

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy sets out the procedures through which we manage and maximise pupil attendance.

Research shows that there is a strong link between good attendance and positive outcomes for pupils. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. At Reeth and Gunnerside Schools we expect all children to attend all day every day, when the schools are open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. Department for Education (DfE)

To promote good attendance, we:

- Create a warm and welcoming environment
- Ensure that students feel safe at all times
- Develop a strong sense of community
- Offer a curriculum that engages and inspires
- Ensure high quality teaching at all times
- Encourage, praise and celebrate achievement and success

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education, either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

We work closely with families to maximise attendance. We know that the barriers to education can be complex and specific to individual pupils. All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance; we will work always approach this role in a supportive, understanding and collaborative way.

IF A CHILD IS ABSENT

Families are asked to contact school as soon as possible and by 9:00am on the first day of any absence due to illness. This information enables classteachers to record the absence correctly in the school register. Telephone calls are taken from 08:30 daily and before this time an answer machine is available. Please provide the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child and the absence is unexplained, the school office will contact parents to ascertain the reason, as part of our safeguarding arrangements. In the rare occasion that parents can't be contacted, all other pupil contacts will be contacted, in order, to try to ascertain a reason for absence and to complete a welfare check. By 10.00am, if no contact is made for an absent pupil, the school office will alert the headteacher who will arrange for a welfare check to be carried out at the pupils' home. If no contact is made by 12:00pm, the Police will be contacted.

We encourage families to book medical appointments outside of the school day. We understand that this is not always possible. If arrangements have been made for a child to attend a medical or dental appointment during the school day, please contact the school office beforehand, enabling registers to be updated accordingly in advance.

Reasons for pupil absence will be accepted via personal dialogue, telephone, email and written note from parents. Pupils cannot relay their own reasons for absence. Parents can send a written note with a sibling of an absent pupil.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

As with every school, and in line with DfE guidance, we make a distinction between 'authorised absence' and 'unauthorised absence'.

An absence is classified as **authorised** when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, if a child is unwell and their parent contacts school to explain the absence, it is recorded as authorised in the register.

Whilst we quite clearly would not want children in school that are really unwell, we all frequently work through minor sniffles and ailments and we encourage our pupils to do so also. We can make arrangements for pupils to stay indoors at break time if they are feeling under the weather.

Medical and dental appointments are also approved, although as noted above, we ask parents to try to book these out of school hours when possible.

Absence is classified as **unauthorised** when a pupil is away from school without explanation or if the absence has not been approved by school.

THE SCHOOL DAY AND PUNCTUALITY

Our schools open at 8:45am, when a member of staff is on duty outdoors. Pupils go straight to their classrooms to begin their morning activities.

8:55am	KS2 pupils register in Reeth playground to travel to Gunnerside.
9:00am	Morning registration
9:10am	Registers close
12:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Afternoon lessons
3:30pm	End of day arrangements Some pupils are supervised until 3:40pm to facilitate transport to home schools.
4:30pm	Most of our school clubs finish at this time, although fell running and mountain bike clubs end at 5:30pm.

If a pupil misses the start of the day, they can miss learning time and miss vital information about the day. Late arriving pupils may disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for some children, which may encourage further absence. We actively encourage all children to arrive at school on time. For any pupil who is regularly late to school, their attendance is discussed with parents to try to identify a solution.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Aware that good attendance has a positive impact on pupil outcomes, the headteacher monitors attendance on a regular basis and reports this data to the Governing Body.

>95%	Attendance is positive and a cause of celebration.
90% - 95%	Attendance is reasonable but could be improved. School will contact parents.
<90%	The government classify persistent absence as below 90% attendance. The headteacher will contact parents to arrange a meeting and support will be offered. This will be followed by close monitoring. If attendance does not improve after all reasonable strategies have been exhausted, it will be necessary to commence the 'Formal Attendance Procedure' with the Local Authority. The commencement of the procedure is at the discretion of the school on a case-by-case basis.

The threshold for the Local Authority to take legal action is 10 unauthorised sessions in the previous 4 month period.

TERM TIME ABSENCE AND REQUESTS FOR LEAVE

Parents do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time without prior permission and agreement by the headteacher. Applications must be made by a parent that the child lives with. Forms are available from the school office and the school website.

Parents are urged to discuss leave requests well in advance of making any arrangements. Ordinarily, parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss their application. Leave requests need to be exceptional.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as exceptional:

- Service personnel returning from active deployment.
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the organisation / company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

This is not an exhaustive list; the headteacher should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Please note that:

- *As headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.* DfE
- Leave will not be considered retrospectively.
- Leave will not be approved if attendance is less than 95%.
- The fact a holiday is cheaper during term time will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave cannot be granted because of the educational merit of a planned trip.
- Parents must obtain permission before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued a fine for unauthorised absences.

FINES

Parents who take their children out of school during term time, without authorisation, may be issued a fine. The council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. Parents that do not pay the fine after 28 days may be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This policy has been written in accordance with the DfE document *Working together to improve school attendance - guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities, May 2022.*

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This policy was approved by governors in spring term 2023. This policy will be reviewed biennially.



APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application form parents are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.

Name of pupil(s):

I request permission for my child to be absent from school.

From To Total school days

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- Where leave is recommended as part of parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

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- Leave will not be considered retrospectively.
- Leave will not be approved if attendance is less than 95%.
- Unfortunately, the fact a holiday is cheaper during term time will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave cannot be granted because of the educational merit of a planned trip.
- Parents must obtain permission before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued a fine for unauthorised absences.

Please explain the reason for the application as fully as possible:

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I certify that the information given in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that checks will be made as part of the approval process.

Signature of parent: Date: