



**JOHN RANKIN** SCHOOLS

Igniting Passion • Empowering Learners • Transforming the Future

Courage • Creativity • Curiosity • Compassion • Composure

# John Rankin Schools

## Attendance Policy 2024 - 2025

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### Further sources of information:

#### Relevant legislation

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The Education Act 2002

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999

The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

#### Other DfE guidance

[School attendance - Parental responsibility measures](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Keeping children safe in education](#)

[Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)

Children missing education

## 1. Introduction

John Rankin Schools are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils. Promoting good school attendance, good punctuality and reducing absence is central to ensure:

- every pupil's day-to-day welfare and safeguarding
- every pupil has access to full-time education
- that pupils make good progress academically and personally
- that pupils leave with the best possible opportunities for their future

This policy outlines the responsibilities for the school and parents in ensuring that pupils' attendance at John Rankin Schools is the best it can be. It also outlines the strategies used by the school, alongside West Berkshire Council, to support and improve attendance.

The policy aims for all pupils to attend school regularly so they will be able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Within this document 'parent' is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of that child.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1 Pupils (when developmentally ready to take some responsibility) are expected to:

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive at school on time.
- Be appropriately prepared for the day and ready to learn.
- Tell a trusted adult if there is a problem that might affect their school attendance.

### 2.2 Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Informing the school on each day of absence, by 9.30am, with an explanation given unless supported by a fit note or the child has vomiting and diarrhoea, in which case they must remain at home for a period of 48 hours from the last D & V episode. After 48 hours, parents must report absence daily as per attendance policy.
- Providing full contact details, and emergency contact details; and update the school if any changes to these occur.
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- Not booking holidays during term-time.
- Treating staff with respect.
- Actively supporting the work of the school.
- Calling on staff for help when they need it.
- Communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support.
- Proactively engage with support offered.

### 2.3 All school staff are responsible for:

- Promoting good attendance.
- Providing a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.

- An awareness that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expecting regular attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community.

## **2.4 Head Teacher and Senior Leadership are responsible for:**

- Ensuring the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.
- Conveying clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- Empower all staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Recognising attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- Having designated attendance champions (Tina Kirk, Family Pastoral Lead and Sarah Amin, DSL and Deputy Head) including the senior leadership team, with clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan.
- Making sure staff receive professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.
- Consulting with the Local Authority Education Attendance Service where there are concerns around pupil's attendance or if there is a child missing from education.
- Governors should have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.

## **3. Recording Attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance registers**

Accurate and timely registers enable the school to safeguard children as well as to recognise and act upon any concerning attendance patterns. Registers are taken in each class on SIMS at the start of every morning and afternoon session, along with a fire register.

### **4.2 Lateness**

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child arrives at school on time.

- Pupils are expected to be on site by 8.50am.
- Pupils who arrive between 8.50 and 9am will be marked as late, but counted as present for that session.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 8.50am will be marked as absent on SIMS for that session. If the parent provides a satisfactory explanation at the school office, this will be marked as an 'authorised absence'; if the parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation this will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence' for that session.

### **4.3 Responding to absence**

Parents are responsible for contacting the school when their child is absent to explain the reason. Absence must be reported via the office absence line (01635 42376) or by email at [jrsoffice@jrs.wberks.sch.uk](mailto:jrsoffice@jrs.wberks.sch.uk)

- If no reason is given, or further information is required, a phone call is made to parents in the first instance (or by email or letter if unable to make contact)
  - To ensure safeguarding, if absence continues without explanation, or if further information is needed, a home visit may be carried out.

- Home visits are not pre-arranged and can be made at any time, as required, at the discretion of the school. Staff will always carry identification and will expect to see the child in question, if only briefly, to ascertain how they are.
- Once sufficient information has been gained, an absence code is determined by the appropriate member of staff in line with DfE guidance in Working Together to improve school attendance (2022). This decision is based on the information provided by parents when the child's absence is reported and will influence whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

#### **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

##### **4.1 Leave of absence in term time**

Parents must get permission from the Head Teacher in order to take their child out of school during term time. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion provided that:

- A completed application form is submitted in advance
- There are exceptional circumstances

Parents should be aware that an unauthorised leave of absence of 5 days or more can result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice which carries a fine of £60 per parent (if paid within 21 days) or £120 (if paid after 21 days but before 28 days) or a court prosecution (if unpaid after 28 days). Penalty Notices are served per parent, per child.

Parents should plan holidays within the school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless absolutely unavoidable.

##### **4.2 When absences will be authorised**

Absences will be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Headteacher due to exceptional circumstances.
- The pupil is ill and has not been asked to provide proof of absence.
- The parent notifies the school of a medical or dental appointment (which could not be made outside of school hours).
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision.
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Where a parent has provided no explanation or the explanation given is not deemed to be valid, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

#### **5. Monitoring and improving irregular attendance**

##### **5.1 Reducing persistent absence**

We regularly monitor cases where attendance is below 95%. In cases where absences are increasing, actions are taken which aim to prevent children becoming or remaining a 'persistent absentee' (<90%).

These actions may include:

- Regular and supportive telephone contact with the parent/s by either the school office team or Attendance Champions, depending on the circumstances around the absence
- Supportive conversations and/or regular check-ins with the pupil (where appropriate)
- Use staged letters: first letter to indicate concern for a decline in attendance; second letter with an action or target to improve attendance or a follow up letter/postcard for improved attendance
- Put individual support plans in place for pupils
- Meet with pupils and parents and create a SMART plan of action & review regularly
- Share plans & meeting notes with parents
- Engage with relevant external agencies involved
- If these actions have been taken and attendance fails to improve, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Education Attendance Service

## **5.2 Attendance and safeguarding**

It is recognised that poor attendance may be a sign or symptom of a wider safeguarding issue that requires further support (this could include but is not limited to domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, substance misuse, or financial strain). Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, action will be taken in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

## **5.3 Formal and legal interventions**

John Rankin Schools and the Education Attendance Officer will seek to resolve any attendance concerns by working together to support the family with improving a child's attendance. Where this is not successful, or where parents do not engage with support, then more formal procedures may be followed.

### Parenting contracts

- A formal written agreement between a parent and the school and/or Local Authority to address irregular attendance at school.
- Parents cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.
- This is a supportive tool, which aims to provide an alternative to prosecution.
- The aim is for the parent(s), pupil (if old enough), the school and Local Authority to work in partnership towards the common goal of improved attendance.

If a parenting contract is not effective at improving attendance, or is deemed not appropriate, the Local Authority has the option to progress legal interventions as a last resort:

- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Fast Track intervention
- Attendance prosecutions
- Parenting Orders

## **5.4 Support back into school following a period of absence**

Pupils who have been excluded or have had periods of absence due to ill-health or truancy should receive appropriate support to return to school, build confidence and bridge the gaps in their learning. These plans are drawn up in collaboration with parents and the pupil and be dependent on the specific circumstances of the pupil's absence e.g. putting a buddy system in place, identifying a key member of staff to greet the child each morning, or spending the first part of the morning in the Nurture room to aid transition into the classroom.

## Appendix 1 – Breakdown of attendance codes

### Breakdown of available codes

Please refer to Working together to improve school attendance [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) page 56 onwards for the full definition of codes available.

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
J	Interview	At a job interview, or interviewing with another educational establishment.
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
H	Family Holiday (Agreed)	A leave of absence for a family holiday is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness and is not a medical or dental appointment.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.

S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to the school. It can also be used where the pupil is in custody (for less than four months). This code is collected for statistical purposes but does not contribute to your attendance figures.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.



## **Annex A: Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register**

### ***Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended***

1	8(1)(a) - where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
2	8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school.
3	8(1)(c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4	8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
5	8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.
6	8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
7	8(1)(g) - that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
8	8(1)(h) - that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and — (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);

	(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
9	8(1)(i) - that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.
10	8(1)(j) - that the pupil has died.
11	8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and— (i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or (ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.
12	8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.
13	8(1)(m) - that he has been permanently excluded from the school.
14	8(1)(n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.
15	8(1)(o) where— (i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.