



Supporting Positive
Attendance
A Guide for Families



**Robert
Bloomfield
Academy**



School Attendance Introduction

Regular, consistent daily attendance is expected of all students at RBA. This is to ensure our outstanding provision is not missed and all students flourish from Year 5 to Year 8. It is the responsibility of the parent/family to ensure their child attends school, but RBA will work with families when barriers occur, such as anxiety or specific medical needs.

Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 require all maintained schools to open to educate their pupils for at least 190 days (380 sessions) in each school year.

Why is this important?

- When a child attends school on a regular basis, they take an important step towards reaching their full potential, and are given the greatest opportunity to learn new things and develop their skills.
- Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams.
- The more time a child spends around other children, whether in the classroom or as part of a school team or club, the more chance they have of making friends and feeling included, boosting social skills, confidence and self-esteem.

The numbers speak for themselves

Days Absent	Attendance in one school year
9.5 Days	95%
19 Days	90%
28.5 Days	85%
38 Days	80%
47.5 Days	75%
57 Days	65%
66.5 Days	60%

Points to Remember

- You can only allow your child to miss school if he or she is ill, or if you have advance permission from the school eg, for a medical appointment
- Absence requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances
- You can be fined for taking your child out of school without advance permission from the school

How do I request permission for an absence?

- You must submit a request to the school before you arrange for your child to have time away.
- If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, you need to submit a formal request to the Headteacher via the school office. The headteacher will then consider whether to give permission for the absence

When will absence requests be granted?

- Permission for absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- The Principal will consider each absence request individually and decide whether to grant the absence.
- The Principal will also decide how many days your child can be away from school if the absence is granted

Exceptional circumstances

It is at the school's discretion to decide which circumstances are 'exceptional'.

Examples of circumstances that **are not** exceptional may include:

- Cheap holidays or holidays that have already been paid for
- Absence that coincides with important school events such as the start of term or exams

As a general guideline, exceptional absence circumstances usually apply only to immediate family. Requests for leave related to extended family and friends are likely to be refused.

What if I take my child on an unauthorised absence?

If you take your child out of school without advance permission (except where he or she is unwell), you can be fined or even prosecuted. This could involve:

- A fixed penalty notice of £60 within 21 days, or £120 within 28 days
- A parenting order, education supervision order or school attendance order where your child repeatedly misses school without a good reason.

Why is it important?

Missing two weeks of school for a holiday might not seem like very much, but it can have a big effect on your child's education. For example, if your child misses two weeks of school every year, this adds up to more than two terms over the child's whole time in school. Making sure your child attends school as much as possible means:

- Your child will have the same education and opportunities as everyone else in the class
- You won't need to worry about catching up on work, or that your child might fall behind because of missing an important lesson
- Your child won't miss out on activities at the start and end of term, which are often fun and a chance to develop friendships

[Legal Framework:](#) (click this heading for the DfE Policy)

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at an alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

Promoting Positive Attendance – Our Strategies

- Year Group Assemblies and regular references in tutor time to promote the benefits of regular school attendance.
- Live % attendance data shared via Sims App and in tutor groups each week
- Classes who achieve the highest % attendance for each half term are rewarded with a non-uniform day.
- Additional rewards for excellent attendance also include Principal's Commendation (our highest reward), luck draw free entry to school discos; VIP lunch pass coupons to skip the lunch queue and more
- Pupils who achieve 96% or above for the term are entered in to an attendance lottery with the winner receiving a £10 Amazon voucher.
- Pupils who achieve 100% attendance for the entire academic year receive a certificate and a prize at the yearly awards celebration assemblies
- Tutors work with students and families in a friendly, open manner to promote the positives of attendance.
- The School approach is one of support rather than punitive measures. We want to work positively with families to encourage improved attendance
- On site wellbeing and mental health first aid and support
- A team approach where school and families work together to ensure our students make good choices over attendance

What about Student Anxiety?

'School Refusal' (also referred to as School Anxiety; School Phobia; Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance; or Anxiety Based School Avoidance) is a term used to describe the reaction of children and young people who experience extreme anxiety and distress in relation to attending school; this reaction can occur for a variety of reasons. Our Pastoral Support Team [have a dedicated space on the school website](#) for more information on school based anxiety and support suggestions for families.

Young people tell us their worries about school can include:

- finding the work difficult, or having problems concentrating
- finding school exhausting, especially if they are dealing with mental health issues
- feeling pressure to get good exam results
- difficult relationships with friends and friendship groups
- not feeling accepted or that they 'fit in'
- not getting on with teachers
- feeling pressured to be the same and learn like everyone else
- experiencing or witnessing bullying
- feeling unsupported and not seen as an individual
- additional needs such as dyslexia not being recognised

Young people may show they're feeling anxious about school by:

- not wanting to get up and get ready
- being reluctant to go to school
- getting very worried about relatively small issues, such as remembering the right equipment for a lesson
- feeling sick or having stomach or headaches
- not doing schoolwork, or getting lower marks
- being angry or upset, or acting out
- exploding when they get home, even if they seem okay at school
- withdrawing – seeming low, quiet or depressed
- refusing to go to school at all
- not going to school without you knowing

We are here to help you and your child. Reaching out to us to make us aware of issues your child may be experiencing early on will help to prevent problems escalating later on down the line. Proactive, early intervention is our preferred philosophy of support.

How to Help (as a family)

- Ask them what it is about school that makes them not want to go. Listen to and validate their experience of finding these things difficult, stay as calm as you can and take your child's worries seriously.
- Don't shout, tell them off, or physically force them to go to school. Even though the situation may feel stressful, this is likely to increase their anxiety.
- Speak to your child's teacher or form tutor as soon as possible. Have they noticed any changes in their behaviour, or in their friendship group or class? Tackling the problem early can be really helpful, as the longer your child is out of school, the harder it can be to go back.
- Ask their teacher(s) if there are particular moments when they seem to struggle. For example, it might be during lesson changeovers, break-times, particular subjects, the journey to school or through the whole day. This can help you identify triggers.
- Keep in regular contact with key members of staff from your child's school. Work with them to make changes that will help - see the section in this guide on working with your child's school for more advice on this.
- Make a log of the days when your child doesn't want to go to school. This will give you a better sense of when and how often they feel like this, and can also help you raise it with the school.
- Be consistent with the strategies you try to help them get back to school. Let your child get used to them and remember that it might take a while for something to work. Changing between lots of strategies quickly can be confusing, so only move on when you've tried something for a while without it helping.
- Try to stick to the same routine and praise your child for every small step they take. This could be getting out of bed at the right time, eating breakfast, washing and brushing their teeth, getting dressed and eventually leaving the house.
- Focus on listening and providing emotional support, and reassure them that you can work together to make things better. Read our tips on starting a conversation around mental health with your child.
- Talk with your child about strategies that help them to express and manage their anxiety. This could be spending time with particular friends, listening to music, reading, playing sport, drawing, cooking or watching a favourite film.
- If your child feels particularly anxious while they're at school, they can carry a notebook with them and write down a worry when it comes into their head, helping to keep anxious thoughts from becoming overwhelming.

Further information can be found at:

YOUNG MINDS: <https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/>

ANXIETY UK: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/our-services/anxiety-information/young-people-and-anxiety/>

MY CAMHS CHOICES: <http://mycamhschoices.org/what-is-camhs/>