RIKKYO SCHOOL
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Lead Person for Policy: Mrs J Overton (Director of Pastoral Care)

This policy applies to the whole school

The Policy is available to the school staff via Staff Share

We have a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is the golden thread that runs throughout every aspect of the school. All our school policies support our approach to safeguarding (child protection). Our fundamental priority is our children and their wellbeing; this is first and foremost.

Scope: All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours, including activities away from school. All new employees and volunteers are required to state that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its procedural documents and confirm this by signing the *Policies Register*.

Legal Status: Complies with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force.

Monitoring and Review: : The text of this policy is necessary and proportionate to meet the needs of Rikkyo School, supporting the staff who work with our pupils, making clearer the responsibilities of school staff, volunteers, proprietor and the Board of Governors.These arrangements are subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Headmaster. The Board of Governors will undertake a full annual review of this document, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been implemented. This review will be formally documented in writing. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the updated/reviewed arrangements and it will be made available to them in writing or electronically.

Signed:

Date Published: October 2026
Next Review: October 2027

岡野　透	*J N Pratten*
Dr T Okano	Mr J N Pratten
Headmaster	Chairman

The importance of school attendance

At Rikkyo School we recognise that positive behaviour and good school attendance are essential in order for students to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Statutory Guidance

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance including the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity;
- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every student has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that students succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that students have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Rikkyo School follows the statutory guidance of the DfE, linked here:

Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK

Attendance Policy

Our policy outlines the school's commitment to attendance. Our policy aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents & carers, students and governors/trustees about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor student attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which students feel safe, secure, and valued;
- raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. 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, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Rikkyo School we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our students from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Name
Attendance Champion	Mrs Jennifer Overton
Named Governor for Attendance	Dr David McKenzie

Improving school attendance is everyone's business, it is a shared responsibility by Governors, Trustees, all school staff, parents, students, and the wider school community. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, students and all members of school staff. However, Rikkyo School is 100% boarding and parents are, in the main, resident in Japan; this does not negate the School's obligation to abide by its legal obligations.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families; albeit they are mostly in Japan.
- Give parents/carers information about attendance by informing them about trips and visits when appropriate.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance by returning to School promptly and not taking their child out early before the end of term.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.

Governors and Trustees

The Rikkyo School UK Board of Governors and the Anglo Japanese Executive Committee recognise the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, students, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm;

- identifying a member of the UK Governing Board to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion;
- 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 students;
- ensuring the school engages and works 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 students or cohorts who need it most;
- ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all students and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of students including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs, and disabilities.
- 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 (including senior attendance champion) at Rikkyo School will:

- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** students and their parents;
- form positive relationships with students and parents;
- ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students 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 attendance champion 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 Trustees and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor/trustee for attendance;
- ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, 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 students and their families;
- document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated;

All staff at Rikkyo School will:

- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** students and their parents;

- form positive relationships with students and parents;
- contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve;
- comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation;
- implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, 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 students and their families.

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 student attendance data.
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Senior Attendance Champion, Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, and other relevant staff members.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual student casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for students causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of an attendance 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.

Rikkyo School requests that parents:

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child returns to School on time and does not leave early for the School holidays.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is not returning from Japan or will be late due to unforeseen circumstances 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.
- 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 in the boarding house to support good attendance.
- Attend all online meetings requested to discuss attendance issues (school refuser).

Students will:

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

Monitoring Attendance

Although schools where pupils are all boarders are exempt from attendance registers and day to day processes to follow-up absence, Rikkyo School continues this work as a matter of good practice.

Daily Attendance Check

- All teachers are expected to take their register each lesson on ISAMS.
- ISAMS allows teachers to select N (not present) or / (present) for each student, no other code can be entered.
- Each day, a member of the admin team will produce an 'N report'
- The N report lists all pupils absent from morning or afternoon registration
- The School Administrator will check the location and code any student on the N report.
- This will include checks with the Health Centre, Reception, Matrons
- The Daily Meeting minutes (eg. school visits, special events etc) are also used to identify absence.
- A member of the admin team will enter these codes onto ISAMS as per DfE guidance
- The Director for Pastoral Care supports in this work and advises as required.
- The missing student policy will be activated for any student who has not been accounted for.
- The N report also identifies which teachers have not completed a register.
- The Director for Pastoral Care will contact these teachers to ask them to complete their register as a matter of urgency.
- The names of these teachers are passed to the academic leadership team.
- Patterns of attendance data are reviewed in Wellbeing meetings where students with low attendance are identified and supported with an action plan.

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any student's absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of other students. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'. 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/Principal.

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 students unless their absence has been authorised

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such 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;

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted such as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- 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 taken during term-time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher/principal, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- Leaving school for no reason during the day;
- Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Persistent and Severe Absence: A student is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee' (PA)** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any student's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. A student who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent' (SA)**. Students within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The attendance of all students at our school is 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 our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted

support. 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 for parentally condoned absence, 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.

Leave of Absence

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 Rikkyo School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headmaster and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Rikkyo School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headmaster at least one month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). Rikkyo School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will also 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. When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a student 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.

Medical Appointments and Absence Due to Illness

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 student 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 student must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must sign out via Reception. No student will be allowed to leave the school site without the confirmation of the medical centre.

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. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will speak to parents/carers regarding our concerns and look at what support can be put in place to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend a school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from

parents and the student as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.[1]

Where a student 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 students with medical conditions at school Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Local authority Council policies via the Medical Needs Service Medical needs - West Sussex County Council. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

Student Absence for the Purposes of Religious Observance
Rikkyo 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 student absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

Our Procedures:
In this section, the school should outline the procedures in place for taking registers and clearly specifying the times and methods for register keeping and recording.

Register Keeping and Recording: The School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 student was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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 morning of the first day of absence and on 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 from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 0830 when our register closes.
- Via email to nanascott@rikkyo.co.uk or telephone 0044 1403 822107
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 0830.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the	Jennifer Overton

[1] This is in accordance with the NSCP Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of student absence from school when medical reasons are cited

strategic approach to attendance in our school	
School staff who parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis	N/A in our setting
School staff who parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance	Jennifer Overton

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

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all students who are not in school after close of register at 0830 and where no reason for absence is known. We will telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.

Late Arrival at School

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Students who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher. At Rikkyo School all students are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 0800, Boarding and Pastoral staff work together to support students who are late. If their arrival at class is before 0900 it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 0900. All students 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. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with [insert staff member], but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our students and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

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

Support Systems

At Rikkyo 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.

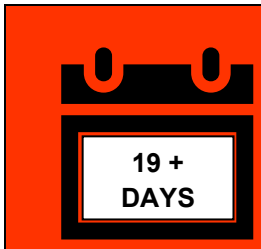
We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child. Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Emailing the parent if the child is late to class.
- Meetings of the child with the Deputy Head (Academic);
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate or undertake an Early Help Assessment & Plan with you;
- Refer the matter to an external agency for multi-agency support or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Contact Japanese Education Authorities if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate).

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and students 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 students.

Attendance Rewards & Interventions:

DAYS ABSENT	**Percentage of attendance**	***Member of staff responsible for actions at each of these stages***	***This column should list the support, rewards and interventions that will take place at this stage so that everyone understands what will happen***
	99 – 100%	Director	The School expects all students to be 99%-100% as the School is full boarding and parents resident mainly in Japan
	96 – 98%		
	92 – 95%	Headmaster	

	Under 90%	Headmaster	
	Under 50%	Headmaster	

At Rikkyo School we will investigate and offer support to any students who are on track to be Persistently Absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 98%. As a 100% boarding school it is expected that attendance will reflect that. Any absence the School will contact the parents immediately.

Part-time timetables

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all students 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 a temporary, reduced timetable where a student's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full-time education, and it would not be in their best interest to do so. We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a student's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a part-time 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 as part of a comprehensive package of support for the student where it is safe to do so; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family. In line with the Local Authority Council guidance West Sussex Services for Schools, we will notify the Attendance Team of all part-time timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

School Attendance and the Law

The School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered. Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Deletions from the Register

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

We follow the Local Authority 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. 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 student will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and the Local Authority Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

Rikkyo School will follow the Local Authority Council's Children Missing Education procedures Report a child missing education - West Sussex County Council when a student's whereabouts is unknown, the school will carry out joint enquiries with the Local Authority Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that students 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

8. Statutory Framework

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

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE (August 2024)
- The School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015)
- Children missing education, DfE (September 2016)
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (September 2023)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (December 2023)

Single National Threshold

The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years. In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold

is met. This might apply for example, where parents have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. The LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of two penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1st penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. Where a student's attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500. A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child **or** who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence). The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance**. Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

Requests for leave of absence

Working together to improve school attendance advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the student can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.' Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise schools will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Support with ensuring regular school attendance

If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact [Insert name and contact details].

Appendices: The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1 to EN08b.1 Attendance Policy: Leave of Absence Request Form.

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME			
Important information for parents – please read before completing this form Working together to improve school attendance advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the student can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance'. Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise we will be unable to consider your individual circumstances, and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The Headmaster is not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance. Our aim is for every student's attendance to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact [Insert name and contact details].			
I have read the above information and wish to apply for leave of absence from school for:			
Child's Full Name:		**Date of Birth:**	**Class:**

Parent/Carer Details (please list all parents)			
First Name:		**Surname:**	
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**	
Address and postcode:			
Telephone number:			
First Name:		**Surname:**	
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**	
Address and postcode:			
Telephone number:			

Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings and the school that they attend

Child's Full Name:	**Date of Birth:**	**School:**

Details of the absence			
Date of First day of absence:		**Date of last day of absence:**	
Total Number of days absent:		**Expected date of return to school:**	

Please provide the reason for this request including supporting evidence:

Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand the this:

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 understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied, and my child is absent during this period. I understand that a fine will be payable per parent, per child.

I have read and understood that the school may need to comply with the Local Authority's penalty.

Signed:		**Full name:**		**Date:**	
Signed:		**Full name:**		**Date:**	

To be completed by the school:			
Date request received by the school:		**Total number of days requested:**	
Child's Name:		**Application Authorised or Declined?**	
Reason for school's decision:			
In the case of a term time holiday please confirm which parent took the holiday:			
Headteacher:			
Signed:		**Date:**	

Appendix 2: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

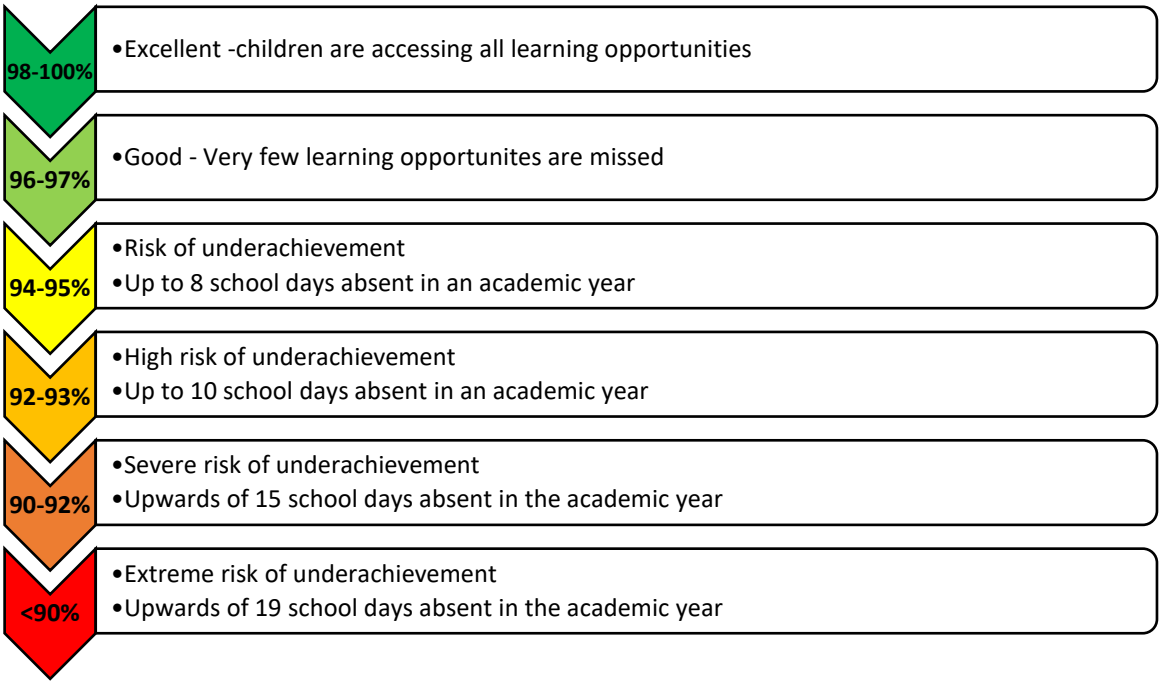
Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

The name and contact details of the school staff member students and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:
Name:
Email address and telephone number

We expect students to attend school for 100% of the academic year. You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives back on time for school at the start of each term and is ready to learn. Arriving after first registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Students must be in school the day before school starts
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours and inform the Lead Nurse who will arrange for your child to be taken to their appointment.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



'On the day' absences: what should I do if my child is not 'fit' to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to return to school, please report this absence by contacting Reception to let us know. In the message you must leave your child's full name, year and class and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence: There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via nanascott@rikkyo.co.uk. You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

Punctuality: 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. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.
Please contact nanascott@rikkyo.co.uk if you require any support with ensuring your child's return to school.