



# Attendance Policy

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## 1. Principles

1.1 The law states that all children must receive a full time education from five to sixteen years of age.

1.2 We are committed to meeting our obligation with regard to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school. We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

1.3 Student who attend regularly tend to make excellent progress. This, of course, is due to the co-operation of parents and cares who keep absence to an absolute minimum.

1.4 We work with outside agencies, including Rutland's Inclusion Officer, who may become involved in your child's attendance.

1.5 This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). 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 Inspectors Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance:guidance for schools](#)

## 2. Reporting Student Absence

2.1 On each day of absence, a parent/care must contact the College to explain the reasons; this can be done using e-amil via: [absences@ucc.rutland.sch.uk](mailto:absences@ucc.rutland.sch.uk) or by using the My Child At School (MCAS) App. If we have not received contact from the parent/carer we will make contact by telephone to ensure that a parent / carer is aware of the child's absence.

2.2 If we have no confirmation of the reason for the child's absence, a member of College staff may take further measures such as carrying out a Welfare Visit at the child's home address, notifying the

police or other external agencies. We will always prioritise any follow up actions for those students who we know to be vulnerable. If we receive no communication within 48 hours as to the child's whereabouts, we will contact the police / or social care.

2.3 If after 48 hours there is still no response to the College's communication about the reasons for the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised unless exceptional circumstances have legitimately delayed communication.

### **3. Monitoring and Feedback**

3.1 Student attendance will be included in Autumn, Spring and Summer Profiles which are reported to parents. Attendance figures are also updated in real-time on the MCAS App.

Parents of any student who have provided no reason for absence, coded N, will also be contacted requesting an explanation. It may be that there are perfectly valid reasons for such an attendance level. However, this may be an opportunity for parent/guardians to raise any issues that may be affecting their child at College.

3.3 If a student has been absent regularly due to illness, the College may ask for supporting evidence of a medical need eg. Appointment card, photograph of medication or confirmation of a medical appointment. These will only be valid for six weeks from the date of issue and the College should be kept up to date of ongoing medical needs. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

#### **3.4 Medical or Dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice to the College is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time possible.

3.5 Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in sections 7 and 8.

#### **3.6 Lateness and punctuality**

- A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late using the appropriate code.
- A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Further information can be found within section 13.

3.7 The College participates in sharing daily attendance with the DfE who provide valuable comparative data both nationally and internally for cohorts and groups of students.

An attendance score card which contains information on absence and persistent absence (across year groups and groups of students) will be shared with the governing body on a termly basis.

## **4. College and Local Authority Inclusion Service**

4.1 The Senior Leader in charge of monitoring attendance will meet with the Inclusion Support Officer at Rutland County Council at least every term to share data, identify trends and seek support in maintaining positive attendance for all students.

4.2 The Inclusion Support Officer will be made aware where appropriate any student whose attendance has fallen below 90%.

An appropriate member of staff will monitor the student's attendance closely, and targets set to improve attendance.

4.3 The College collects and stores the attendance data on Bromcom. This data is used for internal purposes, such as:

- To track the attendance of individual students or groups of students.
- To identify whether or not there are particular groups of students whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Monitor and evaluate those students identified as needing intervention and support.

## **5. Below 90% Attendance – Persistent Absence**

5.1 It is the legal responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their child attends College regularly. Permitting absence from College without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Poor attendance could also be considered a safeguarding matter and lead to a referral made to social care.

If a student's attendance falls below 90%, the Inclusion service will be informed and the situation monitored. The following types of information may be explored in order to identify underlying issues:

- Use of the local authority ARNA (anxiety related non-attendance tool) to identify the underlying issues.
- Assessment reports to identify curriculum strengths.
- Options choices.
- Bromcom reports to track behaviour/friendship/bullying incidents
- Cpoms reports to track safeguarding concerns
- Tutor group details
- Environmental factors
- Social, emotional and personal health and family information
- Historical attendance issues

Support to improve attendance might include the following reasonable adjustments:

- Targeted pastoral support / allocated key worker
- Time out card
- Attendance plan in liaison with parents
- Curriculum adaptation

- Internal adult or peer mentoring
- Temporary access to the Cabin.
- Mental health support
- Homework club
- Transport support
- Adaptations to movement around College to avoid times that heighten anxiety
- Social group work
- Short term reduced timetable, regularly reviewed with the aim to return to full timetable.
- External agency referrals: Early Help, mental health support groups and the School Support Partnership

## 6. Letters and Escalation

### 6.1 Stage 1 – Form Tutor Support

Should a form tutor feel that there is a concern about the attendance of a tutee, a letter will be sent home to highlight this and offer parents support in improving attendance. At this point, form tutors will also discuss the importance of good attendance with their tutee and support them with any of their own concerns. A regular meeting with the form tutor may take place.

### 6.2 - Medical Evidence request and further support

- A medical evidence request letter may be sent when:
- A student has been absent for a period of 5 consecutive days
- A student has reached 90% attendance
- A pattern of repeated short-term absence is noted
- The College has reason to believe that the student was not too ill to attend, but was absent from College.

Where a student's attendance is below 90%, a member of the attendance team will be assigned to monitor attendance and offer further support to parents and the student. They will maintain close communication with the student and their family to identify issues and create the support needed to improve their attendance.

Meetings will be convened with the student and their family to identify underlying causes for low attendance. Support strategies (outlined 5.1) will continue to be used.

Medical evidence may be required for absences in the form of a GP or hospital letter, a photograph of any medication prescribed (including the date) or a copy of an appointment card. Further evidence may be requested at the discretion of the College attendance team.

### 6.3 Stage 3 – Four-week monitoring period and further support

A student will be placed on a four-week monitoring period when:

- Medical evidence has not been provided for absences.
- A student's attendance remains below 90% and there is not a sustained improvement despite support from the College.
- There has been little engagement with the support offered, either by the student or parent.

A letter will be sent which outlines the dates over which this monitoring period will take place. We will liaise with parents to discuss concerns over attendance and offer further support strategies where appropriate. Where attendance does not show a sustained improvement over this monitoring period, parents will be invited to a College or Local Authority Attendance Panel.

#### 6.4 Stage 4 – Local Authority Attendance Panel

A prosecution meeting may be held at the discretion of the Local Authority Inclusion Support Officer. Parents/carers will be invited to a Local Authority Attendance Panel meeting in order to discuss the student's low attendance. An Attendance Action Plan will be produced collaboratively with parents/carers, school staff, the local authority and the student, where appropriate, to support and resolve attendance issues. Formal notes will be taken at this meeting and a record of the details and the agreed action plan will be taken and signed by the parents/carers and the Inclusion Support Officer so that all parties are clear about the expected next steps. A review will take place after six weeks where a decision will be made by the Local Authority whether to refer parents/carers for prosecution. A Senior Leader will be assigned to a Stage 4 attendance case. If the student has attendance of less than 50% this is classed as severe attendance and as thus might be considered, depending on the circumstances, as educational neglect. The College might refer this to Childrens' Social Care as a safeguarding issue.

6.5. The Inclusion Service may also be compelled to place the parent/carer at stage 1 of the Local Authority's Prosecution Procedure. An immediate attendance target will be set to avoid prosecution under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

6.6. Failure to meet the Local Authority's target may result in further formal proceedings and possibly a fixed penalty notice being issued or court action. Failure to ensure a child's attendance is an offence under the above Act.

6.7. If the Principal has not authorised the absence, then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings. This may result in:

- A penalty notice requiring payment of a penalty of up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due could result in a prosecution before a Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted, a parent/carer may be fined up to £1000.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted, a parent/ carer may be fined up to £2500 and/or a custodial sentence.
- Parents/carers may not be issued with a Penalty Notice as the Local Authority may decide that it is appropriate to prosecute without first offering an alternative.

6.8 If the child has taken other unauthorised absences in the same academic year and has previously been issued with a penalty notice, or, if the child has taken unauthorised absences when general attendance is poor, then it is likely that the Local Authority would refer the case directly for prosecution without issuing a further penalty notice.

6.9 Parents/carers should be aware that if they are found guilty of aggravated non-attendance (where a penalty notice has already been issued) it will be recorded on the National Police Computer. Because they will have a conviction, it will appear on their record if a DBS check is carried out.

## 7. Acceptable reasons for absence

7.1 Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the College for a good reason such as:

- My child is too ill to leave the house
- My child has a hospital appointment which cannot be arranged outside of hospital hours
- My child has toothache and has an emergency appointment
- To attend the funeral of a relative
- To attend a significant event involving education, music or sport

## 8. Unacceptable reasons for absence

8.1 Unauthorised absences are those which the college does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been authorised. This includes:

- To look after other family members
- Sleeping in
- To avoid being late
- Another child is ill, so all are kept off
- Minor ailments such as tummy ache or headache
- Start or end of term
- To mind the house or take a delivery
- Holiday during term time
- Choosing to revise or study at home

This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

## 9. Welfare Visits

9.1 Pastoral staff may conduct a home visit when:

- A student is absent from school without a valid reason and
- The school hasn't received a reply from a follow-up call or
- The school has received a reply that they are concerned about
- The school has concern that the student has not been seen since the return of a holiday period or by another professional
- The student is in receipt of Medical Needs Tuition

## 10. Term Time Absences

10.1 As per the [Pupil Registration Regulation Legislation \(September 2013\)](#), we are only able to authorise time off from College in exceptional once-in-a-lifetime circumstances. Any applications must be received in writing at least ten working days in advance. The College cannot authorise absence requests on the basis of cost, nor can the College authorise a known absence retrospectively.

10.2 The College considers each application for term time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.



## **11. Children who do not attend College due to medical reasons.**

11.1 We recognise that there will be times when students need to be absent due to illness. When a student is too unwell to attend for a few days we do not routinely provide work. However, we do recognise that there are some exceptional circumstances, for example, following an operation, when a student may be judged as being too unwell to be in college, but well enough to complete work at home, for a short period of time. During this period the College will aim to provide work to match that which is covered within the lessons.

However, this should only be for a short period of time because without specialist teach input students inevitably progress at a different rate to their peers. Once an absence extends for more than a few lessons, it becomes increasingly difficult to plan and assess work, as well as provide effective feedback.

11.2 If you believe your child will be too ill to attend College for a longer period of time, please:

- Contact the College at your earliest convenience to explain the nature of the illness
- Provide medical evidence to the College in the form of a GP or hospital note

## **12. Celebrating and Rewarding Good Attendance**

12.1 It is important to recognise and reward the vast majority of our pupils who have consistently outstanding attendance. The College does this through certificates awarded at end of term Success Assemblies.

## **13. Lateness and Punctuality**

13.1 Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Students who arrive late miss work, have reduced contact time with teachers, disrupt the learning of other students and can suffer embarrassment or heightened anxiety.

13.2 The College opens at 8:10 am and by 8:35 am all students should be in form time ready to commence their learning.

13.3 Morning registers are taken during form time. Students will receive a late mark if they arrive after 8:35 am.

13.4 If a student arrives after 8:35 am immediate sanctions may be used and the student may be required to make up the time missed, either at break, lunchtime or the end of the College day.

13.5 Lateness to any session, including morning registration, will trigger a C1– late to lesson behaviour point on Bromcom, which will be communicated immediately to parents/carers via the MCAS App.

13.6 Frequent lateness to morning registration will be monitored and parents/carers will be contacted by the College, either by the phone or via email.

13.7 Students who are persistently late may be discussed with the Local Authority at attendance meetings as well as being required to make up the time in an after-school detention.

13.8 The morning register will close at 8:55 am every day (except Wednesday, when it is 9am). In accordance with government guidance, if a student arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark, and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence.

## 14. Authorised Absence for Term Time Absence

[Link to the 365 Form – UCC Request for leave of absence form](#)

The wording on the form is as follows:

This form must be completed by the parents/carers of a UCC student at least 10 days before the requested period of absence.

Absences adversely affect the progress that students make. The school cannot authorise absences for holidays taken during the school term. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Principal can authorise absence during term time and these decisions will be made based on individual circumstances.

The following are indicative of acceptable reasons for requesting an absence:

- for a close family funeral.
- taking part in a significant event involving education, sport, music or other performance.

Unauthorised absence will form part of a student's record. It is often difficult for students to catch up with work as they miss out on the interaction with the teacher and other students.

If you wish to take your child out of College for what you consider an exceptional reason, please complete and submit the form below. Please note that we may need to ask for additional evidence to support any request.

**WARNING - A fixed penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority if you choose to take your child out of College for an unauthorised term-time absence. Each parent may be liable to a penalty of £60, per day, if paid within 21 days and £120, per day, if paid within 28 days. Where relevant this will apply to each child.**

**In cases of aggravated non-attendance (where parents have already received a penalty notice) this will be recorded on the National Police Computer and will be declared on any DBS checks carried out by employers or other agencies.**

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student 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.)

<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day