**THE RICHARD PATE SCHOOL**

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**Attendance Policy**

 **Reviewed JMH September 2024**

This policy applies to The Richard Pate School, including the EYFS. It is available to current and prospective parents upon request and is published on the School’s website.

**1. Introduction**

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated - pupils need to attend School regularly to benefit from their education. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. We expect all pupils to attend every day (or when registered in the Nursery) when the school is in session so long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Children with poor attendance records tend to achieve less in their Reception, Pre-Prep, Prep and Senior years.

The Government expects the following from Schools:

* to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
* to ensure every pupil has high levels of attendance so they can access the education they are entitled to;
* to act early to address patterns of absence;
* to encourage parents to perform their legal duties by ensuring their child attends school regularly;
* to ensure all pupils are punctual to lessons.

KCSiE 2023 gives clarification that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.

KCSiE 2024 - the wording about absence has been changed. The term “deliberately missing education” has been replaced with “unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education”

**2. School Day**

All pupils are required to be in school by 8:45am with the exception of Nursery pupils who are required to be in school for 9.00am. The normal school day ends at the following times:

**Nursery**

08:30 Nursery door open

09:00 Morning school begins - Free choice and adult led activities.

09:00 - 09:30 Assembly time Mon, Wed, (Fri from 09:25 – 09:55)

10:00 - 10:30 Rolling snack time

10:30 - 11:20 Outside/inside free play

11:20 - 11:40 Carpet time

11:45 Morning children go home

12:00 - 12:45 Lunch time in the main school then quiet time in the Nursery

12:45 - 13:25 Outside play (weather permitting)

13:25 - 15:00 Adult led activities and Free choice inside/outside

15:00 - 15:30 Tidy up time/carpet time

**Prep.**

08:30 Duty teachers in playground

08:30 School opens

08:45 Prep. doors open \*

08:55 Registration and playground doors locked (late entry is through the main reception area)

10:30 - 10:50 Morning break

12:00 noon Lunch

13:25 Afternoon school begins

14:25 - 14:40 Afternoon break

15:30 End of academic day

**Junior**

08:15 Member of staff in Netball courts

08:30 Duty teacher in Netball courts

08:30 School opens

08:45 Children to come into school for registration \*

08:55 First lesson begins

10:55 – 11:15 Morning break

12:15 – 13:25 Lunch

14:25 – 14:40 Afternoon break

15:40 End of academic day

Pupils are registered at both the start of the morning and afternoon sessions each day.

**3. Notifying the school of illness**

If an occasion arises where your child is ill, please e-mail absent@richardpate.co.uk or telephone the school (01242 522086) before 09:30 each and every day of absence, unless the School has been given a specific return date when the initial call is made. If the School has not heard from a parent or guardian we will telephone in order to enquire as to your child’s whereabouts.

We ask that you contact us each day your child is going to be absent in order that we can keep our records updated and importantly, so that we can keep abreast of their progress to full health and anticipated return date.

Any child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must stay away from the school or early years setting until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule') and feel well.

**4. Late Arrival**

Registration takes place twice each day at 8:50 and 1:25pm. It is therefore essential that if a pupil arrives late, they are brought to the main office so our lists remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times. When returning to School following an appointment, children must ensure that they sign in via the office.

Our systems are again updated at 9:30 when we compile a final Registration for the morning. At this point, if you have not contacted the school by telephone or email, a list will be generated of pupils who are not present and this will prompt our Reception team to contact you.

**5. Leaving school early during the day**

Pupils are not normally allowed to leave the site during the School day unless accompanied by a member of staff, for a trip, a visit or a sporting fixture. If a pupil has to leave the School during the day for illness or a parent is collecting them for a medical appointment or other need, this must be communicated with the office team and children signed out and back in.

**6. Requests for absence**

6.1 Requesting absence

If you wish to request an absence for any planned appointment or event, you should make the request in writing via email and send it to: rmacdonald@richardpate.co.uk and office@richardpate.co.uk marked ‘absence request’. In line with Department for Education guidelines absence during term time is discouraged.

6.2 Compassionate grounds or exceptional circumstances

Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional circumstances should be made in writing to the Headmaster in advance of the proposed absence when possible. Absence in exceptional circumstances does not normally include the following:

• birthdays

• holidays

• days out as a special treat

• other family celebrations

6.3 Authorising absence

The Government has confirmed that schools, not parents, authorise absence. The main areas where the School will authorise absence are given below:

6.3.1. Illness

Where schools accept that a pupil is ill, they must authorise the absence but can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.

6.3.2 Appointments

Dental and medical appointments are authorised absences but, where possible, such appointments should be made out of School hours.

6.3.3 Holidays

The Regulations state that time off for family holidays is not a right. Parents do not have the right to take a child out of School during term time. By law parents must ask prior permission for their child to miss school. The Regulations do not allow the School to give retrospective approval.

The Headmaster is only able to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If the Headmaster grants a leave request, it is for him to determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. Authorised leave is not guaranteed for the purpose of a family holiday and you could face prosecution if you take your child out of school without permission.

6.3.4 Religious observance

The School will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the school may seek confirmation from that religious body that the day has been set apart for religious observance.

6.3.5 Exceptional circumstances / unavoidable causes

Authorised absence will be granted for compassionate reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement.

**7. Poor attendance**

The Department for Education (DfE) expects every pupil attending school to maintain an attendance level of approximately 90% and above; any figure below this is deemed as poor attendance.

7.1 Persistent absentees

The Department for Education has changed the definition of ‘Persistent Absence’ to deal with the reality of pupil absenteeism in schools and its impact on their learning. The Department has reduced the threshold at which a pupil is defined as ‘Persistently Absent’ to 15 per cent.

Pupils whose attendance is below 85 per cent are now officially classed as ‘Persistent Absentees’. The school will be obliged to contact the parents if their child’s attendance drops below that figure. If attendance does not improve and absence continues to be persistent, the School will contact GHLL.

**8. Summary of the law taken from the guidelines for ISI inspection**

All Independent schools - Regulation 3(17) “The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006”.

Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers, an Admissions register, known as the “School Roll”, and an Attendance register. School Inspectors are required to check both registers and assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met.

The regulations covering school admission and attendance are very prescriptive reflecting the importance that successive Governments have attached to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school. Schools are required to ensure that an attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session, and during the afternoon for all day pupils. The regulations specify the contents of both registers and the manner in which they are operated and maintained.

**9. Attendance registration system**

Attendance is recorded on the school's Management Information System – School Manager - using the registration codes identified by the Department for Education.

**10. Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities**

The school’s attendance register is summarised weekly and stored electronically. It is backed up weekly, in the form of an electronic copy, and records are retained for six years after the end of the school year in question and then retained in an archive.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. Schools may therefore receive an enquiry about whether they are educating a specific child. Schools are required to alert their local authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has:

• been absent without authority for 10 consecutive school days, or

• failed to attend school regularly, or

• been removed from the school without the school being informed formally, in writing

Author: JMH

Responsible Person: Headmaster

Date of last review: January, 2024

Date of next review: January 2025