

# RIPLEY ST THOMAS

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY



## Attendance Policy

Originator	Mrs A Casson
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*Believe.....*

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Mission

As a worshipping community, witnessing to the Christian faith in all the school's activities, Ripley St Thomas aims to develop to the full the academic, spiritual, aesthetic and physical potential of each pupil, encouraging in all its members a real and living faith in God.

Students can only maximise this learning opportunity if they are at school, on time, every day the school is open. Absence is not acceptable unless it is unavoidable or authorised by school. The responsibility for attendance lies with the **parent**.

### Overview

The school, not the parents of an individual student, is required to classify any absence as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. In order to classify absence parents, guardians or carers are always required to give in writing a reason or cause for an absence.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable cause. From 1 September 2013 headteachers are not, by law, able to grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between school, the parents and the student. If a student is reluctant to attend, it is never a wise step to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

### Rewarding and Encouraging Good Attendance

The school will encourage good attendance by:

- Reporting to you regularly on how your son/daughter is performing in school and what their attendance rate is
- Celebrating good attendance in rewards assemblies
- Rewarding good or improving attendance through prize draws, certificates and through the annual Awards evening
- Weekly 100% will be marked in the pupil's journal

### Absence

When a student is absent it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school on the first day of absence. Ideally, parents should let the school know when the student is likely to return. This should be via phone answer machine service. Further information and clarification may be requested (eg doctor's note, appointment cards, consultant letters etc) where patterns emerge or absence levels are high.

**Absence** may be authorised for such reasons as:

- illness
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- exceptional family circumstances (eg bereavement)
- exclusion

**Absence** will not be authorised for such reasons as:

- looking after brothers/sisters
- family gatherings and birthdays
- days out (eg The Appleby Fair, Christmas shopping)
- family holidays where permission has not been granted in advance (please note, family holidays during term time will only be authorised in the most exceptional circumstances)

Where possible we encourage parents/guardians to organise medical appointments outside the working hours of the school (08:45 – 15:05) or during holiday periods. The aim of this is to minimise the disruption to learning. If this is unavoidable then we recommend that appointments take place at the start or end of the day.

### **Persistent Absence**

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. However, at Ripley we will intervene when attendance falls below the 95% threshold. This intervention may be:

- Telephone call/letter/meeting with Progress Leader / Assistant Progress Leader
- Attendance report

If attendance does not improve then:

- a parenting contract to improve attendance will be created which may involve an Early Help Assessment and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant Progress Leader /Assistant Progress Leader and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the school, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.

Persistent absence/attendance data is communicated to the Local Authority on a termly and annual basis.

### **Term Time Holidays Absence**

Holidays during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/guardians must apply **in advance** for permission and the Principal will decide on a case by case basis whether the application meets the exceptional circumstances criteria. Application forms should be completed and returned at least 8 weeks before the proposed absence and before the holiday is booked. Parents/guardians who take their son/daughter on holiday during term time without permission are liable to receive a fine of up to £120, per parent, per pupil at the school.

### **Long Term Absence**

Occasionally a student may be absent for an extended period of time due to ill health. Parents must liaise with the Progress Leader / Assistant Progress Leader where the absence period is likely to be greater than one week. The school will aim to minimise the disruption to learning by providing appropriate work to complete. If necessary a phased return or part-time timetable will be considered. Liaising with the PL/APL, students can be gradually introduced to their timetable; these situations are always managed on an individual basis.

### **Tackling Punctuality**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your son/daughter misses the start of the day they can miss vital information and intervention at registration along with core messages at worship and assemblies. Pupils arriving late disrupt lessons which in turn can be embarrassing for the child. If after intervention punctuality does not improve a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued. Parents/carers are encouraged to approach their child's Progress Leader / Assistant Progress Leader if there are problems getting their child to school on time.

### **Positive outcomes**

Attendance creates a sense of belonging so pupils know they are part of a community which cares about them and their future. It creates resilience, an essential characteristic for young people if they are to be well-adapted and well-functioning members of society. Attendance is habit forming for when pupils take up employment opportunities.

Ripley is the safest place to be each day. Parents and carers are encouraged to raise any issues as early as possible with their child's progress tutor, progress leader and/or assistant progress leader so that children can attend school and so derive the maximum benefit from their education.