

Attendance policy



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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to Centre attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve Centre attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-Centre culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- › Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all learners
- › Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every learner has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to make sure learners have the support in place to attend Centre

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve Centre attendance](#) and [Centre attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern Centre attendance:

- › Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

- > [The Centre Attendance \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- > <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents>The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- > The [Equality Act 2010](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made> It also refers to:

- > [Centre census guidance](#)
- > [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- > [Mental health issues affecting a learner's attendance: guidance for Centres](#)
- > [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- > Setting high expectations of all Centre leaders, staff, learners and parents/carers
- > Making sure Centre leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on Centre attendance, including:
 - > Making sure the Centre records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - > Making sure the Centre works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate
 - > Recognising and promoting the importance of Centre attendance across the Centre's policies and ethos
 - > Making sure the Centre's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for learners who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
 - > Making sure the Centre has high aspirations for all learners, but adapts processes and support to learners' individual needs
 - > Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping Centre leaders focus improvement efforts on individual learners or cohorts who need it most
 - > Working with Centre leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
 - > Monitoring attendance figures for the whole Centre and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the Centre's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting learners' needs
 - > Where the Centre is struggling with attendance, working with Centre leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
 - > Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The Centre's legal requirements for keeping registers

- The Centre's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate
- › Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- › Holding the Head of Centre to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head of Centre

The Head of Centre is responsible for:

- › The implementation of this policy at the Centre
- › Monitoring Centre-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Deputy Head of Centre to be able to do so
- › Working with the parents/carers of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for learners with SEND, including where Centre transport is regularly being missed, and where learners with SEND face in-Centre barriers
- › Communicating with the local authority when a learner with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the learner's needs
- › Communicating the Centre's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to learners and parents/carers through all available channels
- › Sharing information from the Centre register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a learner's name is added to or deleted from the Centre admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of learners who fail to attend Centre regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 Centre days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of learners who the Centre believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading, championing and improving attendance across the Centre
- › Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- › Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- › Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- › Liaising with learners, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

- › Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with learners and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to learners and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Kim Anderson and can be contacted via kim.anderson@rbet.ac

3.4 The attendance officer

The Centre attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to Centre staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Head of Centre
- › Working with School Support Team to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the Head of Centre when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Lucy Jackson and can be contacted via lucy.jackson@rbet.ac

3.5 Teachers and mentors

Teachers and mentors are responsible for recording attendance for all learning sessions and activities and submitting this information on paper to the Centre office if the online registers are not working.

3.6 Centre staff

Centre staff will:

- › Take calls/emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the Centre system

3.7 Parents/Carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the Centre and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- › All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- › All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- › Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Use the online Parent App to inform the Centre and report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the Centre with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the Centre day
- › Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the Centre and/or local authority
- › Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Centre.

3.8 Learners

Learners are expected to:

- › Attend the Centre every day, on time
- › Attend every timetabled session, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all learners on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each Centre Day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the Centre Attendance (Learner Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every learner is:

- › Present
- › Attending a place other than Centre
- › Absent
- › Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity, where a learner is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances, where a learner is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The Centre day starts at 9am and ends at 3pm.

Learners must arrive in Centre by 9am on each Centre day and no earlier than 8.45am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.10pm and will be kept open until 1.40pm according to page 19 of [Working together to improve Centre attendance](#)].

4.2 Unplanned absence

The learner's parent must notify the Centre of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by using the ParentApp or emailing worthing-admin@rbet.ac.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the Centre has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the Centre will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the learner's parent notifies the Centre in advance of the appointment. Parent/carers should request leave of absence by using Parent App or by emailing worthing-admin@rbet.ac.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of Centre hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the learner should be out of Centre for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The learner's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the Centre can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A learner who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

We will notify parents/carers by email or telephone call if there is continued lateness to the Centre or to individual lessons. There may be an attendance meeting held to discuss strategies to help support and improve the learner's punctuality.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any learner we expect to attend does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the Centre will:

- Call the learner's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the Centre cannot reach any of the learner's emergency contacts, the Centre may contact the police or conduct a home visit
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the learner was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the learner's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the learner and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the learner needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

- › Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve or a penalty notice and advise the appropriate local authority who is funding the placement.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The Centre will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels eg termly via written reports.

5. Authorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of Centre will only grant a **leave of absence** to a learner during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 Centre attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- › Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- › Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- › Study leave
- › A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- › Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Head of Centre's discretion, including the length of time the learner is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

Rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur. Examples include:

- › Medical emergencies
- › Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)

Leave of absence will not be granted for a learner to take part in protest activity during Centre hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The Centre considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence and must be in writing and sent to worthing-admin@rbet.ac. The Head of Centre may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence

5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- › Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the Centre will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance
- › Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a learner is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the learner is travelling with them. In these

circumstances a learner will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory Centre age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place

- › If the learner is currently suspended or excluded from Centre (and no alternative provision has been made)

5.3 Absences from the Centre site (which are not classified as absences)

The Head of Centre will allow learners to be absent from the Centre site for certain educational activities, or to attend other Centres or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- › Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the Centre
- › Attending another Centre at which the learner is also registered (dual registration)
- › Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- › Attending work experience
- › If there is any other unavoidable cause for the learner not to attend Centre, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the Centre premises are closed

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our learners to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, learners need to avoid missing lessons and days of Centre as much as possible. As a Centre, we want to acknowledge high attendance and not just penalise learners for poor attendance.

Learners with good attendance will be recognized by receiving attendance certificates.

7. Supporting learners with poor attendance

Our Centre will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

7.1 Attendance contracts

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the Centre to address irregular attendance at Centre. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the Centre cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the Centre will arrange a meeting with the parent (and learner if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the learner's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the Centre may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the Centre may take further action.

7.2 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and attendance contracts have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

8. Supporting learners who are absent or returning to Centre

8.1 Learners absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the Centre becomes aware of barriers that relate to the learner's needs, we will inform the local authority. We will work with our families to create an individual plan to support attendance at the Centre, or provide work during periods where the learner cannot attend the Centre.

8.2 Learners absent due to mental or physical ill health

Due to the nature of our learners, there may be periods of absence due to mental or physical ill health. We will work with our families to encourage learners to attend the Centre wherever possible, and offer a bespoke support package according to needs. This may include additional mentoring, part-time timetable for a fixed period.

8.3 Learners absent due to other barriers to attendance

The Centre is a specialist independent provision for young people who have previously struggled to attend mainstream schools. Our expectations are that our learners will attend the Centre wherever possible including those learners who have been identified as

- > Being disadvantaged
- > Having SEND
- > Being known (or previously known) to children's social care
- > Having other barriers to attendance (e.g. young carers)

Part of Ofsted's criteria for 'expected standard' for attendance and behaviour says that any reasonable adjustments and/or interventions should be timely and appropriate, well-chosen and targeted. The Centre will work with the learner and their family to ensure that any barriers to attending will be overcome.

Where a learner has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, the Centre will inform the local authority.

8.4 Learners returning to Centre after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where a learner has had a significant period of absence, the Centre will provide a bespoke programme of reintegration. This may include an adjusted timetable, additional mentoring or therapy and support with addressing any gaps in learning.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The Centre will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the Centre and at an individual learner, year group and cohort level.

Specific learner information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's Centre absence national statistics releases. The underlying Centre-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The Centre will benchmark its attendance data at whole Centre, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The Centre will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify learners, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify learners whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The Centre will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual learners, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the learners we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with learners and families, and to the governing board and Centre leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, and designated safeguarding leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other Centres in the area, local authorities and other partners where a learner's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a learner misses 10% or more of Centre, and severe absence is where a learner misses 50% or more of Centre. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the Centre's strategy for improving attendance.

The Centre will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of learners who the Centre (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at Centre
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available

- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these learners. In doing so, the Centre will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above)

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Head of Centre. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- > RBET Child protection and safeguarding policy
- > Behaviour for learning policy
- > Supporting learners with medical conditions

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on Centre attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Learner is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Learner is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Learner arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the Centre		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Learner is attending a place other than a Centre at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Learner is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the Centre
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Learner is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the Centre
W	Attending work experience	Learner is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Learner is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Learner is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Learner is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during Centre hours, approved by the Centre
M	Medical/dental appointment	Learner is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Learner has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Learner has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in Centre	Learner of non-compulsory Centre age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Learner is not in Centre due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Learner is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Learner is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Learner has been suspended or excluded from Centre and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend Centre because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Learner is unable to attend Centre because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at Centre
Y1	Transport not available	Learner is unable to attend because Centre is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Learner is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of Centre premises closed	Learner is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole Centre site unexpectedly closed	Every learner absent as the Centre is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Learner is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Learner's travel to or attendance at the Centre would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the Centre	Learner is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the Centre
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the Centre isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in Centre after registration closed	Learner has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective learner not on admission register	Learner has not joined Centre yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-Centre closure	Whole-Centre closures that are known and planned in advance, including Centre holidays