



Rochdale Islamic Academy  
*inspire - believe - achieve*  
GIRLS' SCHOOL

## **ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

Reviewed: August 2023

Next Review: August 2024

Responsible: Mr Mohammed Zarafat

Approved by Board of Trustees: August 2023

## AIMS

Rochdale Islamic Academy aims to encourage every student to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance in order to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them. We recognise the very strong link that exists between a student's level of attendance and their achievement. This link is shared with students and parents at every opportunity. We aim for 100% and ask for 95% as a minimum.

## THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A student is required by law (under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and Regulations of 2006 and 2010) to attend regularly at the school where they are registered. The school is required to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

It is expected that the parent/guardian will contact school to inform them concerning absence. However, it is for the school to judge whether the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence.

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 empowers LA officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school, and for parental failure to ensure that their child is not in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of an exclusion.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs that they may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A prosecution can take place against any person that has parental responsibility for the child's education or who has care of the child. Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children are properly educated.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of everyone (students, parents, governors, and all staff) in the school to improve the attendance and reach the annual targets set by the LA and DfE. This is achieved by a close partnership between the LA, parents, and support agencies.

## STUDENTS

All students are expected to attend all their lessons regularly and punctually. Where there are difficulties, support will be offered from Form Tutors, Pastoral Managers, and the Attendance Officer. Good attendance will be rewarded regularly with awards. Poor attendance will be monitored closely, and parents contacted.

School starts at 8:40am however the school is open from 8am. Students are expected to be in their class by 8:40am at the very latest so that they can start their lessons promptly. Students who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and the beginning of lessons. This can mean that they are often unsettled and confused about tasks. It is essential that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time to prevent disruption to your child's own learning and that of others.

**If a student is late to school, a 20 minute after school detention will be given on the same day.** It is not optional. If concerns persist, a meeting will take place with the student and a member of the Senior Leadership Team, contact will be made with the parent/guardian. Ongoing concerns will result in a meeting with a parent/guardian in school.

Parents are asked to notify school before 8.20am if their child will be absent, giving the reason and the expected return date. Where there has been no contact from parents, a member of the attendance team will send a text message to the priority contact. If we have not heard from you by 9:15am, we will ring you to check on your daughter's safety and wellbeing. If no contact is made, we may complete a home visit. Please note that if your child is off sick for three days or more, a doctor's note is required as proof.

Wherever possible, we ask that routine medical and dental appointments are made outside of school hours or during the school holidays. If this is not possible, a copy of the appointment message/letter will need to be given to the school office otherwise we will not let your child leave school premises.

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% schooling across the school year. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education.

### **PARENTS/GUARDIAN**

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, on time and properly equipped for learning. They are expected to notify the school promptly on the designated attendance telephone number if their child cannot attend. Any absence will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received. The school staff will contact a parent on the first day of absence if no reason has been provided. Parents are discouraged from making medical/dental appointments during school time, if possible, and only expected to remove their child from school for the minimum period when this is unavoidable. School will require evidence if pupils are out of school for medical appointments and interviews.

### **SCHOOL**

Attendance is the responsibility of all, but especially that of the form tutors and attendance officer, who closely monitor and regularly communicate with parents, students, and staff. The school employs a whole range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality with awards and certificates, however the school promptly follows up absences and lateness. A careful log will be kept of all enquiries regarding moving schools.

### **EXTENDED LEAVE DURING TERM TIME**

Taking your child out of school during term time may harm your child's academic progress, we therefore strongly recommend that you do not arrange holidays in this period. Regular attendance in Years 10 and 11 is particularly important in preparation for GCSE exams. Therefore, no requests for holiday absence will be authorised in years 10 and 11.

The school will allow 5 days leave during term time in extenuating circumstances. Each request for absence will be dealt with on an individual basis; parents MUST consult the school prior to booking holidays. Holidays exceeding 5 days or holiday taken without permission may result in the child being permanently excluded from school. A penalty notice will be issued.

You are strongly advised to complete a holiday request form and return it to the school for consideration and authorisation before booking any holidays.

### **UNAUTHORISED FAMILY HOLIDAYS**

Holiday request forms that are completed by parents will be passed to the headteacher for permission. The headteacher will notify the parents/guardians, in writing, of their decision to refuse or grant permission for leave.

If the headteacher is notified that a family has taken a holiday without seeking prior permission the headteacher will consider whether the request could be considered to fall under the heading of 'exceptional circumstances.'

If the request is not being made because of 'exceptional circumstances OR family have already taken a holiday without seeking the prior approval of the Headteacher, then the period of absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A penalty notice of £50 per day, per child will be issued and this can also place the parents at risk of having their child removed from the school roll.

## **IMPROVING ATTENDANCE**

The schools Attendance Officer monitors absences. Weekly attendance meetings take place and students that are a concern are discussed and referred to SLT for follow-up action. Students whose attendance is below 90% are reviewed weekly and the attendance officer works with the student and their parents where there is a high or persistent absence.

## **REGISTRATION**

Formal registration is a legal requirement and takes place at Rochdale Islamic Academy at 8.40am and 1.40pm. The school gates officially close at 8.40am and students arriving after this time will be recorded as late for AM registration.

If a student fails to arrive before registers have closed, she should report to the admin office and sign the late book. The register entry will read 'late'. Arrival more than 30 minutes after registers have closed without an acceptable reason can result in a student being marked as unauthorised.

All class teachers will take registers in each of their classes and will notify the Attendance Officer if there are any concerns

If your child is absent, the attendance officer notes in the system whether the parent made the call to school or if RIAG made the call to parents/guardians. They also note down the reason of the absence. If there was a doctor's appointment, a doctor's note/message/letter must be provided.

Absences for half a day (one session) is coded according to category. The Attendance Officer monitors the registers closely and follows up any incorrect procedures or inconsistencies.

## **AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

It is essential that all staff follow the same criteria when deciding whether to authorise an absence.

The role of the Attendance Officer is key in this issue and ensures consistency of practice. The school decides on how absence is recorded following the latest guidance from the DfE. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

## **FIXED PENALTY**

The parent/guardian of the child will be issued a fixed penalty for taking their child on holiday during term time without school's permission. The school will issue a letter to the parent/guardian of the child stating a charge of £50 per day. The parent/guardian should make the payment in full before the child returns to school. This cannot be combined with the school fee and should be paid separately. If the fixed penalty is not paid the school hold the right to take the child off the school roll.

If your child has below 95% attendance, they will be logged as a persistent absentee. In cases where there is no improvement after a penalty notice is given your child may be permanently excluded from school.

## **STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

Rochdale Islamic Academy will provide an environment in which students feel safe, valued, and welcome which is vital for their achievement and progress. Students need to know they will be missed, and any absence will be followed up.

Students who feel vulnerable and experience difficulties attending class or have friendship problems will be supported and given strategies to help them cope. The Attendance Officer will be the key member of staff involved liaising closely with the tutors.

A varied, and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Special provision will be made for identified students and a mentoring scheme exists to promote confidence and well-being.

A clearly defined and consistent approach to positive behaviour management exists to provide a fair system and support for all students especially those who have difficulties, focusing on rewarding the positive.

Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to students' needs and support is available whenever possible.

- Attendance data will be produced and monitored regularly and analysed in order to identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy/practice.
- High attendance will be recognised and awarded every term.
- Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be monitored closely.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, letters home etc.) of the importance of regular attendance.
- Students who have been absent for an extended period of time, or who are experiencing serious attendance problems, will have individually tailored programs to support them.
- School staff will liaise with other services/agencies that may assist students who are experiencing difficulties.
- Pastoral lead, SENCO, the Attendance Officer and headteacher will have regular meetings where attendance issues are discussed.
- Discussion on transfer (with primary and upper schools) will identify students who require extra support.

The Headteacher will report to the Trustees at least annually on attendance matters.

#### **PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

Overall, most of our pupils arrive to school on time. It is imperative that pupils arrive at school on time each day; pupils arriving late miss out on valuable learning during assembly or form time. To overcome persistent punctuality issues the school will apply the following policy.

1st late	20 minutes after school detention
2nd late	Call home to parents
3rd late	Meeting with parents & attendance officer
4th late	Report Temporary Exclusion

**Persistent 'lates' may result in permanent exclusion or referral to external authorities.**

**This policy is effective from the start of each school year.**

#### **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

The policy is revised as required and reviewed on the school's cycle every year.