Attendance Policy

Member of Staff Responsible	**Deputy Head Pastoral**
Date of Policy	**November 2026**
Date for next review	**September 2027 (Reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes)**
Approved By Governors	**n/a**
Distribution:	**All**

Introduction

This policy is written in conjunction with Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026). Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils, including their safeguarding and welfare, and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school. That starts with the Senior Attendance Champion, who works closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, but includes all school staff and the Board of Governors. In developing and implementing this policy, the school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Senior Attendance Champion: Ms K Bratt (Deputy Head Pastoral) Contact: k.bratt@rokeby.org.uk

We expect all children on roll to attend school every day when it is in session, provided they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do everything possible to encourage children to attend and to implement suitable procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision possible for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from attending school.

Under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (Statutory Instrument 2024/208), the Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that the school maintains an attendance register that records the presence of pupils at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. The Deputy Head Pastoral is the school's Senior Attendance Champion and monitors attendance throughout the school.

A child's repeated absence from education can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

Where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown or there are concerns that a child may be missing education, the school will follow local authority Children Missing Education procedures and make referrals without delay where required.

Attendance data is reviewed monthly by the Senior Attendance Champion and reported to Governors at least annually. Monitoring includes persistent absence, severe absence, vulnerable pupils, pupils with SEND and those with safeguarding concerns.

Statutory Framework

The legal framework governing school attendance is summarised in "Working together to improve school attendance" (DfE, 2026) and its accompanying summary document. Further guidance can be found on the school's website. The school also complies with guidance published by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and advice published by the Kingston and Richmond Local Education Authority (LEA) regarding school attendance, which can be found on the Richmond.gov website. Responsibilities of parents towards their child's attendance are outlined in DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance 2024. In addition, Children Missing Education and Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school provide statutory guidance for local authorities, and further note certain school obligations. Further non-statutory guidance includes Providing remote education: guidance for schools and Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

Definitions:

1. Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not constitute an authorised absence.

2. Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3. Persistent and Severe absence

Persistent Absence (PA): attendance below 90%

Severe Absence (SA): attendance below 50%

Responsibilities of Parents

Parents with a child of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. This means their child must punctually attend every day that school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or having permission for an absence in advance from the school. This guidance from the DfE and NHS will support parents in making the decision about whether the child is too ill to attend school.

Parents are responsible for informing the school on any occasion/day when their child is unable to attend due to illness, a medical appointment or a pre-agreed circumstance, providing the reason for non-attendance. Parents should send an email to the absence email address (absence@rokeby.org.uk) regarding the reason for their child's absence.

Parents are expected to work together with the school to help understand and overcome any barriers to their child's full and timely attendance and to proactively engage with any support offered on behalf of the school or local authority to avoid the need for more formal support. The DfE considers absence from 10% of school over an extended period to be 'persistent absence', and recommends that, at that level, the school should work with local authority services to ascertain and understand the reasons for their low attendance and seek to support the child and parents to overcome those barriers. Where attendance is low, despite initial support, parents are also expected to proactively engage with any formal support offered by the school or local authority, such as a voluntary Parenting Contract or other voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Where parents fail to ensure regular attendance and have not engaged with support services or voluntary measures such as a Parenting Contract, the local authority may take a number of measures, as outlined in School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (DfE, 2015). These may include a Penalty Notice, a School Attendance Order, a Parenting Order, or prosecution, which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 or a jail term of up to three months.

If a child is absent unexpectedly

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the electronic register.

The office staff will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian to establish the reason for absence.

The electronic register should be annotated accordingly with the reason for absence by the form teacher.

A note may be sent to the school in advance of the absence day. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact immediately with the parent or guardian to check on the child's safety.

'Good' Attendance

What constitutes good attendance? Attendance percentages are not like examination results: an attendance percentage needs to be in the high nineties before it can be considered good.

Consider the following example:

An attendance record of 90% might seem good, but it is equal to 1 day missed per fortnight. Our view is that, for an attendance record to be deemed good, it must be 96% or above:

100% = excellent attendance
98% = very good attendance
96% = good attendance
Below 96% = cause for some concern

Each year, a number of boys in every year group achieve 100% attendance records, showing that this is an achievable target. Additionally, several children have consistently achieved this level of attendance over successive years. Therefore, we want every boy at Rokeby to achieve at least good attendance, with a target of 96%, and to aspire to reach a very good level of attendance, with a goal of 98% or above.

The DfE considers absence from 10% of school over an extended period to be 'persistent absence', and recommends that, at that level, the school should work with local authority services to ascertain and understand the reasons for their low attendance and seek to support the child and parents to overcome those barriers.

The parents of any boy whose attendance **falls below 90%** over a one-term period may receive written communication from the school, noting its concern and requesting measures to improve the boy's attendance. If attendance remains below 90% for longer than one term, the school may inform the local authority.

COVID-19

It is no longer recommended that children and young people be routinely tested for COVID-19, unless directed to do so by a health professional. As COVID-19 presents a low risk to children and young people, combined with high vaccination rates in the population, there are no longer specific rules relating to it in schools, colleges, childcare and other education settings.

Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to go to school. However, those who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people where they can. They can go back to school and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.

Illness

Boys suffering from a minor cough or common cold should attend school if they are otherwise well and do not have a high temperature. However, if your son has a fever, he should stay at home until he feels better and the fever has resolved.

If your son has a fever or is too ill to attend school, please keep him at home and email the school before 8:15 a.m. using the absence email address: absence@rokeby.org.uk. Please send an email on each day of his absence, giving details of the reason he is unable to attend. If he has been vomiting and/or had diarrhoea, please do not send him to school, but keep him at home for 48 hours after it has stopped. Boys with contagious infections, such as conjunctivitis, should consult a doctor to determine whether they should be allowed to attend school. If your son becomes ill while at school, you will be contacted and asked to collect him from the First Aid room, located in the Lower School building. If we cannot reach a boy's parents, we will contact the emergency contact listed in our database. Please be aware that the school does not have a school nurse on-site, and we can only offer emergency First Aid. If your son is involved in a significant accident, he will be taken directly to the Accident and Emergency department, and you will be contacted as soon as possible.

The school may request appropriate medical evidence where there are concerns regarding attendance.

Whenever possible, parents should book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day and term. Where a child has missed fifteen (consecutive, or cumulative) days due to illness, the local authority may wish to work with parents to ensure appropriate educational provision.

Further, the School is obligated to inform the local authority of any child who accumulates 15 consecutive or cumulative absences across a school year (a 'Sickness Return').

Off Games

Boys who are well enough to be at school are considered well enough to participate in Sport/Games/PE.

However, there may be medical exceptions with regard to both injury and illness. Therefore, if your son is 'off games', this must be discussed with the Health and Wellbeing Assistant (First Aid) in the first instance on the morning of the associated session, if not before. If this applies to your son, please notify first aid – firstaid@rokeby.org.uk and the Director of Sport - m.schmid@rokeby.org.uk in writing as soon as possible and no later than the morning before the Games session. If it is agreed that your son is 'off games', he will not be sent home but will work in the 'off games' room under the supervision of a member of staff instead. Where boys are absent for more than two consecutive sessions, a note must be received from the family doctor or another suitable medical professional.

Boys in Reception to Year 2 who are unwell and unable to participate in the Wednesday morning Games sessions should remain at home for the day. Allowances will be made for injuries, and alternative provision can be arranged with the Director of Sport.

Request for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

We expect all boys to attend school throughout each term, as this is a legal requirement. If parents wish their sons to miss a day of school for an important family occasion, or any other special event, they are asked to **write in advance to the Headmaster for permission at least two weeks before the event (where possible)** via his PA's email address headpa@rokeby.org.uk

Unless it is to support a special (and unique) event, the Headmaster is unable to grant permission for a **holiday** beginning during term time. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Parents who request permission for holidays or early departures within the last week of term or half term are especially likely to be disappointed, as there may be little opportunity for the Headmaster to consider these requests. Staff carefully arrange the syllabus and activities to maximise the use of school teaching days. When boys miss school time, it often sets them back and can have a detrimental effect on others, as a team or group activity may become eroded or have to be cancelled. This applies as much to the last few days of term and those less formal school activities.

Special Permission

If a boy has become involved in an activity outside of school which might affect his commitment to the school's activities (including weekend sports fixtures), similar permission should be sought. Each request will be carefully considered, with the assistance of the Director of Sport, in accordance with an internal protocol. Parents seeking such permission will need to provide as much information as possible in support of the request. They will also need to ensure that dates and times are supplied for future engagements that might conflict with school activities.

Like all schools, we are required to maintain an attendance register, and any instances of unauthorised absence are duly noted. Please do not make a booking before asking for permission. If permission is denied for any reason, you may incur a loss. The Headmaster will be expected to report on a boy's participation in school life to prospective senior schools.

Long-term absence

The school will consider reasonable adjustments and individual attendance support plans for pupils whose attendance is affected by disability, special educational needs or physical or mental health conditions.

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send materials home so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

Boys who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 consecutive school days or more without permission.

The school will inform local authorities of the details of boys who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 consecutive school days or more without permission.

Addressing Persistent or Severe Absence

The School will seek to reduce severe or persistent absence, in accordance with Working Together to Improve School Attendance. The school's strategy when doing so is founded upon the understanding that the child's welfare is paramount, and that respectful and positive relationships between home and school will be the foundation of good attendance; and that the School will be seeking to understand and remove barriers to attendance, together with the parents – particularly where those barriers are complex, for instance for those pupils with long term physical or mental health conditions, or who have special educational needs and disabilities – and any and all relevant pastoral supports will be put in place. Wider support from the local authority and other partners will be sought where lower-level supports are not proving effective at improving concerning attendance, with enforcement measures as a last resort. Practices regarding information sharing and collaborative working with local authorities are outlined below.

In seeking to address the concerning absence:

- The school will make informal contact seeking to understand in-school barriers; seek to support pupils and parents in overcoming these or other barriers. These may include welfare or mental health support, mentoring, creating and emphasising positive

reasons to attend school, plans for successfully making it to school, and voluntary engagement with local authority services.

- the school may request appropriate medical evidence where there are concerns regarding attendance.
- Where absence continues/intensifies, so will support. This may include:
    - o More formal meetings with parents, with a senior pastoral lead
    - o Voluntary early-help assessments where such support would be valuable to the family.
    - The school may refer concerns regarding attendance to the relevant local authority, which may consider enforcement measures where appropriate.

The school will record and evaluate the success of interventions at each stage.

The school will be particularly mindful and sensitive when supporting pupils whose attendance is impaired by long-term medical conditions (physical or mental health), disabilities or special educational needs.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster to monitor overall attendance. The governing body is also responsible for implementing and ensuring the implementation of this policy. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of six years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their classes and for following up on absences in an appropriate manner. If there is a concern about a child's absence, the school office will be contacted immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Deputy Head Pastoral, who will contact the parents or guardians.

Punctuality

We understand that adverse circumstances will very occasionally prevent boys from arriving on time at school, but ask that all parents help their children to adhere to the school rules regarding punctuality:

All boys should arrive at school and be on the playground or in their classroom (if in Reception to Year 2), ready for the 8:35 am bell. They should then register with their Form Tutor. Anyone arriving after 8.40 am will be marked as 'late' on the register.

Boys arriving later than registration time should sign in at Reception and explain their lateness to their tutor at the next registration. We are required to register boys arriving after 9.05 am with code U, which is an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Lateness is problematic for both boys and staff. Lateness incurs missing important information at registration time or assembly and is often stressful for boys who are put 'on the back foot' from the start of that day.

Boys who are persistently late will be brought to the attention of the Deputy Head/Head of Lower School, as appropriate.

Early Morning Clubs

The club leader will register boys attending clubs before school and during AM registration via SOCS. Reception staff will update the registration data for these boys.

Registration Administration

● School Office staff will maintain the school's absence and lateness records.
● All absences must be cleared with the correct code every day.
●Telephone parents of all pupils who are registered as Absent: N – No reason yet provided. Where no contact is received from parents, inform the Head of Phase, the Tutor and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
● Register pupils who arrive later than 9.05 am and maintain a record of reasons given for late arrival.
● Enter, as applicable, the following codes in the School Register:
As stated in The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the following codes are used by the school to record attendance:

/ - present for morning session.
\ - present for afternoon session.

The following are classified as authorised absence:
I - Illness.
M - Attending medical/dental appointment.
C - Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. (Reason must be noted)
R - Religious observance.
E - Suspended or permanently excluded.
T - Parent travelling for occupational purposes.
S - Study leave.
C1 - Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
J1 - Attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
C2 - Pupil is absent from school for part of the week (on a part-time timetable) – then also use the code for the reason why absent.

The following are NOT classified as absences:
B - An offsite educational activity.
K - Alternative provision arranged by the LA.
L - Late arrival before the register is closed (during the 30 mins 'grace' period).
P - Approved sporting activity.
V - Attending an educational visit or trip.
W - Work experience.

The following are classified as unauthorised absence:
G - Holiday not granted by the school.
N - Reason for absence not yet established.
O - Absent in other or unknown circumstances.
U - Arrived in school after the register closed (after 30 minutes 'grace' period).

The following are classified as ‘not a possible attendance’:
D - Dual registration, so attending another school where registered.
X - Pupils of non-compulsory school age absent when they are not timetabled to attend (e.g. EYFS).
Q - Lack of access arrangements by LA.
Y1 - Transport normally provided not being available.
Y2 - Widespread disruption to travel.
Y3 - Part of school premises being closed.
Y4 - Whole school site being unexpectedly closed.
Y5 - Pupil is in criminal justice detention.
Y6 - Public health guidance or law not to attend.
Y7 - Any other unavoidable cause [this includes absence due to non-payment of fees (reason stated in accompanying field)].

The following codes are not collected for statistical purposes:
Z - Prospective pupil not on admission register.
- Planned whole school closure (holidays).