

February 2025



RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL
Headteacher: Catherine Le Roux

Dear Parents/Carers

At Riverside School we firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for the educational progress and overall wellbeing of our pupils. We hope that this letter helps you to keep in mind the key aspects of our attendance policy.

Why regular attendance matters

Consistent school attendance allows your child to:

- › Fully engage in learning and make academic progress
- › Develop critical social skills by interacting with their friends and teachers
- › Grow in confidence in a supportive and nurturing school environment
- › Build a sense of routine and security, essential for future success

Attendance support

We understand that some pupils may face challenges that impact their attendance. We are here to provide support and guidance to pupils and families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do reach out to your class teacher, Gill Stoll (Home School Manager) or one of our friendly Admin Team.

Acceptable reasons for absence

We recognise that there are circumstances where a pupil's absence can't be avoided.

Acceptable reasons for being absent from school include:

- › **Illness:** when your child is unwell, either physically or mentally, and unable to attend school
- › **Medical appointments:** if your child has a medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside school hours, please notify us in advance and provide relevant documentation (e.g. an appointment card)
- › **Religious observance:** we respect the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our pupils. If your child needs to be absent for religious observance, please submit a request and the Headteacher will review it
- › **Exceptional circumstances:** in exceptional situations, such as family emergencies or unforeseen events, please contact the school immediately to discuss the absence

How to report unplanned absences

In the event of an unplanned absence, we ask that you follow these steps:

1. **Contact the school:** on the day of the absence, please call the school office before 9am to inform us about your child's absence. You can also leave messages during out of school hours.

Scratchface Lane, Purbrook, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 5QD
Tel: 023 9225 0138

e-mail adminoffice@riverside.hants.sch.uk www.riverside.hants.sch.uk

2. **Provide a reason for absence:** please provide a brief explanation for the absence, such as illness or family emergency, to help us maintain accurate records
3. **Remain in contact with the school:** if your child is absent for more than 1 day, please remain in contact with the Admin Team, so that they can keep class teachers updated and ensure that we know where your child is.

Term-time holidays

Term-time holidays are generally not permitted during the school year. Absences due to term-time holidays are disruptive to learning and lead to missed opportunities in the classroom.

If you decide to book a holiday during term time, please submit a formal request to the headteacher well in advance. This will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may impact the attendance record for your child. This could lead to more formal proceedings, such as a fine. We appreciate your co-operation and understanding regarding our approach to term-time holidays.

Sanctions for unauthorised absence

The headteacher may issue a fine (known as a fixed-penalty notice) for unauthorised absence. If issued with one, you'll need to pay this directly to the local authority - £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

The decision whether to issue a fine will take into account whether the national threshold has been met - namely 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks - as well as other factors.

Before a fine is issued, you will receive a letter explaining your child's attendance record and give you the opportunity to engage with support.

Let's work together to celebrate and encourage regular attendance.

Please get in touch with Mrs Karen Usher in our Admin Office with any further questions, and we'll be happy to discuss them with you.

Thank you for your co-operation in making sure your child receives the best possible educational experience.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Le Roux
Head teacher