



RIDGEWAY PRIMARY Academy ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Local Governing Body of Ridgeway Primary Academy places a high priority on achieving high standards and feel that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential for this. In order for children to achieve their potential, pupils must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school. Regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives

To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a **minimum of 95%** attendance each year.

The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education, to which they are entitled and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Our Expectations

Parents will:

- ✓ Ensure that their children attend school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and ready to learn.
- ✓ Notify school on the first day of absence before 9.30am.
- ✓ Not take their children out of school during term time for the purpose of a family holiday.
- ✓ Provide the school with up to date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility.
- ✓ Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep a child away from school.

The Class Teacher will:

- ✓ Keep an accurate attendance register at the start of the morning and afternoon session.
- ✓ Praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance.
- ✓ Monitor pupil absence and inform the Co-Headteachers if absence is impacting upon achievement.

The School Attendance Officer will:

- ✓ Monitor pupil attendance on a weekly basis.
- ✓ Monitor the attendance levels in school and inform the Pastoral Lead of any pupil who's attendance is becoming a cause for concern.
- ✓ Send letters to parents of children whose attendance falls below required levels.
- ✓ Ensure medical evidence is provided when attendance is cause for concern.

The Pastoral Lead will:

- ✓ Liaise with Attendance Officer and take actions where concerns are identified on levels of attendance.
- ✓ Report to Governors on attendance matters,
- ✓ Support families to improve attendance,

The Local Governing Body will:

- ✓ Receive reports on school attendance and ensure steps are implemented to improve attendance.
- ✓ Nominate a named Governor for Attendance

Late Procedures

We expect children to arrive at school promptly. The doors will be open between 8.45am – 8.55am.

The school uses the registration module in SIMS to take an electronic register. Each class teacher, or their nominated representative, is responsible for taking the register at morning and afternoon registration.

Morning Registration is completed by 9.05am

Afternoon Registration is completed by 1.25pm for Reception, Year 1 & 2 and 3 and 1.40pm for Year 4-6

Children who arrive late (after the doors close) will enter through the main office entrance and must be signed in by their parent/carer or appropriate adult and provide a reason for the lateness. Children in Year 5 & 6 who walk to school on their own, may bring a note from home with an explanation for their lateness.

The office staff will update the MIS system with a late mark **(L)**.

Any pupil arriving without reason for their lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised late (U).

Children who frequently arrive late will be monitored; parents will be contacted and a referral to the Education Welfare Officer will be considered.

The official register closes at 9:30am. Any child arriving after this time for any reason, other than medical, will be marked late **(U)**. **This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session.**

Any child who goes home during the lunch hour must be collected from the school office at the end of the morning session. They must return to school by the start of the afternoon registration period. Any children arriving after the afternoon registration period will be marked as late **(L)**.

Children who are taken out of school for any reason during the day should be signed out at the main office by their parent/carer or appropriate adult. **Parents are requested, where possible, to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours.**

The Co-Headteachers will write to parents/carers of pupils who are persistently late to remind them of the school policy and expectations. If lateness persists, the Co-Headteachers will invite parents/carers to a meeting with the Pastoral Lead to discuss ways in which the school can support the family in getting the child to school on time.

Reporting Absences

If a child is absent from school, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first day of absence stating the reason for the absence. Parents should use the Report an Absence section of Parent Mail to report an absence or by telephoning the school office and choosing option 1.

If a child is not in school, and we have not been notified of a reason for the absence by mid-morning, a telephone call will be made by the school office to the parents/carers to find out why a child is not in school.

All absences are monitored by the School Attendance Officer on a weekly basis. Any child with an attendance below 95% will be monitored closely. Continued absence will mean that parents/carers will be called to discuss any issues around attendance. If this does not improve then a referral will be made to the schools Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which “no leave” has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences for which no reason has been given to the school
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments

If the school is satisfied that a child of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school because of illness, doctor/hospital or dentist appointments, then the absence will be treated as authorised.

Family Bereavements

The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.

Family Holidays

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school time to go on holiday. Leave of absence will not be granted for family holidays under any circumstances.

Any request for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Co-Headteachers using the ‘Request for Leave’ form available from the school office (**Appendix 1**). **The Co-Headteacher is the only person able to authorise leave of absence.**

Leave will only be granted in term time for exceptional circumstances. Where leave is granted the Co-Headteachers will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

Any period of leave taken without agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

Persistent Absence

When attendance becomes a concern

If a child is absent on a regular basis without adequate explanation, or is absent regularly on specific days, e.g. Mondays or children are absent for prolonged periods of time, the school will contact parents/carers to discuss the problems and to seek a solution.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% at any time within the school year, the Co-Headteachers will write to parents/carers to inform them that their child's attendance has fallen below 90%. Parents/carers will be reminded of their legal duty to ensure their child has regular attendance at school.

Following a period of monitoring, if attendance does not improve the Co-Headteachers will invite parents/carers to a meeting with the school's Pastoral Lead to discuss ways in which the school can support the family in getting the child to school every day.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, school will not be able to authorise any further absence for illness without medical evidence to confirm the illness. In order to authorise continued illness related non-attendance parents/carers will need to provide the school with, for example:

- a. **A doctor's note or medical certificate**
- b. **A copy of the dated prescription**
- c. **Copy of labels from medicine bottles**

Otherwise the absences will be recorded as unauthorised (O).

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across a school year. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Penalty Notices for Absence from School

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. Where parents fail to comply with this they could be issued with a penalty notice fine.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

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.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In this case where the criteria to issue a penalty notice is met for a third time within 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.

Penalty Notices and other legal sanctions will only be used where parental cooperation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:	
• The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.	
• Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive	Notice to Improve As part of this process the parent(s) will first be issued with a 20 day notice period, clearly advising that if unauthorised absence / lateness occurs in this 20 day period, a Penalty Notice may be issued. This is to allow the parents a further period to address their child's irregular attendance by working with the school or other agencies.

• Persistent unauthorised absence. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.	
• Any absence for Family Holidays	The formal warning letter and 20 day improvement period will not apply to absences taken for holiday purposes.

People responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- The Co-Headteachers; **Mrs Joanne Jelves & Miss Laura Gray**, have overall responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate and efficient systems in place to promote and support the school attendance policy and that these are adhered to.
- First Day Contact: The School Attendance Officer; **Mrs Molly Brownridge**, will record the reason for absence or ring home if no reason for the absence has been received.
- Request for leave of absence can only be authorised by the Co-Headteachers; **Mrs Joanne Jelves & Miss Laura Gray**.
- The School Attendance Officer and Pastoral Lead; **Miss Helen Woodward**, will monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils in school where attendance falls below 95%.
- Class teachers or the SENCO can be contacted regarding children being reluctant to come to school if support is required.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good attendance.

Parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

Attendance Policy: Updated September 2025

Joanne Jelves & Laura Gray
Co-Headteachers

Document History

March 2015	Updated following changes to the LA Code of Conduct for Attendance and the criteria for issuing penalty notices presented to Behaviour & Attendance Committee 11 th March 2015 for adoption.
January 2018	Updated following changes to how Penalty Notices are issued. presented to Resources Committee 13 th February 2018 for adoption
January 2019	Reviewed with no changes presented to Resources Committee 26 th February 2019 for adoption
January 2020	Reviewed with changes to % for persistent absentee and unauthorised absence code presented to Resources Committee 27 th February 2020 for adoption
July 2021	Reviewed with changes personnel dealing with absence presented to Pastoral Committee 13 th July 2021 for adoption
September 2022	Reviewed with changes personnel dealing with absence
September 2025	Reviewed with changes to Penalty Notice amounts. Presented to LGB Meeting 2 for adoption (30 th September 2025)