



# Regency High School Attendance Policy

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Authorised by: Chair of Governors

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Signed by: ..... *S Harding* ..... (Policy Author)

Date: *5th July 2018* .....

Signed by: ..... *[Signature]* ..... (Chair of Governors)

Date: *5th July 2018* .....

# Regency High School

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

This Attendance Policy Statement has been developed, in conjunction with the policy issued by Worcestershire County Council and within the context of the national and local priority of raising the educational achievement and attainment of pupils.

Leave of absence in term time which results in significant absence from school, is disruptive to the child's education and has a detrimental impact on attainment.

The purpose of this policy statement is to provide updated guidance on procedures that are followed by Regency High School in order to manage absence in term time and to support the aim of the Local Authority that parents should be made more aware of the official regulations and legislation about absence in term time, including holidays.

Regency High School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this is partly achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, carers, pupils and all school staff.

### School's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at Regency High School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all students are able to learn and feel valued members of the school community. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### Complex Medical / Additional Needs

Due to the nature of the school's population a significant number of students have complex medical or other complex additional needs. The school encourages parents/carers to limit time off and supports families to achieve this by working in partnership with health professionals and other external agencies. Regency High School hosts clinics on site for Paediatricians, Physiotherapists, Orthotics, CAMHS, Social Services and Speech and Language therapists. We understand that it is sometimes unavoidable for students with complex needs to have significant time off school to attend specialist appointments, undergo surgery, receive specialist medical treatment or recover from specific procedures.

Where necessary, certain students are removed from the analysis of attendance data to enable a fair analysis to take place.

## Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: at the start of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

### CODE

	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## **Registration**

Registers will be called promptly first thing in the morning and after lunch by the class teacher or member of the class team.

Registers will close at the end of the registration period.

## **Categorising Absence**

A mark will be made in respect of each student during registration. Any student who is not present at this time will be marked as (N) NO REASON YET PROVIDED unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable.

School staff will amend registers to indicate lateness if a student arrives after the register closes.

## **Collection and Analysis of Data**

A member of the school's senior leadership team will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Headteacher.

Office staff have responsibility to make sure accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE when required.

## **Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Student Attendance**

1. When a student is absent a member of the class team will attempt to contact the parent/carer during that day to establish a reason.
2. If a student returns to school with no explanation for an absence from their parent/carer, a member of the class team will contact parents/carers requesting this information
3. If a pattern of concern regarding attendance is developing, or attendance drops below 95%, a member of the senior leadership team with responsibility for attendance will speak to the parent/carer about their child's pattern of absences. It may be necessary at this stage to send a 'request for medical evidence' letter to parents/carers.
4. Once point 3 is reached the Education Welfare Officer will be involved and appropriate strategies for improving attendance will be considered.

## **Parents' / Carers' Responsibilities**

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with

parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Regency High School.

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says:-

“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence”.

(NB Where the Education Act refers to “he”, it also means “she”)

Regency High School expects parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children’s attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents/carers will also be expected to:

- notify school by telephone on the first day of absence and confirm in writing in the home/school book upon their child’s return to school;
- ensure their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents’/carers’ meetings, taking an interest in their child’s work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child’s school life. Regency High School will endeavour to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

### **Department for Education Guidance**

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove reference to ‘Family Holidays’ and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances, Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school. There is no automatic right to any holiday in term time. Advice is available to schools from the Education Investigation Service.

The DfE guidance about holidays in term time makes the following points:

- each request can only be judged on a case by case basis;
- even in exceptional circumstances it is expected that Headteachers will use their discretion sparingly;

- Headteachers should not apply policies (for example, blanket bans) which might suggest that each application has not been considered on its individual merits;
- as a general guide any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time should not be authorised during the school term.

### **Leave in Term Time**

This policy supports legislation (The Education (Pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013) which makes it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**There is no automatic right to any leave or holiday in term time.**

Leave of absence must be requested from and agreed by the Headteacher in advance of any absence. If approved, the absence is registered as authorised and if not approved but still taken, as unauthorised. Regency High School will use the pro-formas provided by the Local Authority when communicating decisions to parents/carers when dealing with any requests for leave in term time (Appendices 3 & 4). This provides parents/carers with information about the possible consequences of taking leave that has not been authorised.

Permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. 10 days' leave is not considered as the norm. When considering requests for leave in term time, Headteachers should take into account that absence shall not be granted unless;

- a request has been made in advance to the Headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and
- the Headteacher, or a person authorised by the Headteacher, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that request.

These regulations clearly make the point that the Headteacher has the final decision as to whether to authorise the leave or not. In line with the guidance, the Headteacher will consider requests on a case by case basis.

In deciding whether or not to grant the request for leave of absence the following should be taken into account;

- overall pattern of attendance;
- age of the child(ren)
- phase of education;
- time of the year and examinations;

- length, destination and purpose of the leave and whether it is likely to be a rare event in the life of the child;
- family circumstances and the parents/carers reasons for wanting to take their annual holiday during term time.

A child's name can be removed from the register if the pupil has been granted leave of absence and after absence:

- s/he has not returned by the agreed date;
- and s/he has continued to be absent for a further twenty school days;
- and the Headteacher is not satisfied that this is because s/he is ill or the absence is unavoidable.

Before a pupil is removed from the school roll their case should first be referred to the Education Investigation Service.

Procedures for authorising leave in term time can be summarised as:

- Holidays in term time are actively discouraged by the school and the LA;
- Holidays in term time are not a right and will not automatically be granted;
- 10 days should not be considered the 'norm';
- Leave should only be granted where proper procedures have been followed;
- Leave of absence must not be granted retrospectively;
- It remains a discretionary power of the Headteacher to authorise leave of absence.
- Parents who continue to remove their child from school without authorisation may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

## Appendix 1

### Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send to the Headteacher the tear off request form below. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered well before (at least 4 weeks) the desired period of absence.
2. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any holiday booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision on their request. In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the departure date to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.
3. The granting of leave of absence in school term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the school. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) policy is that family holidays should not be taken in school term time. Where such requests are made, for the leave to be granted, the Headteacher should decide if there are exceptional circumstances.
4. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
  - the exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
  - the age of the child;
  - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
  - the overall attendance pattern of the child;
  - the nature of the trip.
  - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will not normally be granted leave of absence.
5. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. It is possible that because of these factors different decisions may be made. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any other requests.



6. Where requests for a grant of leave of absence are received from only one parent the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all 'parents' are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent will receive a penalty notice.
  
7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence but, the child does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, his/her place at the school could be lost.
  
8. Should the School decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised which may be subject to a Holiday Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child. If not paid within 21 days this fine increases to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.

**Appendix 2**

**Regency High School**



**Request for Leave during Term Time**

To: The Headteacher of Regency High School

Date.....

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name) .....

for the period from (date) .....to (date) .....

The exceptional circumstances and reason for this request are:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s) ) .....

School(s) attended .....

(Signature of 1st Parent/Carer(s).....

Print Name.....

(Signature of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) .....

Print Name.....

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

**For Office Use Only**

Current Attendance.....% Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time .....(this Academic Year)

Agreed / Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed .....Date .....

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent .....

## **Appendix 3**

### **School Letter - Leave Agreed**

(Parents name and address)

Date

Dear (Parents name)

(Child's Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school for (number of days), (dates).

As you may be aware the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take holidays in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having looked at your application, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance. Therefore, the absence to include the dates requested will be authorised.

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, in the future you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances. I have attached a copy of (pupil's name) attendance for this academic year.

I hope this letter explains the reason for the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely

Sara Harding

Headteacher

## **Appendix 4**

### **School Letter - Leave Not Agreed**

(Parents name and address)

Date

Dear (Parents name)

(Child's Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school for (number of days), (dates).

As you may be aware the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Having looked at your application, although understanding of your reasons, I do not feel that your request can be supported in this instance. Therefore, if the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised.

As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Worcestershire County Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings.

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

I have attached a copy of (pupil's name) attendance for this academic year.

Thank you for your understanding; I hope this letter explains the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely

Sara Harding

Headteacher

## Appendix 5

### Absence in Term Time - Pupil does not Return Procedure

#### **(a) No contact from parent/carer to say return is delayed - absence has been authorised**

- Absence has been authorised and pupil does not return on the agreed date.
- School send letter 1 (appendix 6) to home or agreed contact address.
- Any further absences should be recorded as unauthorised unless parent/carer informs school of the reason for the delayed return.

Absences then recorded appropriately. This could be illness or disrupted travel arrangements. Appropriate attendance code should be used.

#### **(b) No contact from parent/carer to say return is delayed - absence has been unauthorised**

##### **Pupil to be deleted from the school register.**

- School and LA should make enquires to locate the pupil.
- If the pupil fails to return to school within 20 days of the agreed return date school may delete the child from the register.
- School must notify EIS before doing so
- If after making enquiries school are unable to contact parent/carer or have any concerns about pupil's welfare they should contact EIS for support.
- School can then delete child from the register and transfer pupil information to the Lost Pupil Database via the s2s website.

#### **(c) Contact from Parent/Carer to say return is delayed - Pupil has not returned to UK**

- Register absence as unauthorised or 'O' irrespective of reasons provided for the delay
- The pupil can be removed from roll 20 days after letter 1 (appendix 6).
- If this action is taken school should inform the Children Missing Education Officer & Admission Team.
- School send letter 2 (appendix 7) to the home address.
- School should then delete child from the register and transfer pupil information to the Lost Pupil Database via the s2s website.

#### **(d) Contact from Parent/Carer to say return is delayed - Pupil has returned to UK**

- Normal procedures for non attendance apply.
- Register absence as authorised if sickness or unavoidable cause is established. In all other cases register absence as unauthorised.
- School to complete EIS Referral (EISR) to request Penalty Notice if criteria met.

## **Appendix 6**

### **Letter 1**

(Parents name and address)

Date

Dear (Parents name)

(Child's Name and Date of Birth)

Your child .....has now been absent from school for  
..... school days.

Before your child left England, you agreed that he/she would return to school on  
.....

As this date has now passed and your child has not returned, I need to let you know that, if  
your child has not returned to school before

.....(i.e 20 days after the agreed return date) we will take  
him/her off the school register.

This means that your child can only be re-admitted if there is a place available at this school.

This is in line with the Worcestershire County Council policy.

Please contact me as soon as you return.

Yours sincerely

Sara Harding

Headteacher

## **Appendix 7**

### **Letter 2**

(Parents name and address)

Date

Dear (Parents name)

(Child's Name and Date of Birth)

Your child ..... has now been absent from school for ..... weeks.

Following my letter dated..... and in line with the Worcestershire County Council policy, I have removed your child from the school register.

This means that your child no longer has a place at this school.

To arrange provision for the future education of your child you now need to contact the School Admissions team to seek further advice on 01905 765765.

Please contact me as soon as you return.

Yours sincerely

Sara Harding

Headteacher

