



Reading Girls' School

Principal: Marika Farrugia

19th June 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to remind all parents about our commitment as a school community to good school attendance and some of the actions we are required to carry out to support it.

Research has shown that regular attendance and good punctuality are crucial factors in students achieving their full potential at school. Reading Girls' School (RGS) works with parents, carers and the Education Welfare Service to ensure regular attendance and punctuality. This is vital to continue to raise standards at the school. We wish to work in partnership with parents and carers, so are seeking your full support in ensuring your daughter attends school every day, on time. We are always pleased to work together with parents/carers in resolving any difficulties and are committed to improving attendance levels at school.

The target attendance figure for all students is a **minimum of 98%** attendance.

Absence

- If your student is going to be absent from school, the parent/guardian must ring school before 8.00am or as close to this time as possible to inform school of the reason for the absence.
- Registers are taken at 8.30am. Any students who arrive after 8.30am must sign in at the office and they will receive a detention that same evening.
- At 8.50am school registers are checked for any absences for which we have no information.
- The attendance team will send a text message to the parent/guardian if there has been no contact with school regarding the absence or the message left on the answering machine is unclear.
- If a student has been absent and school has not been able to find out any reason for absence from the parent/guardian, a home visit will be made, as soon as is possible but certainly after the third day of absence. A first day absence visit may be made if there are concerns such as family welfare or persistent absence.
- A student who is absent from school without an authorised reason will be marked as 'unauthorised' in the register.

Categorising absence

The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 require schools to determine whether an absence can be deemed to be authorised or whether the child should be regarded as being absent without permission i.e. truanting. In the terms of the legislation, it is only the school who can approve the absence, not the parent.

Here at RGS, absence will only be authorised by the Principal for the following reasons;

- Student illness with evidence from a medical professional for example an appointment card or email evidence of a doctor's appointment with outcome resulting in absence from school.
- Student is absent on a day set aside for religious observation by the religious group to which the pupil's parents belong. As per the government guidelines one day will be authorised.
- Student is absent following the death of a close family member.
- Student has a medical or dental appointment, confirmed with an appointment card/letter. The student is expected to attend school prior to the appointment or return to school after the appointment – where possible medical or dental appointments should be booked outside of school hours.

Persistent absentees

Pupils whose attendance is less than 90% are referred to as "Persistent Absentees" by the DfE and will be considered for referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team. The school attendance team will then begin a programme of monitoring and support as set out in our Attendance Phases which can be found on the school website. <https://www.readinggirsschool.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=939&type=pdf>

Extended leave and family holidays in term time

In September 2013, the law was changed (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) to remove the statutory threshold of the discretionary 10 school days of absence for the purpose of a family holiday or extended leave except for exceptional circumstances. Consequently **NO FAMILY HOLIDAYS OR EXTENDED LEAVE WILL BE GRANTED** for any student.

If a request is made, families must note that if they decide to take unauthorised leave e.g. go on extended leave in term time, then the school will actively pursue the issuance of a fixed penalty notice which could lead to a minimum fine of £50 per child per parent which must be paid within 21 days or £100 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions. If you have 3 children with a mother and father, then each parent will be fined £50 per child $3 \times £50 = £150$ which would be £300 fine for the family.

Should you have any questions or worries regarding attendance please contact the school attendance officer in the first instance who will be happy to assist any way possible.

attendance@readinggirsschool.net Amanda Comber 0118 921 1336 ext 468

Yours sincerely



Sally Elliott
Assistant Principal