



Rye College Policy

Policy Title:	Student Attendance Policy
LT Responsibility:	Deputy Headteacher (Welfare)
Review Body:	Executive Headteacher
Date:	November 2018
Review:	June 2019

1. Aim

The aim of this Attendance Policy is to enable the academy to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all students. Regular attendance is key to steady progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason Rye College is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

Rye College takes a holistic approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents and families, students and all staff members to ensure that students are attending college as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy is supported by our policies on **Safeguarding, Preventing Bullying and Behaviour Management**.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable —

- (a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
 - (b) to any special educational needs they may have,
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age —

- (a) when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) —



- (a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if they attain that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

From September 2015 Section 2 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requires a young person to continue in education or training until their 18 birthday.

Rye College is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

Further information can be found in 'DFE: School Attendance: Guidance for Schools'.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance

3. Key roles and responsibilities

The following key roles and responsibilities are part of our approach to promoting and maintaining high attendance.

3.1 Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant policies and guidance directed at parents and staff;
- Annually review the Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, parents and families and children to implement the policy effectively;
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents and families, children and staff;
- Work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year;
- Take time to review and discuss attendance issues with senior leaders in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year;
- Ensure that the academy is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and families and staff;
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

3.2 Senior Leadership Team

The leadership team will:



- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents and families, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Coordinate with the board of trustees to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review;
- Ensure that all relevant staff are up to date with the attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues;
- Ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them;
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this role;
- Submit periodic reports to trustees on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

3.3 Teachers and Student Support

Teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents and families, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily;
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed;
- Work with external agencies to support students and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

3.4 Parents and Families

We request that parents and families:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing in the academy;
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular attendance at home.



- Encourage and support their children's aspirations;
- Follow the set procedure for reporting the absence of their child from college (**see section 5**), and include an expected date for return;
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside academy hours;
- Use the academy as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the academy so that there is easy communication when a problem arises;
- Keep the academy informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the academy day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at the academy about the importance of attendance;
- Do not take their children out of the academy for holidays during term time. If parents and families would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher, (**see section 5.5**).

ALL REQUESTS FOR HOLIDAY DURING TERM TIME WILL BE REFUSED BY THE HEADTEACHER. ANY REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE SHOULD BE IN 'EXCEPTIONAL' CIRCUMSTANCES.

Legal Warning

"If the request is unauthorised the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service will be notified of the absence and a Penalty Notice may be issued. A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the time limit. If it is not paid, this will result in legal action."

3.5 Students

We request that students:

- Be aware of the attendance policy, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by staff, support from parents and families and the timetable;
- Speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at the academy or at home which may impact on their attendance;
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their timetable;
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen;
- Follow the correct set procedure if they arrive late (**see section 5.7**). Students are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the academy to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the



child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety under emergency evacuation procedures;

- Sign and comply with our Home-School Agreement.

4. Definitions of Student Absence

Please note that this list is not exhaustive. **Only the academy may authorise any student absence.**

Rye College defines absence from school as either:

- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed;
- Not attending the academy for any reason.

Rye College defines **authorised absence** from the academy as:

- An absence for sickness for which the academy has granted leave;
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the academy has granted leave;
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy has granted leave;
- An absence due to a family emergency for which the academy has granted leave.

Rye College defines **unauthorised absence** from the academy as:

- Parents and families keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason;
- Truancy before or during the academy day;
- Absences which have not been properly explained;
- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised¹;
- Leaving the academy for no reason during the day;
- Parental withdrawal from the academy without the consent of the headteacher e.g. inclement weather when Severe Weather Policy is not active.

Please note: Penalty notices can be used if a student is absent from the academy without permission or good reason and if the absence is unauthorised by the academy. In all cases during an attendance support meeting a warning letter will first be issued. Following the warning letter, if a student has ten unauthorised sessions of absence (5 school days), within ten school weeks, a penalty notice will be issued.

Rye College defines "persistent absence (PA) as:

- Missing 10 per cent (10%) or more of schooling across the year **for whatever reason.**

¹ All requests for holiday during term time will be refused by the headteacher.



5. Categories of Absence & Procedure for Reporting Absence

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence is given to the academy. Parents and families cannot authorise absences.

Colleagues will make it clear on the register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where colleagues have any concerns regarding absences they will follow the set safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents and families should inform the academy by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent of the child and /or medical evidence. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

5.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents and families will need to make a phone call to alert the academy on the first day/each day of absence before 9.00am. When the child returns to the academy they should bring a note from their parent explaining the absence – this is required for the academy's records.

For any absence longer than 5 days due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the academy with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

5.2 Medical or dental appointments

Parents and families should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside academy hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend the academy for as much of that day as possible. Evidence of the appointment must be provided.

5.3 Authorised absences

Absences will only be authorised by the academy.

5.4 Exclusion

Fixed Term Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The academy will arrange for work via Classcharts for the first five days. Reference should be made to our Behaviour Management Policy.

Please note: If an excluded student is found in a public place during the academy day the East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service will check whether the student was excluded at the time. If they were excluded, then a penalty notice will be issued.

5.5 Family holidays and extended leave

Parents and families should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of term time. All requests for holiday during term time will be refused by the headteacher. Any requests for absence should be in 'exceptional' circumstances. Requests for exceptional leave of this type must be made in writing on the form provided to the headteacher fourteen (14) days in advance of the leave being taken. Retrospective applications will not be considered



and the time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved and the length of absence approved.

As in all absences, it is the student's responsibility to catch up on any missed lessons.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to the academy. Parents and families should contact the academy immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents and families may be subject to further action by the academy or prosecution by the local authority.

If the academy suspects that an unauthorised absence is as a result of a holiday we will send a letter asking for medical evidence for the length of the absence. Failure to provide this evidence or respond to the letter will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Legal Warning

"If the request is unauthorised the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service will be notified of the absence and a Penalty Notice may be issued. A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the time limit. If it is not paid, this will result in legal action."

Fixed Penalty Notices: Holidays in term-time

In all cases - if a headteacher does not authorise a written request from a parent or family for a holiday lasting a minimum of ten sessions (five school days) of absence a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued by East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service.

Please see Appendix 5 for more information on Fixed Penalty Notices

5.6 Religious observance

The academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow reasonable authorised absence for these times.

Parents and families will be aware of these dates and should provide written notification to the academy in advance stating the religious festival being observed.

5.7 Late arrival

Registration begins at 9.00am. Students who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. **The registration period ends at 9.10am**



Students who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to student reception to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that students sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all students are accounted for.

A register is also taken at the start of all subject lessons by the subject teacher, and any unexplained absences reported back to the Attendance Officer. If a student is late to the lesson this will be recorded on the register.

Persistent lateness will result in an Attendance Support Plan and / or a fine.

“Unauthorised Lateness – i.e. arrival at school after the register has closed: where a minimum of 10 unauthorised late absences have accrued within a 10 school week period, following a warning letter, a Penalty Notice may be issued. During the 10 school weeks review period any other unauthorised absence will also be included in the 10 sessions. The 10 sessions need not be consecutive.”

6. Action by the Academy to follow up absences

Class registers are completed electronically and monitored by attendance at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the academy will contact the parents and families. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents and families to discuss possible reasons and support systems that could help.

Parents and families will be contacted if a student gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse.

The Attendance Officer will chase students and parents for a written explanation from their parents and families for their absence upon the student’s return from being away. This is required for the academy’s records and is necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence.

Where students have been away for long term medical reasons, the academy will support that child when they re-enter the academy to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

Where a child has been absent from the academy for a period of more than 10 school days, and where the absence was unauthorised, the academy will report the child as ‘Missing from Education’ to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will make every attempt to contact the parents and families, and will notify the academy when to take a student off-roll. The academy will take disciplinary action against any students who are discovered to be truanting and parents and families will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and support systems that could help. The academy may take further action against the parents and families, including referral to the local authority to begin criminal proceedings against the parents.

The Attendance Officer will invite parents in for an Attendance Support Meeting.

Please note Fixed Penalty Notices may be used for truancy.



“Persistent unauthorised absence: where a minimum of 10 unauthorised absences have accrued during a 10 school week period, following a warning letter, a Penalty Notice can be issued. The 10 sessions need *not* be consecutive”

7. Rewarding Good Attendance

Rye College acknowledges 100% attendance in the following ways:

- recognition in assemblies

Educational trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90% these privileges may be taken away.

Attendance at the Year 11 Prom is by invitation only, and a student’s attendance record may be taken into account.

8. Complaints

Please refer to the trust’s Complaints Policy if you have any concerns in relation to the procedures or processes that have been applied in relation to the academy’s management of the Student Attendance Policy.



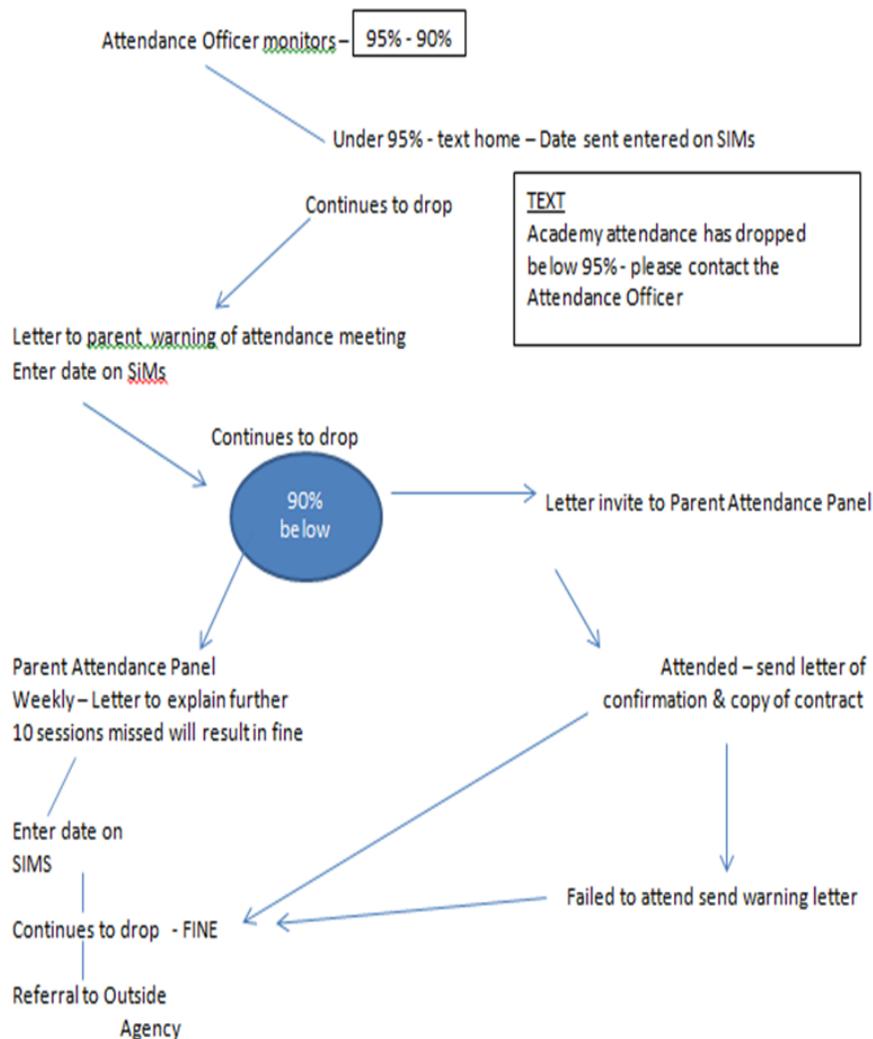
Appendix 1

Attendance Procedures

Procedures

- Use of text messages to alert parents to their child's attendance dropping below 95%;
- Attendance panels introduced much earlier at 90%;
- Use of penalty notices - £60 per child per parent (case by case basis).

Monitoring – see flow chart and table





Reports Weekly	Actions
95% - 93%: Attendance Officer picks up	Warning text: Are you aware your child's attendance is below 95% Students to receive e-mail: Are you aware your attendance is below...
93% - 91%: Letter home	E-mail student: If you miss 5 days now your parents may be fined, to avoid this get your attendance back to 95% Parent Letter: if your child's attendance drops below 90% no authorisation without medical evidence such as ... and you may incur a penalty notice fine of £60.
90% - 86%: Parents and families will be asked to attend an Attendance Support Panel.	Below 90% Letter: 10 further unauthorised absences (5 days) may result in a fine. Parent Attendance Panel set up. Support systems from meeting put in place
Attendance Officer and Deputy Headteacher make decisions around Fixed Penalty Notices for approval by the Headteacher.	Fixed Penalty Notice sent.
85% and below	Outside agency referral.



Classroom attendance procedures

All registers will be taken in the first ten minutes of the lesson on SIMS.

If you are unable to access SIMS a paper register on the printed off register sheet for that lesson must be completed and sent to reception. If the problem is with SIMS access or availability please inform IT services.

Supply teachers will be provided with paper registers that must be completed and returned to reception as above.

Registers will be checked 15 minutes into the lesson and if the register is not completed you will receive a reminder to do so.

At the end of the school day the Deputy Headteacher will receive a report of any teachers who have not completed their registers.

The Deputy Headteacher will speak to the member of staff to establish the reason for this and take any and all appropriate actions.

Any colleagues who persistently fail to complete their register may be subject to disciplinary procedures.



Appendix 2

Fixed Penalty Notices: Code of Conduct

Authorisation

1. The decision to request a Penalty Notice sits solely with the Headteacher.
2. The primary responsibility for the issuing of Penalty Notices rests with the local authority, The Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) will issue Penalty Notices in East Sussex. This ensures consistency and will prevent conflict with other enforcement sanctions.
3. Although professionals other than those within the local authority (e.g. headteachers, the police etc.) are accredited persons within the legislation, able to issue Penalty Notices, there is no requirement for them to do so. In East Sussex it has been agreed that the Police will not issue Penalty Notices. If a headteacher feels it is appropriate for a Penalty Notice to be issued, they will consult with, and then, instruct ESBAS. This will avoid a Penalty Notice being issued when the ESBAS is instigating legal intervention proceedings for irregular school attendance.
4. ESBAS will ensure that the issuing of Penalty Notices is closely monitored. In this way the local authority have the means to avoid the issuance of duplicate notices.
5. Penalty Notices will only be issued by post and not as “on the spot” action; this will satisfy that all evidential requirements are in place.

ESBAS will act upon requests to issue Penalty Notices from schools, academies, alternative education providers, and Sussex Police, provided that:

- a. all relevant information is supplied in the specified manner;
- b. the circumstances of the student’s absence meets the requirements of this Code of Conduct;
- c. the issuing of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other enforcement sanctions already in process.

If there are any issues with the documentation provided by the school, the local authority would contact the school to discuss.



When a Penalty Notice May Be Issued

The issuing of Penalty Notices by the local authority is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

1. Specific period of unauthorised absence (for example a holiday): absence from school without permission and the absences are unauthorised. If a Head teacher does not authorise a request from a parent/carer for an absence s/he will respond to the request directly. This response will constitute a valid Warning to the parent. In all cases, a minimum of 10 sessions in total (5 school days) of absence must have been accrued before a Penalty Notice is requested. The absences will be consecutive but weekends, Bank Holidays, inset days etc. *do not* interrupt a period of absence and therefore it will remain consecutive.
2. Persistent unauthorised absence: where a minimum of 10 unauthorised absences have accrued during a 10 school week period, following a warning letter, a Penalty Notice can be issued. The 10 sessions need *not* be consecutive.
3. Unauthorised Lateness – i.e. arrival at school after the register has closed: where a minimum of 10 unauthorised late absences have accrued within a 10 school week period, following a warning letter, a Penalty Notice may be issued. During the 10 school weeks review period any other unauthorised absence will also be included in the 10 sessions. The 10 sessions need not be consecutive.
4. An Excluded Student found in a public place during the school day: in all cases the ESBAS will check whether the student was excluded at the time. If the criteria is satisfied then a Penalty Notice will be issued (a school is *not* deemed by the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to be a public place for the purposes of this legislation).
5. During a Truancy Sweep by the ESBAS in conjunction with Sussex Police: if a child is found out of school or at home, and the absence is unauthorised, a Warning Notice.

For more information please go to:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/attendance-behaviour/truancy-non-attendance/penaltynotice



Appendix 3

Notification of Planned Absence from College

General Information

There are just 190 school days in which your child can receive an education.

There are 175 other days in which you can take holidays, family visits and reward days out.

100% is recognised as an expected level of school attendance. If your child is out of school for 3 days each term, then their attendance is below 95%. Five days of school equates to 25 hours of learning, Ten days is 50 hours of learning.

Rye College does not authorise any absence in term time in all but the most exceptional circumstances because of the impact on your child's education. If you wish to take your child out of the College for any reason please fill in the form below giving the exceptional circumstance that has occurred.

WHAT IS GOOD ATTENDANCE?					
190 days	180 days	178 days	163 days	161 days	143 days
100%	95%	94%	86%	85%	75%
Good  Only 1-2 day missed per term		Worrying  Between 3-8 days missed per term		Serious Concern  More than 9 days missed per term	

Your child has the right to a full time education and the opportunities that this can bring. We hope that you will work in partnership with us to make sure that your child attends school every day, allowing them access to the education they deserve.



Notification of Planned Absence from College

To be completed by parent or carer and returned to the Attendance Officer

Notice:

- I understand that if the request is unauthorised the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service will be notified of the absence taken and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued;
- I understand that a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. This is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the time limit;
- I understand that if I do not pay this will result in legal action.

Student's Details

Student's Name: Tutor Group

Date of withdrawal:

Date of return:

Total number of learning days missed:

Reason withdrawal from learning is requested:

To be completed by the Attendance Officer

Thank you for informing the college of your planned absence from College.

- Your request has been AUTHORISED:
- Your request has been UNAUTHORISED:

Headteacher's signature: Date: