



Rye Academy Trust

Attendance Policy for Rye College & Rye Studio School

1. Aim

At Rye College and Rye Studio School we are unwavering in our drive to continue to improve the attendance and punctuality of students in order to ensure that every child has the ability to be successful. We demand the highest level of attendance from students so they make the most of their education with us and develop their full potential in preparation for the next steps.

2. Principles

Poor attendance and punctuality result in a poor and disrupted education and low attendance rates are associated with lower achievement. DFE research suggests that 17 missed school days a year is the equivalent of a GCSE grade drop in achievement. Good attendance is set at 95% and missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities.

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will do this through its use of curriculum and learning materials, pastoral staff involvement and by working with external agencies and partners.

Parents/carers and students should ensure that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable, such as illness. A parent/carer is committing an offence if they fail to make sure that their child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without the parent's knowledge.

Some children are reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, parents and the student at the earliest opportunity. If a student is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and it may make things worse. When parents and the school work closely together attendance difficulties are usually resolved through the use of voluntary contracts and/or support strategies.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time so permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence.

If this, or other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance fail, the school, in conjunction with the Local Authority (East Sussex) or a Police Officer may decide to issue a Penalty Notice (a fine) in accordance with a published LA code. The penalties are currently set at £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 42 days. Non-payment will normally lead to court prosecution. Parents can also be imprisoned for 3 months for failing to ensure regular attendance of their child.

Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order which means that the parent has to attend a parenting class. These actions are thankfully rare at Rye College and Rye Studio School due to our close working relationship with parents and students.

Schools are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether a pupil is present or not. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only the school can authorise the absence, not the parents/carers. This is why it is important that parents/carers provide information about every absence so that the school can make a reasonable decision as to whether it can be deemed authorised or not.

3. Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, not by the parents/carers, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

- **Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

- **Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:
 - parents/carers keeping students off school unnecessarily;
 - truancy before or during the school day;
 - absences which have never been properly explained;
 - students who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
 - holidays taken in term time, except in exceptional circumstances.

The schools will monitor attendance closely but it is helpful if the parent contacts the school at the earliest stage when there are absence concerns so that staff can work with parents and students in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the student may be referred by the school to the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS), a partner agency within the Local Education Authority. ESBAS will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the student's attendance have failed they may take formal action.

4. Registration of Admissions

4.1 Legislation

The admissions register for the school must contain an alphabetical index of all students on roll at the school, alongside the following information:

- The student's name in full;
- The student's gender;
- The name and address of the student's parents/carer and with which one they usually reside if they live with a single parent, plus their contact telephone/email details;
- The day, month and year of birth of the student;
- The day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school of the student;
- The name and address of the school they last attended, if any;
- Identified as Pupil Premium.
- Looked After Children

4.2 Deletions from Admission Register

Student's details can be deleted from the register if:

- They are now attending a different school full time;
- They have been withdrawn from the roll of Rye College or Rye Studio School and are now being home educated;
- They have been permanently excluded.
- There is unexplained absence for 10 or more consecutive days and the LA will be informed

The requirement exists for written confirmation to be provided by parents that a student is attending another school or has been withdrawn for elective home schooling, for the college to be able to remove the student from the roll. Such deletions will be made known to East Sussex Local Authority.

4.3 Recording

Every entry in an admission register shall be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

5. Registration of Attendance

5.1 Legislation

The following particulars must be recorded in the attendance register at the commencement of each morning and afternoon session - whether a student is:

- present;
- absent (and whether this is authorised (e.g. sickness, religious observation, etc.);
- attending an approved educational or sporting activity (noting what & where it is), or work experience; or

- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (noting what they are, e.g. closure of the school, no school transport due to adverse weather conditions, etc.).

The name of a student may only be deleted from the attendance register when their name has been deleted from the admission register for the school (see 4.2 above).

5.2 Reporting

At agreed periods within the school year, the Principal will make reports to East Sussex Local Authority regarding students who have failed to attend school regularly, or who have been absent without authorisation for at least ten (10) school days.

5.3 Recording

Every entry in an attendance register shall be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

6. Attendance Expectations

By law, all students of compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education.

6.1 Expectation of Teachers

- To complete registers accurately (via lesson monitor) and timely (within the first 15 minutes of the start of a lesson).
- To encourage students to be prompt in delivering their absence notes.
- To inform the Attendance Officer of student absences known in advance.
- To be aware of poor attenders and speak to them about the problem.
- To contact and speak with the parents of poor attenders where appropriate.
- For Head of Key Stage and Head of Faculty (Rye College) to keep the Rye Academy Trust office and Data Officer informed of changes to student groupings.
- For the Director of Behaviour and Welfare to monitor and support colleagues when student absences become persistent.

6.2 Expectation of the Student Administration Team

- To ensure that tutors and teachers keep lesson monitoring and attendance data up to date and accessible. To publish attendance data relating to year groups every three weeks.
- To contact parents/carers as soon as possible during the morning of the first day of absence where notification has not been received.
- To respond proactively to issues raised by tutors, Key Stage Leaders or the Director and implement the appropriate procedure.
- To liaise with the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service about current cases and concerns.

- To liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) regarding attendance issues with new-intake students.
- To contact parents where there is a concern about attendance and punctuality.
- To act upon truancy promptly and inform relevant members of staff.

6.3 Expectations of the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service

- To look into all cases that are referred by Rye College and Rye Studio School and act appropriately and expediently.
- To liaise regularly with the Attendance Officer.

The Director of Behaviour and Welfare will attend the Hastings and Rother Panel meetings on behalf of both schools. He will be the first point of contact for ESBAS.

6.4 Fixed Penalty Notices

The circumstances where the schools may issue a fixed penalty notice relate to unauthorised absence – e.g. a holiday during term time which causes the student’s attendance to drop below 90% or if a student has 10 unauthorised sessions in any 10 week period.

The penalty is per parent per student and will be £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if unpaid within 21 days. Further legal proceedings may follow if a Fixed Penalty is unpaid.

6.5 Attendance Improvement Procedure

The school may also implement an Attendance Support Plan where a student’s attendance is below 90%. A Fixed Penalty may be issued if 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence occur during a 10 week monitoring period.

7. Persistent Absenteeism

The Government threshold for Persistent Absenteeism is now set at 90%. This includes all absence whether as a result of genuine illness or for unauthorised reasons. The school reports names of students in this category on a termly basis to East Sussex County Council.

If a student falls into this category the school may request that parents/carers provide medical evidence to support any absence in order to better understand the nature and pattern of the absence. This evidence could be in the form of a doctor’s note, hospital letter, copy of a prescription, appointment card or medicinal packaging. Due to the level of absence at that point the school will not be able to authorise any further absences which are not supported by medical evidence.

If a student’s attendance remains at this level and absences are not supported by evidence, then the parent will be invited into school to meet with the student’s Key Stage leader and a member of the school leadership team. At this meeting the school may take the decision to place the student on an Attendance

Contract, with a target aimed at reducing the level of absence. Failure to achieve this target may result in a referral to ESBAS being made and a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

8. Student Missing from Education

If a student leaves the school and is not enrolled at another school within the required period a Child Missing from Education (CME) notification is made. This notification may be made at an earlier point if there are Child Protection or Safeguarding concerns.

9. Punctuality

Students are met by senior staff on the school gate every morning which is open from 8.40 and closed at 9.00 am. Students are considered to be late if they arrive at school after the start of morning registration, 9.00am. Students arriving late should sign in at student reception.

Students should go to their registration rooms by 9.00 am to be registered at the start of the day. They will be considered late if they are not registered at 9.00 am even if they are on site.

If a student is late without an acceptable reason, then they will be issued with an appropriate sanction.

10. Staff responsible for attendance matters

Director of Behaviour and Welfare for ensuring that the Rye College and Studio School attendance meets or exceeds national averages.

The Director meets regularly with the Heads of Key Stage to monitor progress towards those targets and address any issues arising.

Heads of Key Stage, assisted by Form Tutors, are responsible for monitoring and addressing the attendance issues of individual pupils within their charge.

Director of Behaviour and Welfare for the correct maintenance of the attendance registers.

Attendance Officer for the administration of attendance registers and contacting parents where notification of absence has not been received.

11. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed annually. The policy review will be undertaken by the Attendance Officer and approved by the Local Governing Board.

12. Policy Status and Review

Owner:	Attendance Officer (Rye College & Rye Studio School)
Status:	Approved
Approval date:	21 February 2017
Review date:	January 2018

The Rye Academy Trust holds ultimate responsibility for all decisions regarding the running of the individual Academies. In accordance with this responsibility, where appropriate, matters covered by this policy may be referred to the Trust Board for advice or decision.