Attendance Policy

Staff Responsible:	**Mrs A Sheridan**
Date of Issue:	September 2026
Review Date:	September 2027

Attendance Matters!

Every Student, Every School, Every Day

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1. Rationale

At Ribbon Academy, Attendance Matters.

We seek to ensure that all pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each child to realise their full potential. Ribbon Academy strives to provide a warm, welcoming and caring environment where all pupils and their families feel valued, safe and supported.

We believe that all children benefit from the broad, balanced and enriching education opportunities available through regular attendance and punctuality. The aim of this policy is to provide a consistent framework that encourages and facilitates excellent attendance for all pupils.

All staff at Ribbon Academy work collaboratively with pupils and families to provide the support required to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time. An attendance target of 95.1% has been set for the academic year, and robust systems are in place to help us achieve this aim.

Children at Ribbon Academy enjoy school and want to be here. To support this, we have established effective systems which recognise good attendance, improved attendance and positive punctuality.

This policy has been written in accordance with the Department for Education statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)* and relevant attendance legislation. Ribbon Academy recognises that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility and requires strong partnership working between school, pupils, parents/carers, governors and external agencies.

Key Contacts

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2. Attendance and Attainment

We understand that the relationship between attendance and educational achievement is inextricably linked. Regular attendance is essential to maximise pupil progress, wellbeing, enjoyment of learning and future life opportunities.

Research consistently demonstrates that pupils with higher attendance achieve better outcomes than those who miss significant amounts of school.

Ribbon Academy will ensure that:

- All children have an equal right of access to education.
- Children are not disadvantaged through poor attendance or lateness.
- Attendance concerns are identified early.
- Effective support is offered to families.
- Appropriate action is taken where attendance does not improve.

Successfully addressing attendance concerns requires collaborative working between families, school and partner agencies.

We will:

Expect

Establish a culture where attendance is prioritised and all pupils are expected to attend school every day unless genuinely unwell or prevented by exceptional circumstances.

Monitor

Use attendance data rigorously to identify patterns, trends and concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Listen and Understand

Work with pupils and families to understand barriers to attendance and identify solutions.

Facilitate Support

Provide support and signpost families to services that can help remove attendance barriers.

Formalise Support

Where attendance concerns continue, establish attendance plans and formal support arrangements.

Enforce

Where support has been exhausted and attendance remains poor, work with the Local Authority to consider statutory intervention in accordance with national guidance.

Attendance Categories

To support a shared understanding of attendance expectations, Ribbon Academy uses the following indicators:

- Excellent Attendance: 97% and above
- Good Attendance: 95% - 96.9%
- Attendance Causing Concern: Below 95%
- Persistent Absence (PA): Below 90%
- Severe Absence (SA): 50% or below

Attendance is monitored regularly and families may be contacted where attendance falls below expected levels.

Supporting Vulnerable Pupils

Some pupils face additional barriers to regular attendance.

Particular attention will be given to:

- Pupils with SEND
- Children In Care
- Children who have previously been in Care
- Children subject to Child Protection Plans
- Children receiving Early Help support
- Young Carers
- Pupils with medical needs
- Disadvantaged pupils

Attendance data will be reviewed regularly to ensure vulnerable groups receive timely and appropriate support.

3. Attendance Procedures

First Day of Absence

Parents/carers should contact school between 8.00am and 9.30am by telephoning the school office or messaging 'Ribbon Academy Attendance' via Class Dojo, providing a reason for absence and when the child is expected to return to school.

Where no contact is received, staff will attempt to contact parents/carers to establish the reason for absence. Where no reason can be established, a member of the Inclusion Team may also carry out a home visit.

For pupils who are Severely Absent, Persistent Absentees or at risk of becoming Persistent Absentees, a member of the Inclusion Team may undertake a welfare home visit, whenever an absence is recorded.

Where a pupil has social care involvement, relevant professionals will be informed of all absences in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Parents/carers should make medical, dental and optician appointments outside school hours wherever possible.

Where school is unable to establish a reason for an absence, absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

Extended Absence

Parents/carers are expected to maintain regular communication with school. Where an absence continues for 3 days or more, a member of the Inclusion Team may contact the family or undertake a home visit.

Medical Evidence

The Academy may request medical evidence where attendance is causing concern, where absences begin to form a pattern, where repeated absences are attributed to illness, or where ongoing absence requires verification as part of an agreed support plan.

Medical evidence may include:

- Appointment cards
- Prescriptions
- Hospital letters
- Medical reports
- Evidence from health professionals

Where medical evidence is requested, but not provided, or is deemed insufficient, absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

Support and Early Intervention

If parents/carers require support with attendance concerns, they are encouraged to contact school as soon as possible.

An Attendance Support Meeting may be arranged to discuss concerns and develop an Attendance Support Plan.

Where appropriate, referrals may be made to partner agencies to secure additional support for families.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Ribbon Academy recognises that attendance difficulties can sometimes be linked to emotional wellbeing, anxiety or mental health needs.

Where attendance concerns are linked to emotional wellbeing, staff will work collaboratively with families and partner agencies to understand barriers and implement support strategies. These may include:

- Attendance Support Plans
- Graduated reintegration programmes
- Early Help involvement
- SEND support
- Referrals to external agencies

The Academy will maintain high expectations for attendance while recognising individual circumstances and vulnerabilities.

Attendance Support Pathway

Stage 1 - Early Identification

Attendance concerns identified and parents informed of the concerns. Parents are given the opportunity to make an appointment to discuss any concern, or support needed.

Stage 2 - Attendance Support Meeting

Parents/carers invited to meet with school to identify barriers and agree a support, as part of an Attendance Support Plan.

Stage 3 - Attendance Support Plan Review

Attendance Support Plan will be reviewed, targets and actions may be amended.

Stage 4 - Formal Review

Attendance reviewed and additional interventions considered.

Stage 5 - Local Authority Involvement

Where a child has accumulated 10 sessions of unauthorized absence within a 10 week period (term time), school have a duty to refer to the Local Authority, Attendance Improvement Team.

Stage 6 - Statutory Intervention

The Local Authority will consider if a Fixed Penalty Notice, Notice to Improve, Prosecution or other statutory measure is deemed appropriate. This action is taken by the Local Authority.

Enforcement Action

Where attendance does not improve despite support being offered, and a pupil accumulates 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within any 10-week period, the Academy has a duty to refer the matter to the Local Authority for consideration of statutory action.

All attendance concerns will be managed sensitively and in partnership with families wherever possible.

Punctuality

School gates open at 8.45am.

All pupils should be ready for registration by 9.00am.

Children arriving after registration but before 9.30am will receive a late mark (L).

Registers close at 9.30am and pupils arriving after this time will receive an absence code in line with statutory guidance.

Repeated lateness will result in:

- Communication with parents/carers
- Attendance Support Meetings
- Attendance Support Plans
- Referral to external services where necessary

Breakfast Club and Greggs Breakfast Club are available to support punctuality and readiness to learn.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

Headteachers may only authorise absence during term time in exceptional circumstances.

Generally, the DfE do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to constitute an exceptional circumstance.

LOA Request forms are available from main reception and requests must be submitted in advance.

All requests will be considered individually.

Absence will not be authorised during statutory or internal assessment periods.

Any Leave of Absence taken without prior request, will automatically be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Where school have reason to believe that a child is absent due to a leave of absence. School has a duty to investigate the reasons provided further. This may result in a home visit by a member of the Inclusion Team, and/or a request for medical evidence to be provided to support the period of absence. If the Head Teacher is not satisfied by the information provided, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Where a pupil accumulates 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised Leave of Absence within any 10-week period, the Academy has a duty to refer the matter to the Local Authority for consideration of statutory action.

4. Promoting Positive Attendance and Punctuality

Ribbon Academy believes that positive attendance develops through strong relationships, high expectations, effective support and a culture of belonging.

Attendance rewards are designed to celebrate:

- Commitment to learning
- Excellent attendance
- Improved attendance
- Outstanding punctuality

The Academy will ensure that pupils with genuine medical needs, disabilities or unavoidable attendance barriers are not disadvantaged by reward systems.

Support from the Inclusion Team is available to families experiencing attendance challenges.

Attendance achievements may be recognised through:

- Weekly attendance awards
- Class attendance trophies
- On Time Ted punctuality award
- Certificates
- Celebration assemblies
- Positive communication with parents/carers

Annual Awards

Pupils achieving:

- 95%+ attendance receive a certificate.
- 100% attendance receive additional recognition.

Achievements may be shared through school communication channels and social media.

5. Children Missing Education

Ribbon Academy has a statutory responsibility to safeguard children who may be missing education.

Where a pupil's whereabouts become unknown, reasonable enquiries will be undertaken which may include:

- Contacting parents/carers
- Contacting emergency contacts
- Home visits
- Liaison with external agencies
- Referral to the Local Authority Children Missing Education Team

A pupil may only be removed from roll when all statutory requirements have been followed.

Failure to provide current contact details may be considered a safeguarding concern.

6. The Law

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.

Where attendance concerns do not improve despite support and intervention, the Local Authority may consider legal action including:

- Notice To Improve
- Fixed Penalty Notice
- Prosecution
    - Section 444(1) Failure to ensure a child attends school. Can result in a fine of up to £1000 per parent, per child.
    - Section 444 (a1) Knowingly failing to ensure a child attends school. Can result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison.
    - Where engagement with support has been problematic. The Local Authority can request that the court considers a Parenting Order. Parents would be required to engage with Specified Support deemed appropriate by the Court.

These measures are intended to protect a child's fundamental right to education.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

Trustees will:

- Promote the importance of attendance.
- Review this policy annually.
- Monitor attendance through regular reports.
- Challenge and support leaders in attendance improvement.
- Receive attendance reports at least termly.
- Monitor attendance of vulnerable groups.
- Monitor persistent absence, severe absence and punctuality trends.

Senior Leadership Team

Senior leaders will:

- Champion positive attendance.
- Ensure effective systems are in place.
- Monitor attendance data.
- Lead attendance improvement work.
- Ensure compliance with statutory guidance.
- Report attendance information to Trustees.

The named Attendance Leader is: **Mrs A Sheridan, Head Teacher**

Teachers and Support Staff

Staff will:

- Promote positive attendance.
- Take accurate attendance registers.
- Communicate concerns promptly.
- Work with families and external agencies.
- Support attendance improvement strategies.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure regular attendance.
- Promote the value of education.
- Follow absence reporting procedures.
- Maintain regular routines.
- Communicate concerns promptly.
- Work in partnership with the Academy.

8. Attendance Register

Ribbon Academy uses **Arbor** to maintain attendance records.

Attendance registers are completed at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions.

The table below shows all attendance and absence codes available to school as of September 2024. All schools are required to mark every child's register twice a day using the appropriate code.

Code	Definition	Present	Authorised
/	Present (morning session)	✓	✓
\	Present (afternoon session)	✓	✓
B	Attending any other approved education activity	✓	✓
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	×	✓
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	×	✓
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	×	✓
D	Dual registered at another school	Attendance Not Required	
E	Suspected or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	×	✓
G	Holiday not granted by the school	×	×
I	Illness	×	✓
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another education institution	×	✓
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority	✓	✓
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	✓	✓
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	×	✓
N	Reason for absence not yet established	×	×
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	×	×
P	Participating in a sporting activity	✓	✓
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Attendance Not Required	
R	Religious Observance	×	✓
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	×	✓
T	Parents travelling for occupational purposes	×	✓
U	Arrives in school after registration closed	×	×
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	✓	✓
W	Attending work experience	✓	✓
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not require to attend school	Attendance Not Required	
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Attendance Not Required	
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Attendance Not Required	
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Attendance Not Required	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Attendance Not Required	
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Attendance Not Required	
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Attendance Not Required	
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Attendance Not Required	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Attendance Not Required	
#	Planned whole school closure (e.g. school holidays / INSET days)	Attendance Not Required	

All amendments to attendance records will identify:

- Original entry
- Amended entry
- Reason for amendment
- Name of staff member making amendment
- Date of amendment

Attendance records will be retained in accordance with statutory requirements.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Academy will review attendance practice and outcomes regularly to ensure attendance systems remain effective and compliant.

The following will be monitored:

- Whole school attendance
- Persistent Absence rates
- Severe Absence rates
- Attendance of vulnerable groups
- Punctuality
- Effectiveness of support plans and interventions

Attendance information will be reported regularly to Trustees and senior leaders.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner should legislation, guidance or local procedures change.