



RAINEY ENDOWED SCHOOL

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Implementation Date – June 2019

Review Date – July 2019

Signed _____ **BoG**

Introduction

Rainey Endowed School is committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their full academic potential and are prepared for the world of work beyond School. Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. Rainey Endowed School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. We acknowledge the correlation between good attendance and high academic achievement, progress and involvement in school life, leading to pupils taking responsibility for their learning, feeling part of the school community and gaining in confidence and self-esteem. The School places great importance on attendance and punctuality and acknowledges that good attendance and punctuality is an outcome of the partnership between School, parents and pupils.

However, we recognise that full attendance is not always possible and that absence may be the result of circumstances beyond the control of the pupil such as illness, bereavement or other family circumstances. It is also recognised that underachievement may be the result of a number of inter-related factors of which poor attendance is only one. We offer support to all pupils with particular medical or pastoral circumstances which prevent attendance at School and promote regular communication with parents and other involved external agencies, working to ensure a return to School that is appropriate for the pupil concerned.

It is however expected that pupils and their parents/guardians will attempt to keep non-attendance to a minimum. It is our intention, in partnership with parents, to encourage full attendance and punctuality of arrival at school in order that pupils may

- take full advantage of their educational and developmental opportunities
- establish good patterns of attendance and punctuality which may be carried forward to employment
- be discouraged from truancy, which may lead to anti-social or criminal behaviour.

In addition, it is hoped, through attendance at assemblies and registration, to

- foster an awareness of the school community and instil a corporate identity
- develop a sense of belonging as a basis for social interaction with both peers and tutors
- facilitate effective communication within the school.

It is also our aim to be proactive in identifying and resolving any problems or potential problems of which absence or lateness may be an indicator or precursor. In pursuance of this it will be considered normal good practice to

- keep detailed records of pupil attendance in school daily and in each class during the day to improve and maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Rainey Endowed School.
- inform parents as quickly as possible, where appropriate, if a pupil fails to attend school/class and provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils
- identify patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and work to resolve any personal/social difficulties
- promote good relationships with Education Welfare Service and inform the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) when pupil attendance is deemed unsatisfactory



- keep a record of lateness to school and, where appropriate, inform parents.
- ensure attendance register is completed twice each day at morning registration and Period 5 class.
- complete reasons for absence.
- inform pupils and parents when attendance is becoming a cause for concern i.e. <90% and set targets for improvement.
- inform EWO when attendance falls < 85% and in collaboration with the EWO, to offer help and support to the pupil to ensure a return to full attendance.
- maintain a high attendance figure by all pupils in the School.

The implementation of this policy depends upon pupils and their parents and a wide range of staff, each with their specific roles.

Role of the School

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance; pastoral staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention. The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis. To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2013/13.

Rainey Endowed School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. The School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Prior to this absence, written notification should be submitted to the Headmaster. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. (Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required. Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.50am for registration or Assembly. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on a pupil's attendance record. If a child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the Head of Year or Deputy Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD:

- ensure that their child attends school regularly and that their child arrives on time
- avoid, if at all possible, taking their child on holiday during term time
- notify the school office by telephone on the **first day** of a pupil's absence from school
- provide on the **first day** the pupil returns to school, an absentee form or letter explaining absence, with appropriate dates
- for a planned absence, provide a letter to the registration tutor **in advance** seeking permission for a pupil to leave school during the day
- co-operate with the school in seeking to overcome problems of non-attendance or lateness.

Parents should phone school **as early as possible on the first day** that their son/daughter is absent in order to explain the reason for absence. The office staff will contact parents on **the second day of absence, via text message**, to ascertain the reason for the pupil not being in school, if a parent has not already contacted the school office. On the **third day of absence, the Year Head will telephone** to ascertain the reason for the child's absence, if a parent has not already contacted the school.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Rainey Endowed School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly. If a pupil has been absent from school a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to a pupil's Registration Tutor on return to school.

Pupils are encouraged to take personal responsibility for maximum attendance at school during term, for punctuality in the mornings for Registration and for classes throughout the day. Pupils should follow the school procedures when late for School, when requesting an exeat during the school day, when planning an absence or when returning to School following a period of absence.

If a pupil arrives after registration, it is their responsibility to report to the School Office so that they can be marked present. **It is crucial that this is done.** Arrival after 9.15am but before 10.30am will be denoted as "L" on the register – this does not affect the percentage attendance however a written note explaining the lateness will be required. Patterns of lateness will be monitored. Any pupil who has not registered by 10.30am will be officially absent for the morning session and this will be denoted as "U" on the register. This will affect a pupils' percentage attendance for the year and a written note will be required to explain the absence.

Sixth Form pupils who are not in a timetabled class Period 5 must sign in at the Study Centre. Sixth Form pupils whose period 5 teachers are absent should sign in at the Study Centre. Sixth Form pupils taking MLP subjects will have their attendance recorded in SIMS in the relevant MLP school; this information will be monitored by staff in Rainey Endowed School.

PUPILS SHOULD:

- make every effort to attend school regularly and to arrive at school by **8.50am** in time for assembly or extended registration
- attend every class punctually
- bring to their registration tutor, **on the first day back after absence**, a signed, dated absentee note, from their parent/guardian, explaining reasons for absence
- bring a letter from their parent/guardian seeking permission in advance to leave school during the day for a planned absence
- show their planned absence (green) slip to those teachers whose classes they will miss
- when late, sign in on arrival at the school office in the appropriate late book explaining their lateness
- never leave school at any time during the school day without permission and without signing out
- co-operate with staff in seeking to overcome problems of non-attendance or persistent lateness.

Role of Tutors

All Tutors and pupils must be in their registration rooms or Assembly at 8.50am. Registers will be completed online by 9.15am. Tutors should call out each individual pupil's name and only mark present those pupils in front of them. All pupils absent should be marked "N". On a weekly basis Registration Tutors teachers should monitor absences in order to ascertain reasons for unexplained absences; these should be coded on SIMS in order to ensure that the register is accurate.

TUTORS SHOULD:

- complete SIMS registration daily (as this is a legal document it is vital that it is completed accurately and only by a member of staff)
- inform the HOY immediately if a pupil is absent for 3 consecutive days
- receive an absentee form or letter of explanation from pupils who have been absent
- code, file and submit to Year Heads at the end of the academic year, all absentee notes received for each pupil
- code the SIMS register that an absentee form or letter of explanation has been received
- inform the HOY if a pupil has repeatedly failed to bring an absentee form or letter of explanation
- inform the HOY if a pattern of absence is detected
- inspect letters requesting permission to leave school and provide planned absence (green) slips
- request reasons from pupils who have been late and code the SIMS register as late if appropriate
- inform the HOY if a pupil is late twice in one week without good reason
- closely monitor the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils as requested by the HOY and report any concerns immediately
- commend pupils for improved attendance.

Role of Subject Teachers

Subject teachers must complete online registration during Period 5 each day. As this is a legal document it is vital that it is completed accurately and only by a member of staff. Teachers should call out each individual student's name and only mark present those students in front of them. All students absent should be marked "N".

All subject teachers are required to register classes using Lesson Monitor for every timetabled class and classes that they have been assigned to for cover. Lesson Monitor provides essential information for Subject Teachers, Subject Leaders and Heads of Year in monitoring attendance and punctuality. The School acknowledges the correlation between good attendance and academic achievement, as well as pupil self-esteem. Failure to complete Lesson Monitor leads to an incomplete picture of attendance and punctuality and results in unnecessary workload for Heads of Year and other staff.

CLASS TEACHERS SHOULD:

- mark their register each class/period and record details of absenteeism and lateness
- check and sign planned absence (green) slips for pupils who have permission to leave school
- complete SIMS registration during period 5
- speak to the appropriate HOY if they have concerns over a pupil's level of absenteeism/lateness

Role of Pastoral Leaders

HOYS SHOULD:

Absences

- telephone parents of pupils absent for 3 days, if necessary
- detain those pupils who repeatedly fail to provide letters explaining absences
- check for patterns of absence or truancy
- contact parents informing them of problematic absences or incidents of persistent lateness
- in particular cases request all teachers to inform them when a pupil misses any class
- discuss with the Assistant Principal (Pastoral) those pupils with low attendance in order that appropriate action may be taken (e.g. parental interview, EWO visit, home tuition)
- speak to pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern, offer support and encouragement and monitor closely
- request tutors to monitor closely pupils with low attendance and to report any concerns immediately
- commend pupils for improved attendance.

Lateness

- check the 'late' register in the office regularly
- contact parents informing them of a pupil's persistent lateness
- in the first instance, caution pupils who are late to school twice in a week or four times in a month

- where persistent lateness continues, place the pupil initially in lunchtime detention, thereafter in after school detention or remove privileges to address the situation
- commend pupils for improved punctuality.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL (PASTORAL) SHOULD:

- discuss with the HOY those pupils with low attendance in order that appropriate action may be taken (e.g. parental interview, EWO visit, home tuition)
- meet with the EWO to discuss the attendance of pupils in Years 8 -12 and, where appropriate, request home visits, medical referrals and/or home tuition
- keep the Principal fully informed of all pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern so that appropriate action may be taken.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

It is important to keep appointments within school hours to an absolute minimum. However, we do acknowledge that this can be unavoidable from time to time and in these cases pupils are asked to write a note for their Registration teacher stating reason for leaving school, time of departure and estimated time of return.

The pupil should retain the note and appointment card and only on producing this note at the office will the pupil be allowed to sign out from school. On return to school the pupil must sign in at the office. The register will then be amended showing attendance for the session. Failure to return for the session will affect the overall percentage attendance.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education. Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attend

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

The School appreciates those pupils who strive to attend throughout the year. High attendance figures feature prominently in UCAS reports, EMA Reports and all references from the School. Likewise Rainey Endowed School acknowledges its statutory responsibility to ensure that students are in attendance during term time and has adopted a range of actions and sanctions to maximise attendance.

Attendance Data will be monitored by Tutors and HOYs and attendance analysis for all pupils with <90% attendance will be reported each month to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral). Year Heads will discuss individual reasons for absence with the appropriate Tutors and report back to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral). Pupils whose absenteeism persists will be interviewed by their Head of Year and their parents informed and required to meet

with them to discuss ways to improve the situation; if this fails the assistance of the Educational Welfare Officer will be sought.

ATTENDANCE RATES

The target rate of attendance for this school year is: >95%

The current attendance rate for Rainey Endowed School for the year is: >97%