



Redcastle Family School: Attendance Policy

Formally adopted by the Governing Body of:	Redcastle Family School
On:	
Signed by Chair of Governors:	<i>Mrs M Eade</i>
Last updated:	November 2023
Review date:	November 2024

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated safeguarding arrangements.



Summary of changes – September 2020:

The model policy has been revised to reflect changes to the statutory guidance as outlined below.

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1. Introduction/Aim

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances.
- 1.2 At Redcastle Family School we believe that regular school attendance enables children both to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. We value the attendance of all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.3 Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils and governors to:
- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
 - Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance;
 - Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences;
 - Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.
- 1.4 We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on

safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

2. Legal Framework

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

2.2 The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- and, act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

3. Definitions

3.1 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or
- Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)¹

¹ See [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), and the Addendum to this policy which outline the changes made to regulations governing school attendance registers in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19), which come into effect from 24 August 2020 for use throughout the 2020 to 2021 school year.

3.2 For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Regular attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

An “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

An “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

“Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

“Parent” as

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

4. Roles and Responsibilities

At Redcastle Family School, we believe that improved school attendance is a responsibility shared by governors, school staff, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Schools should insert the names of key staff with responsibility for the management of attendance.

Role	Name	Contact details
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Attendance Lead	Mr J Julian	office@rfs.norfolk.sch.uk
Attendance Officer	Mrs J Hedger & Mrs M Jobbins	office@rfs.norfolk.sch.uk
Named Governor for Attendance	Mrs M Eade	POA

The Governors of Redcastle Family School will:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and work effectively with the local authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

The Senior Management Team at Redcastle Family School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents;
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents;
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually;



- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues;
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with;
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource;
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time;
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor for attendance;
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented;
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence;
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions;
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families;
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated;
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff at Redcastle Family School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents;
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents;
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation;
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner;
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions;
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents, and the school timetable;



- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance;
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class;
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or guardians to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen;
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data;
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant staff members;
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance;
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance
- Managing individual pupil casework files;
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of a Family Support Plan (FSP) and/ or the implementation of a parenting contract;
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to, if a child is absent from school without contact from parents;
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes;
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

Redcastle Family School requests that parents will:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress;
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school;
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment;
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible;
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours;

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their school work or home and family life;
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance;
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home;
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance;
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

5. Categorising Absence and Attendance

5.1 The table at Appendix 1 of this policy outlines the national codes which enable all schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and comply with the regulations and Department for Education advice². When marking our registers, we will apply these codes to accurately record and report attendance.

5.2 Leave of Absence

5.2.1 Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence for the sole purpose of a holiday (unless in exceptional circumstances). All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

5.2.2 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances.' At Redcastle Family School, leave of absence shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. This may only be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher. Redcastle Family School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

5.2.3 Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher and it will be marked as unauthorised. Redcastle Family School will treat each application

² [‘School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities’, DfE \(August 2020\)](#)

individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

5.2.4 A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken
- A longer period is taken in excess of the agreed number of days.

5.2.5 When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

5.3 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

5.3.1 Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office and signed in and out by a member of the admin team or SLT. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

5.3.2 In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If a child's attendance is below 92% and classed as persistently absent from school then Redcastle Family school will require medical evidence for any absence due to illness until their attendance is above the expected level of 96%. Failure to provide this evidence will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

5.3.3 Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend

school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.³

5.3.4 Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and Norfolk County Council policies via the Medical Needs Service. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

5.4 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Redcastle Family School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

5.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. There are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. Schools and Local Authorities can make a big difference to their life chances through:

- Clear high expectation of all pupils, regardless of their background
- An inclusive culture that welcomes all communities
- Strong engagement from parents

In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that

³ This is in accordance with the NSCP [Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited](#)



trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Redcastle Family School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Redcastle Family School in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Redcastle Family School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

5.6 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

6. Attendance Protocols

6.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.⁴

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

“Regular” attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

An “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

An “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

6.2 Late Arrival at School

At Redcastle Family School, all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at designated times for each class as follows:

Class & Location	Arrival	Departure & Collection
Nursery (Nursery Entrance)	A.M. Session 8:50 a.m. -11.50 a.m.	P.M. Session 12.20 p.m. -3.20 p.m.
Reception (KS1 Playground- Footsteps)	8:45 a.m.	3:10 p.m.
Year 1 (KS1 Playground- Footsteps)	8:45 a.m.	3:10 p.m.
Year 2 (KS1 Playground – Hall Entrance)	8:45 a.m.	3:10 p.m.
Year 3 (KS2 Playground)	8:40 a.m.	3:20 p.m.
Year 4 (KS2 Playground)	8:40 a.m.	3:20 p.m.
Year 5 (KS2 Playground)	8:40 a.m.	3:20 p.m.
Year 6 (KS2 Playground)	8:35 a.m.	3:20 p.m.
SRB (KS2 Playground)	8:30 a.m.	3:00 p.m.



We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken at a designated time before 9:00 a.m. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before 9:15 a.m. it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9:15 a.m.. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

6.3 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9:15 a.m. and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission

In certain circumstances the School may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement
- Refer to an external agency/ support service to offer support, guidance and advice

- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a EHAP or consulting with the Children’s Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

6.4 Attendance Procedure and Reward System

Redcastle Family School is committed to ensuring standards of attendance meet or exceed national expectations.

To ensure that we support pupils in achieving this we implement a number of reward and support systems to engage and promote good attendance.

Good Attendance is promoted and rewarded on a individual and class level. Each half term the attendance officer will identify children who have achieved 100% attendance and these will be rewarded with awards. At the end of the a full school year any children who have achieved full attendance are rewarded with prizes for their achievements as well.

On a weekly basis we reward a class in both infant and junior for achieving the highest attendance (ensuring this is over 97%). Rewards involve a certificate, cup and a donation to their class prize fund.

In addition, all pupils parents/ carers will receive a traffic light letter for their attendance which informs them of attendance for the current term and how successful this has been. This letter praises parents for their support if a child receives a green letter which indicates attendance between 97 – 100%.

If a child is identified at being between the 92-97%, their parents/ carers will receive an amber letter explaining the consequences that attendance is having on their learning. Each half term this group of pupils will reviewed with the safeguarding team and actions to address their attendance will be agreed. This may include:

- Meeting with member of SLT to discuss attendance and explore issues.
- Actions for ongoing CIN, Early Help of FSP plans.
- Direct referral to persistent absence school actions.

At Redcastle Family School we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

Please see section 6.5 and 6.6 for further information on how we support pupils whose attendance is categorised as RED (below 92%).

Attendance Data is shared termly with School Governors who agree annual targets for standards as part of the Redcastle Family School Improvement & Development Plan.

6.5 Support Systems

At Redcastle Family School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

If a child is identified at being between the 96% or less their parents/ carers will receive an amber letter explaining the consequences that attendance is having on their learning. Each half term this group of pupils will reviewed with the safeguarding team and actions to address their attendance will be agreed. This may include:

- Meeting with member of SLT/ Safeguarding Team to discuss attendance and explore issues.
- Actions for ongoing CIN, Early Help or FSP plans.
- Direct referral to persistent absence school actions.

Meeting with member of SLT/ safeguarding to discuss attendance and explore issues.

In order to plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

This meeting will identify the reasons behind the attendance not meeting the acceptable threshold. It will then identify methods and actions for the school and the parents to complete to ensure attendance improves. Examples of actions and services Redcastle Family School may utilise is described below although this is not an exhaustive list and other suitable actions may be addressed when a specific need presents itself.

Actions to support child health: Where absence has been identified to relate to a child's ill health then the school will look to support parents in receiving the correct

level of care for their child in order for their health and attendance to improve. This may involve identifying actions relating to medical services or the school making referrals directly. Medical evidence would be requested and targets set to complete actions so that the situation improves in a timely manner.

Actions to support mental health issues: Where absence is relating to mental health issues or anxieties relating to school or home life the school would seek to use its pastoral/ safeguarding team to support a child/ family in addressing the issues. After actions have been completed to assess the needs of the child, the school may refer the child or family to external services and also set targets for the parents to complete any appropriate actions as well.

Actions to support behaviour issues: Where absence relates to behavioural issues, the school would utilise the pastoral/safeguarding team to identify the cause of these issues using the Norfolk STEPS “Roots & Shoots” approach. After actions have been completed to assess the needs of the child, the school may refer the child or family to external services and also set targets for the parents to complete any appropriate actions as well.

Actions to address parental neglect: Where it is assessed that the parents are not completing their duty of care to ensure attendance is of a satisfactory level then the school will identify actions that must be completed and monitor this improvement on a weekly basis. If Parents do not address the actions outlined or do not accept their parental responsibility in the initial meeting then the school will automatically default to actions outlined within 6.6 Persistent Absence and legal actions.

Actions for ongoing CIN, Early Help or FSP plans.

Where intervention is already established with a parental group then the school would address the concerns as part of the pre established process and using the framework for these meetings to address any concerns and set targets. If improvement is not evident then the school would default to section 6.6 to escalate the situation further and separate to the ongoing intervention.

6.6 Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child’s educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above.



Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. The school would also utilise unannounced visits to clarify authenticity for any reasons given for absence during this time.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

6.7 Reduced timetables

All schools, academies and free schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement one for a time-limited period to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used a part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil.

In line with Norfolk County Council [guidance](#), we will notify the Attendance Team of all reduced timetable as soon as a plan has been agreed.

7. Deletions from the Register

7.1 At Redcastle Family School we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At Redcastle Family School we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.



7.2 We follow Norfolk County Council’s Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

7.3 If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent’s intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Norfolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above. We will also inform Norfolk County Council’s Services to Home Educators Team by completing a referral form.

7.4 Redcastle Family School will follow Norfolk County Council’s Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown, and the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

8. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medical needs
- admissions
- anti-bullying
- exclusion
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards

9. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- **School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, DfE (August 2020)**
- **School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015)**
- **Children missing education, DfE (September 2016)**

- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE (September 2020)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE (2018)

10. Appendices

10.1 The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: Department for Education Attendance & Absence Codes

Absence and Attendance Codes

Present at School

**/ ** Registration code / \ : present in school / = am \ =pm

- L** Late arrival before the register has closed. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity

- B** Off-site educational activity. This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
- D** Dual Registered – at another educational establishment. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used

to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

- J** At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment. This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.
- P** Participating in a supervised sporting activity. This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
- V** Educational visit or trip. This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.
- W** Work experience. Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school

- C** Leave of absence authorised by the school. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually considering the specific facts and

circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

- E** Excluded but no alternative provision made. If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.
- H** Holiday authorised by the school. Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher’s discretion.
- I** Illness (not medical or dental appointments). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors’ notes.
- M** Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- R** Religious observance. Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for

religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

S Study leave. Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

T Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

N Reason for absence not yet provided. Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should

be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

O Absent from school without authorisation. If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

U Arrived in school after registration closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because the pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

Z Pupil not on admission register. This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Planned whole or partial school closure. This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance



such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Appendix 2: Fixed penalty notice whole school warning letter

INSERT SCHOOL LOGO

Dear Parent/Carer,

Date:

Attendance at school and legal intervention

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers regarding the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

In the DfE policy document entitled, 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' it states, '*Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. **The application must be made in advance** and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a*



*leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. **A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion**'.*

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the Headteacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the Headteacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have at least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the last 6 school weeks.

The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any pupil at [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of the notice. The fixed penalty notice is per parent per child. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 3: Example leave of absence request form

Name of School:

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME



Important Information for Parents

- Headteachers comply with the 2013 amendment to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (2006) Regulations 2013** which means that they cannot authorise a leave of absence from school unless it is exceptional; every case should be treated on an individual basis and with due consideration of the circumstances. Ultimately, it is the Headteacher of the school who decides if a period of leave during term time should be authorised or not
- Headteachers may grant leave of absence if they consider exceptional circumstances apply
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Headteacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed
- If leave of absence is granted, please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child’s academic progress
- This form **MUST** be completed by the parent who intends to remove the pupil from school during term time
- Failure to make a request for a leave of absence in advance will result in the absence taken being recorded as unauthorised

Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Full name of child/ren.....

Address.....

From (1st day of absence)To (last day of absence)

Total number of school days.....Expected date of return to school.....

Reason for proposed absence - please provide reasons to support the application including evidence:
.....

Please read the following and sign to indicate you agree:

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren’s progress. I undertake to make sure my child/ren catch up with any work that is required of them.

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s):

Date:

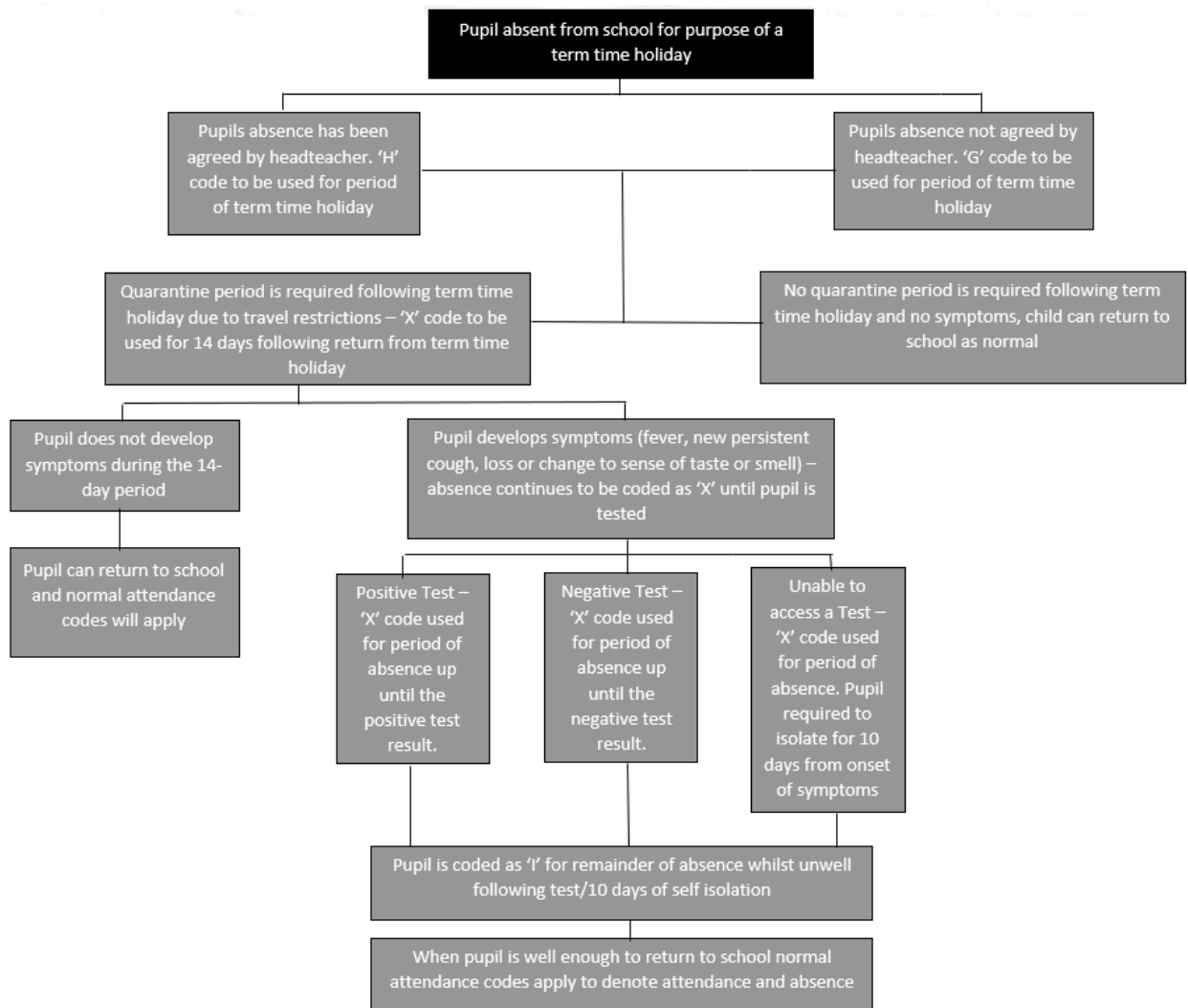
Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been:

Agreed Days agreed Not agreed





Signature of Headteacher:


11.6 Continuity of learning

Please refer to the Redcastle Family School: Remote Learning Policy for further information.



Attendance Rewards & Interventions

		<i>This column should denote which member of staff is responsible for actions at each of these stages</i>	<i>This column should list the support, rewards and interventions that will take place at this stage so that everyone understands what will happen</i>
 <p>0 – 2 DAYS OFF</p>	99 – 100%		<i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm welcome • Attendance matter sessions • Praise texts, planner notes • Form tutor award for consistent weeks & 100% weeks • Amend attendance ladder each week and offer praise to movers • Request notes for unauthorised and update MIS • Talk with yellow to red to offer motivation and add notes to MIS • No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention
 <p>4 – 7.5 DAYS OFF</p>	96 – 98%		<i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% weeks note in planner • Green letter when moving up the ladder • School, student, and family develop attendance plan • Weekly check ins with attendance officer • Home visits, Minibus pick up • At 93% at risk letter 2 • Monitor three weeks • Attendance support panel • No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention
 <p>9.5 – 17 DAYS OFF</p>	92 – 95%		<i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% weeks note in planner • Yellow/Orange letter when moving up the ladder • School, Student, and family develop PA/at risk of PA plan • Three weeks monitoring of plan • Home visits, Minibus pick up • Letter 3 intent to Fast Track • Involvement from LA and external agencies with
 <p>19 + DAYS OFF</p>	Under 90%		<i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% weeks note in planner • Yellow/Orange letter when moving up the ladder • School, Student, and family develop PA/at risk of PA plan • Three weeks monitoring of plan • Home visits, Minibus pick up • Letter 3 intent to Fast Track • Involvement from LA and external agencies with

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>consent from parents</i> • <i>School, Student, Family and Attendance support panel</i> • <i>No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention</i>
	<p>Under 50%</p>		<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Formal support such as parenting contracts will be in place</i> • <i>Intensify support through statutory children’s social care involvement</i> • <i>No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention</i>