strategies to reduce persistent and severe absence

Letters are sent out to parents who are either at risk of becoming persistently absent, or in the PA category. Letters are either advisory, or evaluating the improvement of their child's attendance over a period of time.

- Tier 1 – an advisory letter, alongside their child's attendance report, is sent out to families falling below 96%. This letter targets pupils with an attendance percentage between 93%-95% advising them that the government expectation is that all primary school children will achieve a 95% level of attendance.
- Tier 2 – a precautionary letter, alongside their child's attendance report, is sent out the parents with pupils at risk of falling into the PA category. This letter targets families with a pupil attendance between 90%-92%. Pupils within the category will be monitored over a set period of time. Phone calls or face-to-face meetings might be arranged with parents to discuss key issues e.g. broken weeks.
- Tier 3 – a warning letter, alongside their child's attendance report, is sent out to all families with pupils in the PA category. Pupils within the category will be monitored closely over a set period of time. The Attendance Lead/Pastoral Lead has regular contact with these families either by in person meetings, telephone calls, home visits and letters to discuss attendance and engagement in school, and offer support to wider services to remove the barriers to attendance.

After an agreed period of time (4-6 weeks), a second letter will be sent to parents analysing the increase or decrease in the attendance percentage.

- If the attendance of the pupil shows clear improvements in either category, a celebratory letter will be sent home, highlighting their efforts in improving attendance.
- If the attendance of pupils within the PA category does not improve and there is not a valid reason (for example, medical evidence or on a part time timetable), daily monitoring will occur alongside attendance plans and fixed penalty notices will be enforced.
- If attendance does not improve for children at risk of falling into the PA category, a telephone call or meeting will be arranged with the Deputy Headteacher (Attendance Leader) to discuss areas on concern.
- Formal meetings will include an attendance analysis

Enrichment strategies may be put in place to engage PA pupils in attending school. These strategies may be individual to the child. For example, becoming a reading buddy or attending morning breakfast provision.

Persistent Absence Strategies				
1) A parent warning letter for a decline in attendance	3) Attendance plan	5) Home visit	7) Breakfast club offer	9) Close Attendance Monitoring
2) A parent letter sharing an improvement in attendance	4) Penalty Notices and Prosecution	6) Early help referral	8) Phone call by Attendance Officer or Deputy Head teacher	10) Formal Attendance Meetings

14. Promoting Good Attendance

At Richard Lee Primary School, we celebrate being an Attendance Hero. 'Here Every day, Ready Ontime'. Through regular discussion, pupils know that great attendance maximises their potential. At Richard Lee, we instil that they should attend school every day, on time and that everyday counts.

100%	99-98%	97-95%	94-93%	<93%	<90%
100% Attendance	Excellent Attendance	Good Attendance	Cause for Concern	At Risk of becoming Persistently Absent	Persistently Absent

We have two different types of attendance awards:



- In celebration assemblies, the class with highest attendance will receive the attendance trophy for their phase. The class percentage is shared and discussed in the assembly, children are aware that we are aiming for over 96% for excellent attendance. If the winning class is below 90%, no trophy will be awarded. Children in EYFS receive an Attendance soft toy in class for the highest percentage. The class in each phase with the highest attendance is shared with parents via our School Newsletter.

- At the end of each term, individual pupils with positive attendance percentages receive certificates. There is one certificate available for achieving 100% attendance and there is one certificate available for excellent attendance which is above 98%. At Richard Lee Primary School, we strongly believe that encouraging excellent attendance over 98% is important as we recognise that everyone can sometimes suffer from illness and have genuine reasons for absence. Children that are unable to attend school for periods of time due to genuine medical reasons, will have their attendance calculated taking this into account, so that they have an equal chance of entering the draw.







15. Pupil Illness and Infection

Pupils in EYFS and of compulsory school age, should only miss school, if they are too ill to attend school. As a school, we follow guidelines taken from the NHS website.

Coughs, Colds and Sore throats	**Attend school** unless they have a high temperature.
Vomiting and Diarrhoea	Children with severe episodes of vomiting and diarrhoea should stay at home for 48 hours after their last symptom.
High Temperature	If the child has a temperature of 38C or more, stay at home.

Chicken Pox	Stay a home until the spots have crusted over. This is usually 5 days.
Cold Sores	**Attend school**
Conjunctivitis	**Attend school**
Coronavirus	**Attend school** unless they have a high temperature.
Ear Infection	**Attend school** unless they have a high
	temperature.
Hand, Foot and Mouth	**Attend school**
Head Lice	**Attend school** and treat at home.
Impetigo	Stay at home until the sores have crusted over. This is usually 48 hours after they start antibiotics.
Ringworm	**Attend school** and start treatment.
Scarlet Fever	Stay at home until prescribed antibiotics from the GP. Return to school 24 hours after starting treatment.
Slapped Cheek Syndrome	**Attend school**
Threadworms	**Attend school**

At Richard Lee, we follow the same NHS guidelines when deciding if to send a child home. If a child has **vomiting, diarrhoea, or a high temperature of 38°C or more**, we will always phone parents to ask them to collect their child at the earliest convenience to stop the virus from spreading and treat accordingly.

If a child looks unwell, but is not showing visual signs of vomiting, diarrhoea, or a high temperature of 38°C or more, a period of monitoring will occur. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee this monitoring and will make the final decision on whether to send the child home or not.

If we suspect a child has one of the listed common childhood illnesses, we would always phone parents to ensure the child receives mediation from a GP or pharmacist at the earliest convenience.

Suspected Chicken Pox	Parent advised to collect their child. Child to return once the spots have crusted over. This is usually 5 days.
Suspected Cold Sores	Parents informed via phone call Child to stay in school.
Suspected Conjunctivitis	Parents informed via phone call Child to stay in school if they are well enough
Suspected Ear Infection	Parents informed via phone call Child to stay in school if they are well enough
Suspected Hand, Foot and Mouth	Parents informed via phone call Child to stay in school if they are well enough
Suspected Head Lice	Parents informed via phone call.
Suspected Impetigo	Parent advised to collect their child. Child to return 48 hours after they start antibiotics.

Suspected Ringworm	Parents informed via phone call.
Suspected Scarlet Fever	Parent advised to collect their child. Child to return 24 hours after they start antibiotics.
Suspected Slapped Cheek Syndrome	Parents informed via phone call Child to stay in school if they are well enough
Suspected Threadworms	Parents informed via phone call Child to stay in school.

Illness Protocol

A child discloses that they feel unwell.	Vomiting, diarrhoea or High temperature	Evidence seen of **vomiting, diarrhoea, or a high temperature of 38°C or more.** Inform SLT and phone home.
	Suspected Childhood Illness	If they have a suspected childhood illness, seek medical advice from a first aider. If the first aider confirms they have suspected **Chicken Pox, Impetigo or Scarlet Fever,** Inform SLT and phone home for the child to be collected. For all other illnesses, parents are informed via a phone call and the child is to stay in school if they are well enough.
	Other Symptoms (For Example: head ache, tummy pain, body aches and pains, coughs, colds and sore throats, ear ache and tiredness)	Inform a member of SLT, and a period of monitoring will occur. The class teacher will ensure the child has access to water, food and fresh air. This could be during playtime or lunchtime. Monitor the child to see if their symptoms improve. A member of SLT will make the decision if to send the child home.