



**Roding Valley**  
HIGH SCHOOL

# **Attendance Policy**

**October 2017**

Reviewed: October 2017

Approved: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017



## Section 1: Statement of Intent

The aim of Roding Valley High School is to provide an excellent education in a safe, supportive learning environment, where people are valued and make positive contributions to the school community, and where pupils go on to become responsible, independent members of society.

## Section 2: Principles

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parent/Guardian's and staff share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at Roding Valley High School are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absence are kept to a minimum.

The Education Act 1996 states that all pupils should attend school regularly and punctually.

## Section 3: Purposes

- To promote, support and reward very high levels of attendance at Roding Valley High School
- To enable the exchange of information between school and parent/guardians about attendance
- To inform students, staff, parent/guardians, the Missing Education and Child Employment Service and governors about attendance and attendance issues
- To meet the requirements of the law on attendance

## Section 4: Responsibilities

Parent/Guardians are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parent/Guardian's should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy and should work closely with school staff to overcome any problems which may affect a child's attendance.

The school will encourage and value high attendance rates.

The school will recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and will work in partnership with parent/guardians, Missing Education and Child Employment Service and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The school will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with students and their parent/guardians and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements. (Further guidance is provided for parent/guardians and students in [Appendix 1](#)).

## Section 5: Guidelines (School Attendance and the Law)

Attendance at Roding Valley High School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – parent/guardian's, students and staff.



### Section 6: Parent/Guardian's

Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states

*"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence"*

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 clearly state that where a parent/guardian provides a reason for absence, the school decides whether or not the absence(s) in question are recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 removed all references to 'family holidays'. Leave of absence may only be granted by the Headteacher's discretion on a case by case basis if there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher no longer has the discretion to authorise up to ten days absence each academic year during term time, absences will be coded as unauthorised (G code). It is the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a penalty notice is requested.

The Department of Education classify a student as a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance is 90% or below, this is when a student misses 10% or more of their possible sessions available to them from school.

For more information regarding attendance and the law please see the Essex Code of Conduct available on [www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk)

### Section 7: Procedures

#### Registration

Registration starts at 8.35am and the register is taken at 8.40am and then again at 12.20pm. Computerised registers will be marked promptly at these times. Should a student arrive after the start of registration but before the registers have closed he/she will be marked as late for that session. Should they arrive after the register has closed they will be marked with an authorised absence or unauthorised absence (U code). A guide of all attendance codes used nationally can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

#### Absences

All absence will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Should an explanation for an absence not be received or should the explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absence due to illness: Parent/Guardian's must contact the school by **9.30am every day** of any absence using the school telephone number: **020 8508 1173**. The reason for absence will be recorded on the school system. On returning to school the student should bring a written note and hand this to their Form Tutor. Please see our guidance for childhood illness on our weekly parent bulletin or telephone the school for advice.

If no notification of illness is received by the school, a text message and email will be sent home and the absence will be unauthorised until the school has a response to this.



If a reason for illness is not supplied a letter will be sent home requesting a reason for absence. **5 days** of unauthorised absence in a 6 week period may result in a Penalty Notice being issued in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct. (**£120 per child per parent / £60** if paid within **21 days**). If this penalty is not paid the local authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/guardian in the Magistrates Court.

If a student is absent for a period of over 3 days and the school has not had any communication from a parent/guardian a home visit may be carried out by the Attendance Manager to establish where the child is. Following this, if there is still no response from the parent/guardian and the child is absent from school for a total of 10 days and no communication has been made, that child will be reported as 'missing in education' to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service.

Where a student appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to illness, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent/guardian to provide such medical evidence will result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised and a Legal Action Warning Letter may be issued by the school, or a referral to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service will be considered.

If there are concerns with a student's attendance level letters will be sent home to parents/guardians and a School Based Attendance meeting with the Attendance Manager and Year Progress Leader may be arranged.

### **Lateness**

Students who arrive at school after morning registration has started should arrive through the 'Late Gate' where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded by a member of staff up until 9.00am. After this time students are required to sign in at Student Reception. If a parent/guardian has not contacted the school prior to their child being late with a valid reason, the student is required to sign in by **8.20am** the following day at the PAL room as a sanction, if the student fails to do this 2 progress points will be deducted. If the student is in later than **9.00am** the sanction remains the same but they are also required to serve at 20 minute lunchtime detention on that day. Year Progress Leaders regularly monitor the punctuality of their year group and students may be placed on a Punctuality Report if the lateness continues.

### **Term-Time Holidays and Other Absences**

Roding Valley High School strongly urges parents/guardians to avoid booking family holidays during term-time. Leave of absence for such holidays will not be granted. It is the Headteacher's discretion on a case by case basis to authorise a leave of absence if they feel there are exceptional circumstances.

An absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and must be applied for in writing at least 10 days before the date of absence, using the Leave of Absence form available from Reception. When looking at a leave of absence request there a number of factors that influence the decision, these factors will include the reason for the leave of absence, the student's current level of attendance, the year group the student is in and the impact on learning. If the leave of absence is taken without the request being agreed or no request for leave of absence has been received, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised (G code). Where there have been 5 days or more of unauthorised absence,



this may result in a Penalty Notice being issued in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (**£120 per child** per parent if paid within **21 days**). If this penalty is not paid the local authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/guardian in the Magistrates Court.

### Communication

Roding Valley High School's Attendance Policy will be communicated through:

- a document on the school website
- the home-school agreement

All school staff will make attendance a priority and their roles are outlined in Appendix 3.

### Evaluation and Review

This policy will be evaluated at the end of each academic year by the Designated Lead and the Senior Leadership Team and reviewed annually by the Governing Body.



## Appendix 1: Attendance & Absence Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Code	Meaning
/	Present – AM (authorised)
\	Present – PM (authorised)
B	Educated off site (authorised)
C	Other authorised circumstances (authorised)
D	Dual registration -attending another establishment (authorised)
E	Excluded (authorised)
G	Holiday - not agreed by school or days in excess (unauthorised)
H	Holiday (authorised)
I	Illness - not medical/dental appointments (authorised)
J	Interview (authorised)
L	Late - before registration closed (authorised)
M	Medical/Dental (authorised)
N	No reason yet provided for absence (unauthorised)
O	Unauthorised absence (unauthorised)
P	Approved sporting activity (authorised)
R	Religious observance (authorised)
S	Study leave (authorised)
T	Traveller absence (authorised)
U	Late – after registration closed (unauthorised)
V	Educational visit (authorised)
W	Work experience (authorised)
X	Non-compulsory school age absence (authorised)



## **Appendix 2: A Guide for Parent / Guardian's**

### **When Does My Child Need To Be In School?**

Your child should be in school at 8.35am for registration which is called promptly at 8.40am.

Afternoon school begins at 12.20pm and afternoon registration is taken at this time at the start of Period 4.

### **What Happens In My Child Is Late?**

Please see Lateness section on page 3 of this document.

### **Will The School Contact Me If My Child Is Absent?**

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the school every day on the morning of absence by 9.30am. If you do not phone us you will receive a text message and an email or in some cases a phone call.

### **What Should My Child's Level of Attendance Be?**

Roding Valley High School expects students to achieve at least 96% attendance over the academic year.

### **What Reasons Will The School Accept For Absence?**

- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Emergency dental/medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- ✓ Day of religious observance
- ✓ Family bereavement
- ✓ Attending an interview for a school, college, university etc

Except in cases of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details.

If you can only get medical or dental appointments during the school day your child should sign in/out around that medical appointment.

In cases of recurring absences for illness or absences over 5 days you may be asked to produce medical evidence.

### **What is Unacceptable?**

Roding Valley High School will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or caring for parents or siblings. The school will not authorise any family holidays during term time. (Please see the term-time holiday section of this document).

### **What Can I Do To Encourage My Child To Attend School?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep, and get up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure they leave home in the correct uniform and are properly equipped for their day. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education.



## My Child Is Trying To Avoid Coming To School. What Should I Do?

Contact your child's Form Tutor, Year Progress Leader or the Attendance Manager immediately the issues start and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with work, friendship group problems, bullying or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

### A Guide for Students

#### Attending Regularly and on Time

Regular attendance to school will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Roding Valley High School – your attendance should be at least 96% at the end of the academic year.

Good attendance will help you:

- ✓ Keep up with your school work and make the most progress so you can achieve your full potential
- ✓ Get a job – employers like people who are reliable. Your attendance will be included in your reference
- ✓ Help your application for a 6<sup>th</sup> Form or College place
- ✓ Build positive relationships with your peers and adults

#### Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Emergency dental/medical appointments (you should sign in/out around these appointments)
- ✓ Day of religious observance
- ✓ Family bereavement
- ✓ Attending an interview for a school, college, university etc.

Looking after brother or sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping or trips to the airport and helping out at home are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

#### Need Help?

- Problems with your school work?
- Are your friends giving you a hard time?
- Are you being bullied?
- Are things difficult for you at home?

You may feel like avoiding school is the answer – it isn't, it will often make things worse!

**TALK TO SOMEONE:** Your Form Tutor, your Year Progress Leader, the Attendance Manager, any member of staff you feel comfortable with or your parent/guardian's. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.



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## Appendix 3:

### 1. The Form Tutor

At Roding Valley High school the Form Tutor is seen as a key figure in promoting regular punctual attendance. The Tutor should:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration
- Carry out registration in the prescribed manner – Roding Valley Routine
- Contact parent/guardian's with concerns if a student is a concern for either attendance or punctuality
- Ensure all notes are scrutinised and passed onto the Attendance Manager if necessary
- Alert the Attendance Manager or Year Progress Leader if they have concerns regarding attendance
- Offer praise and encouragement to individual students whose attendance and/or punctuality improves

### 2. The Subject Teacher

- Take a register within the first 10 minutes at the start of every lesson (and ensure that the students know that a register is being taken)
- Follow up any suspected internal truancy by checking with the school office immediately

### 3. The Year Progress Leader

Year Progress Leaders are responsible for monitoring the attendance and punctuality of their year group. They should:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality weekly, setting targets for improvement as appropriate
- Monitor the performance of individual tutor groups
- Review registers and attendance and punctuality figures regularly with the Attendance Manager
- Regularly put attendance on the agenda of Year Team Meetings
- Ensure that contact is made with parent/guardian's of poor attenders, following school procedures (liaising with the Attendance Manager)
- Meet students and set targets where punctuality is an issue and all other provisions have failed. Contact parent/guardian's where necessary
- Follow up internal truancy with appropriate sanctions
- Promote good attendance and punctuality through assemblies, rewards, etc



### 4. Attendance Manager

The Attendance Manager will carry out the following to support good attendance throughout the school:

- Monitor daily attendance for the whole school
- Regular meetings with Year Progress Leaders and Deputy Headteacher for Behaviour and Attendance
- Send letters home to parents/guardians conveying any attendance concerns
- Provide weekly and half termly attendance data for Year Progress Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team
- Carry out School Based Attendance Meetings with students and parents/guardians where attendance has fallen to a level of concern, setting and reviewing targets for students
- Making home visits where appropriate with attendance or safeguarding issues
- Compiling information in relation to the legal framework and working with the Missing Education and Child Employment Service to put in place legal proceedings where appropriate
- Work and liaise with external agencies where appropriate

### 5. Deputy Headteacher for Behaviour and Attendance

The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the attendance and punctuality of the whole school. They should:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality weekly, setting targets for improvement where appropriate
- Monitor the performance of individual year groups, following up with individual Year Progress Leaders in instances where patterns of absenteeism are not being effectively addressed
- Review attendance and punctuality data regularly with the Attendance Manager
- Ensure that contact is made with parent/guardians of poor attenders following school procedures (liaising with the Attendance Manager) supporting the Attendance Manager and Year Progress Leader where appropriate when dealing with parents/guardians directly
- Promote good attendance and punctuality throughout the school
- Report attendance and punctuality to the BAP and work with local schools to share good practice and improve attendance across the consortium