



SPENCER

ACADEMIES TRUST

Attendance Policy

September 2022

The Local Governing Body of Rushcliffe Spencer Academy were informed of this policy on 13th October 2022.

It will be reviewed should statutory guidance require changes.

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1. Aims

Spencer Academies Trust (SAT) and Rushcliffe Spencer Academy are committed to fulfilling our obligation to school attendance through our whole-academy culture and ethos that values and understands the importance of good attendance – high achievement depends on good attendance. This includes:

- promoting good attendance;
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- acting early to address patterns of absence and;
- building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend the academy.

Further to attendance to the academy we will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Whilst we will apply our policy fairly and consistently, we will also ensure that we consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(2022\)](#) published by the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures \(2015\)](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 SAT and Local Governing Body

SAT, through the Director of Inclusion and Engagement and by delegation, the Local Governing Body, is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of attendance across the academy's policies and ethos;
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data;
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school;
- making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance and;
- holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

The Director of Inclusion and Engagement is Sarah McAneny. Our link governor for attendance is David Lodge.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- the implementation of this policy at the academy;
- monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to governors;
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies and;
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

3.3 The Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The Senior Leader for Attendance is responsible for:

- leading attendance across the academy;
- offering a clear vision for attendance improvement;
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes;
- having an oversight of data analysis;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
- arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and;
- delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The Senior Leader responsible for attendance at Rushcliffe Spencer Academy is Mr Simon Ward. They can be contacted via 0115 9744050 or attendance@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The academy Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7);
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Principal;
- working with academy partners, the Local Authority and Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence and;
- advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

Rushcliffe Spencer Academy Attendance Officer is Naomi Batley and can be contacted via attendance@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk or 0115 9744050

3.5 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office through SIMS (the academy information system). This must be done on the same day and by 8.50am on a morning. It must be completed within 10 minutes of period 4 in an afternoon.

3.6 Academy Administration/Office Staff

Academy admin/office staff will:

- take emails or calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system (SIMS);
- transfer emails or calls from parents to the Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year/Attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every day and on time;
- email or call the academy to report their child's absence before 8.30 am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return;
- provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and;
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day.

All absences can be reported by emailing attendance@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk or using the academy absence line on 0115 9744050.

3.8 Pupils

All Rushcliffe Spencer Academy pupils are expected to:

- Attend every school day and lesson on time.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- present;
- attending an approved off-site educational activity;
- absent, or;
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date on which the amendment was made and;
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

(See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.)

We will also record:

- whether the absence is authorised or not;
- the nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity, or;
- the nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive into the academy by 8.35 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until the end of form time. The register for the second session will be taken at the start of period 4 and will be kept open for 10 minutes.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30 am or as soon as practically possible by emailing or calling the academy office staff (see also section 7).

This is to be done by emailing attendance@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk or calling 0115 9744050.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or there are concerns about persistent absence, the academy may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

In the event of dental or medical appointments please email attendance@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk or call 0115 9744050.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of the academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- **Before the register has closed** will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- **After the register has closed** will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Punctuality is monitored through the school attendance recording system (SIMs). Ongoing punctuality issues are dealt with through the 'Systems for a positive ethos' steps located within the 'Managing pupils positively' policy.

4.5 Following-up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend the academy does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit and/or contact the police and/or social care depending on the individual circumstances of the child;
- identify whether the absence is approved or not;
- identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session and;
- call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will take the necessary steps to ensure safeguarding. This may include the involvement of external agencies.

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through termly progress reviews.

Attendance and punctuality can be monitored through edulink.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-time Absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen and for which there was insufficient time to take the necessary action to resolve the situation arising from those circumstances.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the Academy website through the tab to governance and then to policies and forms.

The Principal may require evidence to support **any** request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where a day is “exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong” (The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c)). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

When considering granting the leave of absence as exceptional circumstance the Principal will consider:

- the amount of time requested;
- circumstances of the request;
- frequency of the request;
- previous leave of absences taken within child’s academy career;
- when the request was made;
- proximity of external and internal examinations;
- the child’s current attendance record, including previous academic years;
- the impact that absence will have on a child’s attendance record;
- the impact on the child’s education and their ability to catch up on the work that would be missed.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

Rushcliffe Spencer Academy or the Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from the academy, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made **directly to the Local Authority**.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal, Local Authority officer or the police.

- The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a **rolling** academic year;
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission, and;
- where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during academy hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Rushcliffe Spencer Academy recognises that rewards play a vital part in encouraging pupils to achieve. Excellent attendance and punctuality contribute to the rewards given to pupils. The following illustrates the rewards and strategies that will be given for good attendance and punctuality (these can be subject to change).

Attendance and punctuality contribute to the rewards in the 'Top 100' half termly awards, 'Shine Brightly' half termly awards, bespoke rewards afternoons specific to year groups and the end of year whole school awards.

Bespoke individual attendance and punctuality systems are also used where these are identified as required.

7. Attendance Monitoring

The Vice Principal, attendance officer and Heads of year monitor and analyse attendance regularly to identify individual pupils or cohorts that require further support with their attendance.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Rushcliffe Spencer Academy will:

- monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the academy and at an individual pupil level and;
- identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Governing Body with the support of the Director of Inclusion and Engagement.

7.2 Analysing attendance

Rushcliffe Spencer Academy will:

- analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families, and;
- look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

Rushcliffe Spencer Academy will:

- provide regular attendance reports to teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families and;
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Rushcliffe Spencer Academy will:

- use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;
- have regular contact with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement and;
- provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- write to parents when pupils become 'at risk' of persistent absence.
- write to inform parents when pupils become persistent absentees.
- involve external agencies where necessary including the use of the 'enforcement' procedures through the Early help team.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's Guidance on School Attendance 2022.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the academy
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the academy
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances at the Principal's discretion
I	Illness	The academy has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness (not medical appointments)
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the academy
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the academy
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	The academy is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence or no reason has been provided
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at the academy after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Academy site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the academy
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day/academy used for polling