



8th September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers

School Attendance

Welcome back, I hope you had a lovely summer break.

I am writing to you about attendance and to provide you with a clear outline about absence procedures and the School and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance. The Governors have made it clear that they will support the Head Teacher in promoting high levels of attendance and act where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence.

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unacceptable Reasons

- shopping visits
- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents'/carers' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Friday and/or Monday)
- parental illness

This list is not exhaustive.

Illness, First Day and subsequent Day's Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness, you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 9:00 a.m. It is useful if you know the expected day of return. You are required to telephone the morning of every absence due to illness. If you do not supply school with this information, we have a duty to contact you in order that we are sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.

Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments, this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns regarding excessive absence patterns through illness, we will need to discuss this with parents/carers in order to ascertain a better understanding of the problems and, of course, to offer support.



Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Inspire, challenge and support through faith

North Drive
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Liverpool
L12 1LE

Head Teacher: Miss K Peaston



admin@runnymede-school.org.uk
www.runnymedestowards.co.uk
0151 281 2300

Medical/Dental Appointments

We would ask, if at all possible, that these be arranged outside school hours. If this is not possible, please ensure that you bring your child into school to obtain their mark. You can then accompany them to their appointment. We are aware that this is not always possible. If a morning appointment has been booked, please indicate in advance, if your child will be returning for their mid-day meal. Medical and dental appointments are marked as authorised absences. If available, please email proof of appointment to admin@runnymede-school.org.uk.

Emergency Occasions

We are aware that there can be some occasions, e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school. We are here to support you and will be sympathetic to such needs. Please discuss any concerns with me.

Lateness

Please ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration; this is carried out at 9:00 a.m. each day. Being able to meet and exchange news with friends before school is important for the children's social development. Additionally, maths revision, editing of work and reading teacher comments takes place during this period. Lateness causes problems with register marking and missed instructions. Gates open at 8:40 a.m. and close at 8:55 a.m.

A fine can be issued if a child misses 10 sessions in a 10-week period, including lateness after the register closes.

Leave of Absence

Holidays

Holidays taken during term time will not be authorised. If pupils are absent for holidays during term time, we have a duty of care to report this to the Educational Welfare Service. Where unauthorised leave is taken, the Governing Body have decided that it will support the imposition of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Additionally, in the interest of transparency, if you have booked a holiday immediately following a bank holiday weekend and informed the school of this and your child is absent on Thursday and Friday immediately prior to the holiday, I will require site of your flight tickets.

Approved Public Performance/Recognised City Council or National Sporting Event

Where children are invited to perform in a licensed show or concert (e.g. orchestra, pantomime) you are asked to consult with the Designated Attendance Lead, Mrs O'Donnell about how much time away from school is required. Where possible, such requests will be granted provided that the child's attendance is satisfactory. The school will also be sympathetic granting leave to participate in a recognised City, County or National Sporting Event. However, this must be applied for in writing prior to the event taking place.





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What is School Aiming for?

Average attendance should be 97.5% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 98.5%. There are examples below of attendance which falls below 97.5% and what it equates to:

96% attendance is:

- 8 days absence per year from school
- the equivalent to 11 weeks missed over 7 primary school years

95% attendance is:

- 10 days absence per year from school
- 70 days or 14 weeks missed from a child's primary school education

90% attendance is:

- 19 days absence per year from school
- 133 days (almost 3/4 of a school year) missed over their primary school career

What is considered as Poor Attendance?

Attendance below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance falls below 85%, serious concerns will be raised. Below 85% is considered as persistent absence by the DfE.

At the end of every half term we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% and contact parents. We then monitor pupils' attendance on a weekly basis. Hopefully a pattern of unbroken weeks will develop.

Duty of Care in responding to unauthorised and persistent absence – possible consequences

School has a duty of care to liaise with the Local Authority and to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low together with invalid reasons for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents/carers condone absence, e.g. by taking children out of school on an unauthorised holiday, parents/carers render themselves liable to a fine.

In August 2024, the Government introduced stricter rules to ensure consistent enforcement of fines across England.

Before this, local councils had some discretion over when to issue fines, leading to variations in how rules were applied. Now, all councils must follow the same national policy. Please note:

- A fine must be issued when a child has at least five days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period



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- A second unauthorised absence within three years leads to a higher fine of £160 per parent per child
- A third offence within three years will result in prosecution instead of another fine
- The fine is now issued automatically rather than at the school or council's discretion

As a school, we do not want this to happen, however, we need to be very clear about the issue.

We hope this will help provide a clear understanding of the School's expectations. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and if you require any further information or help in maintaining your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs P O'Donnell

Designated Attendance Lead

