



The Robert Carre Trust

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Parents or carers of students of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full time education by attendance at school or otherwise. (Education Act 1996). If a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly their parent commits an offence.

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995, the school must keep an attendance register.

The Trust schools are registered with the Information Commissioner under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Aim

Schools within the Robert Carre Trust are caring schools which always have the best interests of their students at the heart of everything they do. In order for our students to gain maximum benefit from their time with us, a high level of attendance is vital. Whilst we appreciate that occasionally absences are unavoidable, we aim to discourage absence where possible. The schools will work with parents and students to secure this aim. This policy will ensure that there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that students who should be attending the schools have registered twice daily, or a reason for non-attendance is known to the schools.

Legislation & Guidance

This Policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance and responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

The Education Act 1996

The Education Act 2002

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Taking the register

Students of compulsory school age must have their attendance registered twice per day. It is the practice of schools within the Trust to register ALL students (including those over compulsory school age).

The register must be updated twice daily at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. In addition, all teaching staff, or staff who are charged with supervising a lesson, must check that the students who should attend each lesson do so.

The register must record the following:

1. Whether a student is present, absent, or attending an approved educational activity.

2. When a student of compulsory school age is absent it must be marked as an authorised or unauthorised absence.
3. The nature of the absence.

An approved educational activity is defined as:

- one taking place off the school premises;
- approved by a person authorised by the Local Governing Body or the Executive Headteacher/ Head of School;
- supervised by a person approved by the Local Governing Body or Executive Headteacher/ Head of School;
- of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits, interviews with prospective employers, approved Sixth Form home study, or for a place at higher or further education;
- link courses where students attend a FE college for part of their time, or franchised students receiving part of their education off-site at another location while remaining on roll and under school supervision, or attending an approved sporting activity.

All tutor group registers will be closed at 9.05am. Afternoon registers should be completed by 1.45pm. Any student arriving late but within 20 minutes of the register closing will be marked with an L. Any student arriving more than 20 minutes late will be marked with a U, unless a valid reason for the lateness, such as a medical appointment, can be given. Students arriving late, **for whatever reason**, will always be marked as such. This also includes lateness due to transport issues.

Inspection

School admission and attendance registers must be available for inspection by HMIs and registered inspectors.

Responsibilities

The **Trust** will:

- approve the policy and any proposed changes;

The **Local Governing Body** will:

- receive reports from a senior leader within the school and
- review the working policy in the light of the senior leader's report.

The **Executive Headteacher / Head of School** will:

- ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the schools, and is known by the parents;
- monitor progress;
- ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school; and
- deal with issues of inadequate registering.

The **Deputy/ Assistant Headteacher** will:

- oversee the attendance arrangements;
- work with Heads of Year to ensure the efficient running of the system;
- make periodic checks of the registers to monitor student absence;
- make a regular report, with statistics, to the Local Governing Body, including references to Persistent Absence (less than 90% attendance) statistics and the attendance statistics for identified student groups including the disadvantaged and those with SEN;
- keep the Executive Headteacher / Head of School informed of the progress of the policy;

- advise the Executive Headteacher / Head of School on any strategies that could be initiated or improved;
- determine, in collaboration with the Heads of Year, whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's Leave of Absence form, or absences which have taken place where no request was made;
- liaise with the relevant Head of Year where matters progress to initiating legal action through the LA.

The **Heads of Year** will:

- make regular checks on reasons for absence;
- ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with;
- contact parents regarding concerns over student absences, where appropriate;
- follow up cases of unaccounted absence or unacceptable notes;
- notify parents, as appropriate, that if a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents are committing an offence;
- initiate, with appropriate staff, strategies to improve attendance;
- liaise with external agencies over persistent absences;
- ensure that unaccounted for absences are followed up;
- make reports to the designated senior leader on attendance related issues; and
- ensure that clear records of action and intervention on attendance-related issues are kept to support legal proceedings should that become necessary to safeguard the interests of the student.

Form Tutors will:

- ensure students are registered accurately by 9.05am;
- record correctly in the register or inform the office of any known planned absences;
- ensure that students bring absence notes. These are to be passed directly to the Attendance Officer or, in the case of Sixth Form students, to the Sixth Form Attendance Officer;
- keep the Head of Year informed of any signs of suspected truancy and/or extended periods of absence. In the case of Sixth Form students, the Sixth Form Attendance Officer should be informed to pass to the Head of Year; and
- inform the Head of Year of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences.

Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- ensure relevant staff are kept updated with regard to current safeguarding concerns related to absence;
- respond in accordance with agreed current protocols for Children Missing in Education in a prompt and timely manner.

Heads of Subject will:

- monitor lesson attendance and completion of registers within their subject area.

Class Teachers will:

- keep an electronic register of attendance at all their lessons;
- complete an electronic register at the start of period 4, completed by 1.50pm, sending a paper register to the main office if this is not possible; and
- inform the Head of Year of the names of students who are absent without known reason.

The **Attendance Officer** or **Sixth Form Attendance Officer** will:

- ensure that student absences are noted and absence notes received from parents;
- monitor that all registers are completed;
- make regular checks of absence notes and the reasons for absence; and
- contact parents over student absences, where appropriate, in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Students are required to:

- make tutors aware of notes in planners and hand in letters/notes regarding absences;
- attend regularly, unless they are ill or have an authorised absence, arriving before the close of the register;
- if late, sign in at reception so that their attendance can be recorded.

Sixth Form students are required to:

- attend registration every day, even when they do not have lessons immediately after;
- sign in late at the Sixth Form Office if they miss registration;
- notify the Sixth Form Attendance Officer of any planned absence;
- complete an Open Day form for any visits to higher education establishments;
- complete a Leave of Absence form for any other planned absences; and
- attend every lesson, including supervised study, unless official home study has been granted at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form and approved by parents (using the Home Study Form).

Parents are required to:

- discuss with tutors any planned absences well in advance;
- inform the office of any planned absences;
- inform the school of absence on the first day of non-attendance and on subsequent days; and
- make any request for leave of absence on the school's Leave of Absence form.

Leave of Absence

The Robert Carre Trust policy reflects the national position regarding absences.

Headteachers may not grant leave of absence to students in term-time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'

Parents are expected to complete the school's official Leave of Absence form before any planned absence, other than medical appointments. The form is available on the school website, but can also be collected from the Main Office.

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Leave can only be granted on the approval of an appropriate member of senior management.

Holiday leave will only be granted in **exceptional** circumstances and **must** be applied for in advance on the official form.

Leave will not be granted automatically but will take into account:

- the age of the child;
- the student's attainment and ability to catch up on lost work;
- the student's attendance record;

- the time of year in which it is proposed;
- the nature of the leave requested;
- the views of the Head of Year; and
- exceptional parental/family circumstances.

Cheaper holidays during term time **do not** count as exceptional circumstances.

If the student still goes on a holiday which has not been approved by the school it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Authorised absences

Authorised absences include those for the following reasons, but they **must be notified in advance**:

- Medical appointments
- Funerals
- Close family weddings
- Visits to University Open Days
- Sporting commitments
- Work Experience
- Interviews
- Driving test
- Musical exams and commitments
- Religious observance
- Armed Forces deployment-related compassionate leave

This is not an exhaustive list and each request will be considered on individual merit.

Schools in the Trust may authorise limited absences for young carers, until other arrangements can be made. Referrals may be made to other agencies, but this will always be done with sensitivity so as to avoid causing additional stress to the student.

Safeguarding and Attendance

The Trust recognises that patterns of poor attendance or unauthorised absences may be causes for concern from a safeguarding perspective. Trust schools will, therefore, endeavour to ascertain at the earliest opportunity, typically on the first day of absence, a reason for the absence by contacting the parent/carer. Where there are safeguarding concerns, these will be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Children Missing in Education

The Trust recognises that patterns of poor attendance or unauthorised absences may be causes for concern from a safeguarding perspective and the Trust schools comply with the latest guidance from the statutory authorities with regard to Children Missing in Education. Trust schools will, therefore, endeavour to ascertain at the earliest opportunity, typically on the first day of absence, a reason for the absence by contacting the parent/carer. Where there are safeguarding concerns, these will be raised with the Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL will ensure that relevant staff are aware of the agreed Local Authority and LSCB protocols for Children Missing in Education and will take prompt and timely action where concerns are raised by colleagues.

Adverse weather

Absences due to adverse weather, such as snow, will be treated on an individual basis. Students who live within walking distance (defined as 3 miles for students over 8 years old), and can, therefore, walk to school, will not have their absence authorised unless the school closes for the

day. Students living beyond the statutory walking distance where school transport is temporarily unavailable will have their absence authorised.

Taking a student off the register

A child's name can only be taken off the register:

- where a child has been registered at another school;
- where the parent has notified the school that the student is receiving education other than at school;
- where a student is granted leave of more than ten days and the school is unable to establish the whereabouts of the student and/or family. In such cases, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed;
- where the student is certified by a medical officer that they are unfit to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- where the student has been absent continuously for a period of not less than four weeks, and neither the LA or the school, after reasonable enquiry, has been able to locate the student; and
- where the student has been permanently excluded.

Ensuring attendance

Schools in the Trust will always attempt to work with parents to ensure that students attend. This may involve enlisting the services of the external agencies focusing on educational welfare and family support. If all attempts to work with the parents fail then the Local Authority and/or Police may become involved.

In extreme cases the Local Authority may prosecute parents who fail to make every effort to ensure that their child attends school.

Complaints

Any parent who is aggrieved with the decision made regarding an absence should follow the Trust's normal complaints procedure.

Reviewed at the meeting of the Education & Personnel Committee on 25 June 2018

Ratified at the meeting of the Board on 12 September 2018

Next Review Due: September 2019 (annually)