



Attendance and Registration Policy

Introduction

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the DfE regulations.

In line with the College's Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs policies, we aim to give all students equal opportunities to take part in all aspects of College life, as far as is appropriate, practicable and compatible with giving regard to health and safety and the efficient education of other students.

This policy takes account of the Government's aim for children to have the support they need under Every Child Matters:

- to be healthy
- to stay safe
- to enjoy and achieve
- to make a positive contribution
- to achieve economic well-being

The policy will follow the five principles of the Children's Plan:

- to support parents and families
- to allow children to reach their full potential
- to enable children to enjoy their childhood whilst preparing for adult life
- to provide services in response to children and family needs
- to use preventative measures to help students avoid the possibility of failure

This policy is based upon the College's commitment to the development and maintenance of good behaviour and a positive and inclusive ethos for all members of the College community.

Foreword

Rooks Heath College is a mixed 11 to 18 multicultural comprehensive in the London Borough of Harrow. This policy is formulated by the Attendance Administrator in consultation with relevant staff and is monitored by other members of the College's Leadership and Management

Group. The policy is subject to review every 3 years by the College's Leadership and Management Group and is subject to approval by the Governors of the College.

As a College we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a *minimum* of 95%. Governing Body sets a target annually.
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Equip our students with the skills necessary for coping with adult life such as attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find College routines and College work easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Good attendance and punctuality are essential life skills and failure to develop these skills in students could seriously affect their success in the world of work.

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Ring on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return. The permitted reasons for keeping a child home are:
 - **He/she is too sick to be comfortable at College.**
 - **He/she might spread a contagious disease to other children.**
- Arrange dental and doctor's appointments out of College hours or during College after an illness. Parents will be expected to collect their child from the College if they are to attend a dental or medical appointment during College time, or if they are going home sick.
- Send in a note explaining the reason for absence on a child's return to College after an illness.
- Keep College updated by telephone or letter if a child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

The Attendance Office will:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls, text messages and letters as soon as possible.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the College prospectus and the Home-College agreement.
- Publish RH attendance rate in the College prospectus and the Governing Body's Annual Report to parents.

- Acknowledge and reward good attendance.
- Publish each child's attendance rate on her/his annual College report.
- Let parent/carers know if there are concerns regarding a child's attendance.
- Make a referral to the Early Intervention Service if the College continue to have concerns.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as 'authorised absences'. For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance.

There are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes a child to be absent.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as 'unauthorised absences'. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is a child's birthday
- Accompanying a family member to an appointment
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

There is no entitlement to time off in term time for occasions such as family holidays.

Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with the College policy by the board of governors. It is our policy that:

- Requests for holidays **will not** be authorised. Absence taken and not authorised could result in a fixed penalty being issued (See Legal Note below for details).
- Only in exceptional circumstances will absence be allowed and then only up to a maximum of two weeks.
- Parents wishing to apply for exceptional leave of absence need to fill in an application form before booking.

Punctuality

Morning registration is at 8.45 am, by which time students must be in registration.

Parents/carers should ensure their child is on the College premises by 8.40 am. Closure of registers for the morning session takes place at 9.10 am, and a register is taken thereafter

throughout the day at the start of each lesson. Registration for Period 4 constitutes an afternoon register.

Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with DfE guidance. The College uses an electronic system of registration (Bromcom). Attendance and punctuality data is monitored weekly by the attendance officer and Director of Learning. Trends and patterns are analysed termly, feedback given to relevant staff and appropriate action taken. Annual data and analysis is given to Governing Body. Late detentions are held weekly.

The procedure for late arrivals to College:

Two or more late arrivals to College in a week will result in students being detained **after College** on a Thursday for 1 hour.

Failure to attend this detention will result in a 1½ hour detention on a Friday.

Additional Support

In the first instance, the College offers support and advice for those parents/carers facing difficulty getting their children to attend College regularly. Meetings can be arranged with the Attendance Team. If necessary, further support is offered by the Early Intervention team at Harrow Children's Services.

Leavers

If a child is leaving, other than at the end of Year 11, parents are asked to:

- Give the College full information about their plans, including date of move, new address, name of new school and start date when known, with reason for moving.

Children Missing Education

When students leave and the College has not been given the above information, and a parent/carer cannot be contacted, then the child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. The Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies to try to track and locate a child

Legal Note

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a child of compulsory school age 'fails to attend regularly' at the school where he or she is a registered pupil, his parent is guilty of an offence.

This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department of Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents may be prosecuted or have to pay a Fixed Penalty if unauthorised absences continue.

At Rooks Heath we are committed to following the Attendance Intervention Model for irregular attendance which was introduced in all Harrow Schools in 2013.

This process involves identifying students who are at risk of becoming persistent absentees. This could potentially lead to either a Penalty Notice being issued or Court action if a parent fails to get their child into College regularly.

Education Penalty Notices

A penalty notice is a fine of £60 and must be paid within 21 days. This rises to £120 if paid after 21 days. If full payment has not been received after 28 days, the Local Authority shall normally prosecute the recipient for the offence of 'Failure to ensure regular school attendance under s444 (1) Education Act 1996'. Penalty notices are issued to both parents.

Up to three penalty notices may be issued per child during each academic school year if appropriate.

In cases where there is more than one poorly-attending pupil in a family, a penalty notice may be issued to each parent in respect of each child.

The issuing of Penalty Notices may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Absence from college
 - At least 20 sessions (10 college days) lost to unauthorised absence within a period of no more than 12 weeks (term time).
 - A leave of absence of at least 10 consecutive sessions (5 college days).
- Lateness
 - In cases where a child persistently arrives at college after the register has closed and has received at least eight (8) unauthorised late marks within a period of ten (10) weeks (term time).
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- Where the Harrow Council's Education Services believes that a Penalty Notice is the most appropriate way to deal with irregular school attendance as the child has attendance below 90% and at least 5% absences are unauthorised.

Local Authority Policies and Interventions

In some circumstances the college will ask the Local Authority to intervene when a child's attendance record is causing concern. Harrow's Education Services is committed to ensuring that every child has access to a sufficient full time education suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and needs. Parents and pupils are supported at college and LA level to overcome barriers to regular attendance through a wide continuum of assessment and intervention strategies. Regular non-attendance from college may require pastoral support and monitoring rather than a Penalty Notice and court action.

The Court Attendance Officer will co-ordinate the administration and processing of Education Penalty Notice and the Pre Court Panel process where children with poor attendance are being considered for legal action under section 444 Education Act 1996; this being a last resort after all other interventions / support have been exhausted.