

Changes to school attendance and how it will affect your child

The Government has released new guidelines for school attendance which come into effect from September 2015; however schools have to start to make changes before this date. The changes relate to persistent absence and how this is measured. At Reigate School our aim is to help all students to achieve their personal, social and academic potential. Good attendance and behaviour is of paramount importance in enabling students to realise this aim. Each student is expected to achieve 95% attendance or above each academic year.

In order to fall in line with the Government changes, we will now be notifying parents as soon as a child's attendance falls below 95% and is a concern for the school. This is initially done by way of a concern letter, followed by a request for medical evidence if no improvement is seen in the review period. We have provided below the relevant information from the Government bulletin to explain the guidelines for measuring persistent absence.

4.8.9 Persistent absentee thresholds [not collected for: nursery schools and special]

The current persistent absence threshold, of around 15 per cent, means a pupil has to be absent for 56 sessions (28 days) of school to be classified as persistently absent. This is a great deal of schooling to miss and, in the government's opinion, setting the bar too high in this respect.

From the beginning of the next academic year, 2015 to 2016, the government is reducing the persistent absence threshold from 15 per cent to 10 per cent.

Currently persistently absent pupils are defined statistically according to the absent sessions threshold – currently 56 or more sessions of absence for the full academic year.

The following table shows estimated cumulative absent sessions thresholds for around 15 per cent and 10 per cent.

	15 per cent (2014-15)	10 per cent (2015-16)
<i>Half-term 1</i>	<i>10 or more sessions</i>	<i>7 or more sessions</i>
<i>Half-term 1-2 (autumn term)</i>	<i>22 or more sessions</i>	<i>14 or more sessions</i>
<i>Half-term 1-3</i>	<i>30 or more sessions</i>	<i>20 or more sessions</i>
<i>Half-term 1-4 (autumn term and spring term combined)</i>	<i>38 or more sessions</i>	<i>25 or more sessions</i>
<i>Half-term 1-5</i>	<i>46 or more sessions</i>	<i>31 or more sessions</i>
<i>Half-term 1-6 (full academic year)</i>	<i>56 or more sessions</i>	<i>38 or more sessions</i>

Reference: DFE-00498-2014

If you have any questions or concerns regarding persistent absence or your child's attendance please don't hesitate to contact me at the school.

Mrs S Morris

Attendance Manager