

Attendance Policy

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Purpose

A core belief at RBAir is that engagement is vital for the social, emotional and academic development of our learners. However, learners at RBAir may face significant barriers to attendance due to a range of issues regarding their mental health, previous school-based trauma, and diagnosed conditions and clinical needs. RBAir adopts a ‘non-punitive approach’ to engagement and attendance and is committed to working collaboratively with families, staff and external agencies to support every young person in re-engaging with education at a pace that is right for them.

RBAir aims to:

- encourage and support engagement and attendance for all learners;
- identify barriers to engagement and attendance early and respond proactively;
- foster a supportive and non-punitive approach to absence;
- work in partnership with families and professionals to develop individualised attendance and re-engagement strategies.

Scope

For Red Balloon of the Air (RBAir), this policy outlines how attendance is monitored and managed. The blended nature of the provision means that attendance procedures are designed to reflect the specific needs of RBAir.

1. Legal framework

- Education Act (1996) - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006, amended Sept 2016
... see 'Children Missing Education')
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2010)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2011)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2013)
- Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DfE – Aug 2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (GOV.UK Sept 2024)
- Working together to improve school attendance (applies from Sept 2025)

This policy works in conjunction with the RBAir Attendance Strategy.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Head of Centre	Overall responsibility for attendance strategy, monitoring and review.
Assistant Headteacher	Day-to-day tracking of attendance, first point of contact for families.
Teachers and Link Mentors	Daily contact with learners, report concerns promptly.
Parents and Carers	Inform RBAir of absence, work with RBAir to overcome barriers.

3. Admissions and attendance

The Head of Centre will ensure that RBAir has clear practice guidelines for encouraging attendance, including a response to non-attendance. (Please see the Attendance Strategy, which will be updated yearly). A designated administrator will ensure that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with this policy.

Admission and attendance registers

Red Balloon of the Air will maintain up-to-date, accurate admission and attendance registers. All attendance is tracked and monitored through our MIS system – Arbor.

The admission register

The admission register contains the personal details of every learner along with the date of admission or re-admission.

The information to be entered (and updated as necessary) in the admission register includes:

- full name of learner;
- sex;
- date of birth;
- date of admission/re-admission;
- name and address of all parent(s)/carer(s) and one telephone number (with an indication as to which of those the learner normally lives with and who has parental responsibility);
- address of new or additional place(s) of residence of learner and date learner began to reside there;
- full name of parent(s)/ carer(s) the learner lives with;
- name and address of last school attended;
- emergency contact details of parent(s) and carer(s);
- name of destination school;
- start date at new school;
- any necessary information concerning communication with parent(s)/carer(s) (such as hearing impairment, requirement for information in Braille, language preference).

A learner will only be deleted from the admissions register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended Sept 2016).

Amendments to the admission register and attendance register

Every amendment made to the admission register and 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.

Where a parent/carer notifies RBAir that a learner will live at another address, we will, in accordance with the requirements of statutory guidance (Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidelines for Local Authorities, DfE August 2024), record in the admission register:

- the full name of the parent(s)/carer(s) with whom the learner will live, the new address, and the date from when it is expected the learner will live at this address.

Preservation of the admission register and attendance register

In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and section 458(4) and (5) of the Education Act (1996) every entry in the admission register and attendance register will be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

4. Monitoring attendance at live sessions

RBAir staff seek to provide a supportive, nurturing environment, and all staff help learners make positive informed decisions about their education and their life in general. Whilst it is hoped that this will help learners to attend regularly, the need for prompt action should they not attend is acknowledged, particularly the need to ensure that the learner is 'safe'.

At the point of referral, RBAir will ensure that learners and parent(s)/carer(s) are aware of the need to report the reason for any absence immediately. If the reason given for absence is considered to be legitimate, no further action will be taken.

Weekly monitoring of overall absence rates will be the responsibility of a nominated member of SLT. This will involve checking individual absence rates, overall patterns of absence and

any circumstances surrounding those absences. Appropriate support systems will be activated to encourage improved attendance levels when necessary. These would include:

- checking with the learner's Link Mentor to establish reasons behind the absence;
- exploring strategies which could/have been put in place by the Link Mentor;
- SLT contact with parent(s)/carer(s) where appropriate;
- escalation to emergency review of the appropriateness of the provision.

In any case where there is prolonged unauthorised absence, RBAir will always ensure that commissioners and appropriate local authority staff are notified and will work with them to attempt to re-engage the learner in accordance with any local agreements that have been reached.

5. Guidance concerning marking the attendance register

Recording live attendance

- Registers must be completed by all staff within ten minutes of a session opening. If a learner is not present and no advance information is available, then a learner will be marked 'N'.
- Admin staff will check registers after ten minutes. A phone call will be made home for any learner marked as 'N'.
- Registers will be updated with any new information.
- Admin staff will notify a DSL should there be any concerns for the welfare of the learner.

If teaching staff do not enter a mark in the register after the ten-minute period, Admin staff will contact the head of that department or a member of SLT.

Attendance codes (from 19th Aug 2024) :

/ \	Present / = morning session \ = afternoon session
N	Not present
L	Record number of minutes
V	Attending an educational visit or trip

M	Leave of absence for attending a medical or dental appointment
S	Study Leave
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
I	*Illness – not medical or dental appointment
K	Used by schools if a YP is on roll and attends an Alternative Education Provision

Further explanation of Code I

***Code I:** Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

This code should be used if:

- the learner is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Educational provisions should advise parents/carers to notify them on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.

DFE guidance for non-attendance described as illness

- RBAir does not routinely request that parents/carers provide medical evidence to support illness absences. RBAir would only request reasonable medical evidence in cases where clarification is needed to accurately record absence in the attendance register – i.e. making a decision that Code I is the absence code that accurately describes the reason the learner is not present in the session in question.
- In most cases, a parent's/carer's notification that their child is too ill to attend will be sufficient and can be accepted without question or concern. Only where RBAir has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence.
- Where medical evidence is deemed necessary, RBAir will not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and should speak to the family about what evidence is available. RBAir will be mindful that requesting additional medical evidence unnecessarily places pressure on health professionals, their staff and their appointment system, particularly if the illness is one that does not require treatment by a health professional.

