

Attendance Policy

Ricards Lodge High School

Attendance at Ricards Lodge High School

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Attendance at Ricards Lodge High School

We firmly believe that:

- Every child has a fundamental and legal right to be educated
- Parents and teachers have a legal duty to ensure maximum attendance at school
- Attendance at school on a regular basis is essential for our students to achieve

We are committed to reducing the overall level of absence of our students in order to reduce its impact upon their learning and maximise their potential for the future.

We recognise that persistent absence can have a detrimental impact upon our students in a number of ways and our work in this area is vital and plays an integral part of our intention to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that students succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that students have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school
- Raise awareness of the need for our students to attend school on a regular basis amongst their parents and carers

Aims

We are committed to improving levels of school attendance and punctuality. We aim to do this by:

- Enabling maximum student attendance through valuing and promoting the importance of high attendance and punctuality rates.
- Rewarding students with high levels of attendance and punctuality and those who are significantly improving their attendance and punctuality.
- Encouraging students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities
- Identifying all students who have poor attendance or punctuality, **at an early stage.**
- Working to resolve any personal or social difficulties that may be contributing to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Recognising the external factors which influence students' attendance and punctuality and work in partnership with parents and carers, the Educational Welfare Services and other agencies to address difficulties.
- Recognising the internal factors which de-motivate and alienate students and to reduce their influence by maximising positive relationships and meaningful learning experiences by using the curriculum creatively.
- Providing effective and efficient systems, which allow us to monitor daily attendance, punctuality and truancy, from school and individual lessons.
- Reducing all forms of absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism.

(The school begins monitoring students with an absence rate of 12.5%, this is then picked up by the EWS at 15%)

- Using a range of actions and intervention strategies that promote monitoring, review and regular liaison with all parties.

To raise the levels of attendance at Ricards Lodge High School

Promoting Attendance

Positive Attendance: Attendance and Punctuality Incentives and Rewards

The school recognises that by raising awareness of attendance and lateness issues by using a variety of strategies that this will have a positive impact on the overall attendance and punctuality figures.

- Certificates and Vivo Points will be awarded termly to those students who have achieved 100% attendance.
- Each Tutor will award weekly Vivo Points to individual students with 100% attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Procedures and Guidance

- Students should make their way to tutor rooms for an 8.35am start. The register should be taken at the start of the session using SIMS. (If SIMS is not available, a list of absent students should be sent to the Attendance Office by 8.45am.) Students arriving after this time will be recorded as late on SIMS.
- Students who arrive late to school or lessons should be marked as late on SIMS by the class teacher. The L code should be used and the number of minutes late to school should be added.
- In order for any absences to be monitored, staff should ensure that they have registered their class within the first ten minutes of a lesson.

Absence Procedures

Definitions

Authorised absences are mornings (Registration and Periods 1 to 4) or afternoons (Period 5) away from school for a good reason such as illness, or another unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never properly been explained

Absence Procedure for Parents

- Parents are asked to contact the school by telephone by 8.30am if their child is going to be absent.

- Parents are expected to phone each morning unless they have specified the number of days their child will be absent.
- Parents should also contact the school if they are aware that their child will be late to school for a known reason.

Absence Procedures for School Attendance Officer

The school uses an automated text system for informing parents and carers of any child's absences from school. It is designed to assist with the monitoring of absence and provides a quick and easy method of communication between school and home.

- On the first day of an unexplained absence an automated text will be activated by the Attendance Officer after 9:30am for contact to be made with home to confirm the absence.
Any follow up phone call made from parents and carers to the attendance office will be recorded on SIMS by the Attendance Officer.
- If absences are unauthorised for more than two days then the Attendance Officer will inform the Head of Year in order for parents / carers to be contacted to ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Information will be distributed to Tutors and Heads of Years on a weekly basis.

Absence Procedure for Tutors

- On the second day of unauthorised absence, the Tutor will attempt to make contact with the absentee's parents to determine the reason for absence. Any on-going concerns should be raised with the Head of Year or the Attendance Officer.

Students Returning to School Following Absence

- The Tutor should request a written note on their return from absence. This is a requirement of the school.
- If the Tutor does receive a note, they should clear the absence on Sims. Notes are to be filed as this is a legal requirement. Only the codes stated in this policy are to be used by the Tutor. Any other reason for absence must be referred to the Attendance Officer for the relevant code.
- If the Tutor does not receive a note after three days then they will contact the parent or carer by telephone. The Tutor should keep a note of each phone call.
- If the Tutor does not receive a note after five days and cannot make contact with parents they should inform the Head of Year, or Attendance Officer.
- Parents and carers are asked to provide reasons for their child's absences. The school will decide if the absence is authorised.

Students Late to School (with no valid reason)

- Students who are late to school with no valid reason are expected to complete a No Notice detention on the same day.

Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time

The Government has made it clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time except in exceptional circumstances. The Governors of Ricards Lodge High School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a students' education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

- Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances is authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. (This is not an automatic right of parents/carers).
- You should not normally take your child(ren) on a leave of absence during the school term.
- A leave of absence should not be booked since authority may or may not be given.
- Each request for leave of absence will be considered individually, taking into account: the circumstances for the request, the supporting evidence provided, the overall attendance of your child(ren), your child's stage of education and progress and where appropriate both internal and external examinations and assessments.
- If the absence is approved by the Headteacher you will be advised as to how many days the Headteacher has approved for your child's absence.
- If the school does not agree the absence and you take the leave without permission or your child is absent for more than the agreed number of days the absence will be unauthorised.
- Leave of absence taken without the authorisation of the school may lead to your child(ren) being referred to the Education Welfare Service and the possibility of statutory action and a fine.
- Parents wishing to apply for their child(ren) to have leave from school should complete the "Leave of Absence" form available from the school office and return it to the school for authorisation at least **one month** in advance of the proposed leave. Absences should not be booked until permission is received for the leave to be taken.
- A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to parents and carers within 7 days.
- Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the London Borough of Merton. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £120.

Taking or allowing your child to take an absence in term time without the school's permission is a serious matter. If we find that you have done so, then the unauthorised absence may contribute to the issuing of a standard penalty notice warning.

Absence Checks and Monitoring

The following checks are carried out by the Attendance Officer:

- **DAILY** - All messages from the answer phone are recorded. Any students who have been called in as absent have their register updated and a note placed on SIMS if necessary
- **DAILY** - All late marks recorded by tutors / teachers and entered onto individual student records on SIMS.
- **DAILY** - Monitored students are checked to see if they have attended during each lesson.
 - Parents / Relevant Agencies are called if a student has not attended a lesson.
 - Head of Year and SENCO are informed if a monitored student has not attended a lesson.
 - Phone calls home to parents of monitored students if they are absent
- **DAILY** - Fire drill registers are printed and stored for use in the event of a fire drill.
- **DAILY** - All missing register marks are confirmed and completed.
- **DAILY** - All absence notes are recorded.
- **DAILY** - Punctuality report to school sent to Head of Year and Tutors.
- **DAILY** - School automated text informs parents and carers of any student's absence from school. This information is picked up from SIMS and a text message is sent to parents.
- **WEEKLY** - Production of reports for Head of Year and Tutors for analysis.
- **WEEKLY** - Percentage attendance report for previous week for school bulletin
- **WEEKLY** - Unexplained absence report since the start of term
- **FORTNIGHTLY** - Production of reports for monitoring meetings between Heads of Year, Assistant Head teacher and Attendance Officer. The list of students who currently have an attendance level of below 92%.
- **MONTHLY** - Production of the Official Register Report for analysis at SLT
- **TERMLY** - Production of certificates for students with 100% attendance and punctuality for the previous term.

Addressing Serious Attendance Concerns

The school will work closely with other agencies to seek support for individual students with a view to securing regular and sustained attendance. These agencies include:

The Education Welfare Service (EWS)
 The Educational Psychologist
 Children and Family Services
 Social Services
 The Health Service
 The School's Inclusion Team
 The Police
 CAMHS

Identifying students below 92%

The Attendance Officer produces a report for each Head of Year on a weekly basis. This allows each Head of Year to monitor the progress of the students in their Year group who are causing concern with regard to attendance.

- All parents of students who have an attendance level below 92% are contacted by the Head of Year and invited to attend a meeting to discuss reasons for level of attendance and to make them aware that we are monitoring the situation.
- Most students with an attendance level of below 92% will be placed on a Year group attendance project.
- Providing the appropriate referral criteria have been met as shown on the EWS referral form, then referrals can be made to the EWS for support and early intervention.
- All concerns are made clear to the Tutor who can provide additional support.
- The Head of Year, Attendance Officer, SENCO and Assistant Headteacher monitors these pupils via a fortnightly meeting with the EWS.
- The Headteacher, SENCO and Assistant Headteacher meet fortnightly to monitor students' attendance.

If No Improvement is Made

There are a number of strategies available to the school to address on-going attendance concerns. These may be applied at various times depending upon the nature of the absence, the level of communication with parents or the circumstances surrounding the student.

- A meeting may be convened by the Head of Year or Assistant Headteacher with parents / carers in order to discuss the concerns and put actions in place to resolve any issues and raise the level of attendance.
- Requests might be made to the GP for medical evidence to explain persistent absence.
- If necessary an Interagency Planning Meeting will be called with the parents and all other relevant agencies. A decision will then be taken about appropriateness of referral and further actions.
- A Penalty Notice may be issued.
- Court action may be taken.

Following up Trauncy

Identifying Students that are Truantiing

Identifying students who are truantiing will be done by a variety of ways:

- Teachers seeing that a student is absent when they have a present mark for the previous lesson.
- Spot check of students by Attendance Officer or Head of Year.
- Regular monitoring of students who are known to truant.

Informing Parents

- Parents are telephoned straight away by the Attendance Officer or Head of Year to inform them that the student is truantiing.
- Parents may be asked to come into school to discuss concerns.

Action for Student

- Arrangements are made for the student to make up the time missed in lessons
Student is monitored by the Head of Year / Attendance Officer on a daily basis

Continued Truantiing

- A meeting with the Head of Year, Student, Parents, Attendance Officer and Assistant Headteacher (if necessary) to arrange a PSP. The legal position will be outlined with possible consequences if the situation persists.

Chasing up Student Absence

Tutor Responsibility

- To clear the absence of their tutees not already cleared by Head of Year or Attendance Officer.

Procedures

- Tutors will receive a weekly print out of currently unauthorised absences to aid with the identification of absences that need clarifying.
- Tutors should clear absences when they have received communication as to the reason for the absence. This may take the form of a phone call, letter or note in the planner.
- Lists of absence codes are available on SIMS.

Lack of Communication from Parents

- Tutors can put a note in planners or call parents to ask if reasons are not forthcoming.
- Any assistance required by Tutors can be provided by the Head of Year, Attendance Officer and Assistant Headteacher

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff will actively promote the importance of full attendance and punctuality by close liaison with parents and those responsible for the care of students. Parents will be made aware of the school's expectation prior to the child's admission through the Home School Agreement. At all times, the school will seek a positive partnership with parents in all aspects of their child's education, including attendance and punctuality.

Students should:

- Arrive at school on time and attend Tutor Time.
- Attend all lessons on time.
- Remain on the school site during the hours of 8:35am to 3.00pm.
- Sign out at the Attendance Office when authorised to leave the site.
- Monitor their individual attendance using their planner and in discussion with tutor.
- Catch up with any work missed due to lateness or absence.

Tutors should:

- Follow the Attendance procedure for Tutors.
- Provide accurate registration data and the sending of this data promptly to the Attendance Officer.
- Collect their Communication folder each morning
- Track attendance and inform parents of any concerns.
- Monitor and take responsibility for attendance issues from **95% - 92%** and discuss attendance concerns with the Head of Year.
- Remind their tutor group what we mean by excellent / good attendance.
- Keep attendance and punctuality high profile throughout the year, and award Vivo points each week to those students who attended every day and have not been late.

Remind their tutor group that:

The Government has an expectation that school will set appropriate targets for attendance and the Local Authority supports the school in their expectation that students will have an attendance level of 95% or above as a minimum.

Absence requests will only be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion.

Parents are asked to supply reasons for their child's absence. It is however the school that authorises the absence. If parents have any doubts concerning the authorisation of planned absences, they are to contact the relevant Head of Year.

Parents should:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time.
- Ensure that their children attend all lessons on time.
- Contact the Attendance Officer before 8.35am on each day of absence.
- Avoid any absence from school e.g. for medical or dental appointments.
- Contact the school promptly in the case of any unavoidable absence.
- Keep the school informed of any continuing and unavoidable absences.
- Ensure that their children catch up with any work missed due to lateness or absence.

Classroom Teachers are Responsible for:

- Maintaining an attendance register for every lesson
- Reporting suspicious absences to the tutor, or Attendance Officer

- All subject teachers should take a register within the first ten minutes of each lesson using Sims. If this is not possible a paper register should be used and passed to the Attendance Officer.
- **Students removed from timetabled lessons:** All staff who are working with students outside of their normal lessons must ensure that they are registered.
- Preparing well planned, structured and motivational lessons which engage students in their own learning and thereby minimise disaffection and de-motivation which may lead to unauthorised absence. Key factors in this are the provision of learning materials and learning progressions which are at the appropriate level to challenge and engage students and appropriate support for students in their learning interactions.
- Recording a student as late on Sims if he/she arrives after the start of the lesson. The number of minutes a student is late should be recorded and consequences implemented.

Heads of Years are Responsible for:

- Having a clear overview of attendance and punctuality issues within the Year group.
- Heads of Year will monitor and take responsibility for attendance issues below 92%
- Setting in place Home / School contracts to improve attendance of students who have an attendance level of below 90% for no justified reason.
- Meet with tutors on a regular basis and discuss individual attendance concerns.
- Monitoring that all actions have been carried out by Tutors as detailed in this policy.
- Attending a fortnightly meeting with the Attendance Officer and EWO to
- discuss attendance issues (of 90% or less)
- Setting and maintaining high expectations for attendance and achievement.
- Presenting the 100% attendance awards.
- Referring to the importance of attendance and punctuality in routine contacts with parents and students.
- Monitoring the work of the tutor team in fulfilling responsibilities for attendance
- Assisting in the processing and assessing holiday absence requests when required.
- Concerns regarding unauthorised absence and casual truancy.
- Regular contact with the Attendance Officer to discuss particular attendance issues and complete all relevant paper work.
- Discuss attendance concerns across the Year Group and implement interventions as required.

Attendance Officer is Responsible for:

- Maintaining accurate records of attendance.
- Assisting with the recording, tracking and communication of punctuality data.
- First day contact with parents of monitored students in the case of unexplained absences.
- Ensure that School automated text system informs parents / carers of any child's absence from school daily.

- Providing attendance and punctuality data for Tutors and Heads of Years on a weekly basis.
- Processing Absence request forms.
- Attending each fortnightly meeting with the Assistant Headteacher, or Head of Year and EWO to discuss attendance concerns in each Year Group.
- Providing attendance and punctuality data for meetings above.
- Providing paperwork as required for attendance PSP meetings and attend these meetings when necessary.
- Providing attendance and punctuality data for the Local Authority as required.
- Completing DfE returns as requested.
- Keeping the Official Register up to date.

Assistant Headteacher is Responsible for:

- Leading all staff in an understanding of the importance of attendance.
- Ensuring that all staff, students and parents/carers are aware of their responsibilities within the policy.
- Support and monitor Heads of Years to enable them to fulfil their duties within the policy.
- Supporting and monitoring the Attendance Officers in fulfilling their responsibilities within the policy.
- Acting as the main contact for the Local Authority and other agencies for strategic planning around attendance and punctuality issues.
- Reporting on policy, practice and outcomes to the Headteacher and the Governing Body.
- Identifying the need for and providing access to training and professional development for staff in order to support the School's work on improving and maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.

The Headteacher is Responsible for:

- Leading, supporting and monitoring the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance and punctuality in fulfilling their responsibilities within the policy.
- Maintaining the profile of attendance at all levels within the school.
- Reporting accurate data to Local Authority officers and the DfE as required.
- Evaluating and reviewing the policy with Governors.

The Local Authority is Responsible for:

- Supporting and guiding the school by providing regular meetings with an EWO
- The documentation and proformas for relevant procedures.
- The legal costs for any representation in court. The LA provides representation for court action however the awarding of costs is at the gift of the court and the LA is not responsible for any costs incurred by witnesses who may be called to attend from the school.

Children Missing from Education (CME) (Appendix 3 EWS Missing Child Procedure)

For the purpose of this document a Child Missing from Education is defined as:

“Any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any approved education activity (eg. School, alternative curriculum, home education), or is registered and has been out of education provision for 20 school days or more”

Children at Risk

- Some children who experience certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education.
- Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Ricards Lodge High School, like all schools has a statutory duty to identify children who are not receiving education.

The school will implement the following:

- If a student is missing from day 1 to day 3 the family will be contacted and every effort will be made to locate the student (ask friends, home visit etc).
- If a child has been missing for 5 days and no contact with home can be made, then a letter needs to be sent home requesting the child's return to school. If there is a CP issue then contact SENCO sooner.
- By day 10 if no contact has been made then a letter and phone call should be made to the EWS outlining what the school has done. The CTF should be completed via S2S entering missing pupil.
- All staff need to be vigilant and inform the Assistant Headteacher / Attendance Officer of any concerns they may have with regard to attendance and punctuality.
- The Child Protection Officer will be kept informed of any children who go missing.

For detailed procedure please follow appendix 3.

Appendix 1

**Ricards Lodge High School
Leave of Absence Form
LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON**

Request for Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances during TermTime

It is not advisable to take your child/ren on a leave of absence during term time as this causes disruption to their education. Schools must follow the law in this regard and may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances if certain criteria are fulfilled.

The Pupil Registration Regulations (England) 2006 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- **Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances is authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher.** (This is **not an automatic right** of parents/carers)
- You should not normally take your child(ren) on a leave of absence during the school term.
- **Please do not book your leave of absence since authority may or may not be given.**
- Each request for leave of absence will be considered individually, taking into account: the circumstances for the request, the supporting evidence provided, the overall attendance of your child(ren), your child’s stage of education and progress and where appropriate both internal and external examinations and assessments.
- If the absence is approved by the Head Teacher you will be advised as to how many days the Head teacher has approved for your child’s absence.
- If the school does not agree the absence and you take the leave without permission or your child is absent for more than the agreed number of days the absence will be unauthorised.
- Leave of absence taken without the authorisation of the school may lead to your child(ren) being referred to the Education Welfare Service and the possibility of statutory action and a fine.

In order for your application for absence to be considered, please complete below:

Name(s) of Child(ren).....

Tutor Group -----

Home address:

.....

Dates of absence: From..... To:.....

Reason for request (additional evidence may be required)

.....

.....

Signed: Parent/Carer

Email address:..... Mobile phone number:.....

Date form submitted:.....

The above request for leave of absence in term time for

has/has not been authorised. If authorised, your child/ren should return to school

on:.....

Signed..... Headteacher Mrs Jerrard

Appendix 1 Continued

Ricards Lodge High School

ABSENCE AND EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE

The Governors of Ricards Lodge High School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a student's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2013 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents and carers must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.
2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form. (Available from the school office)
3. This must include the reason why you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to you within 7 days.

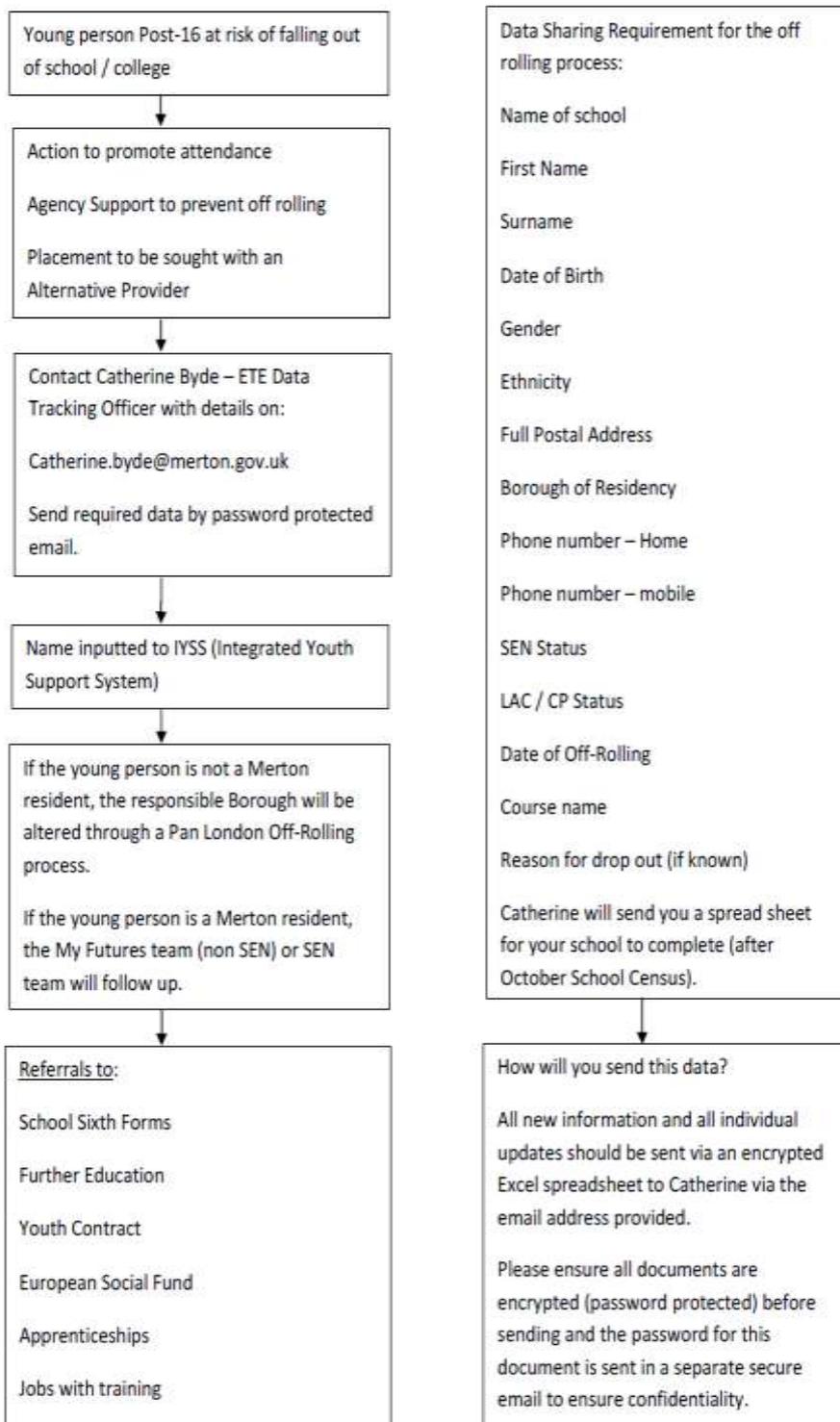
Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the London Borough of Merton. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £120

Appendix 3



London Borough of Merton Off-Rolling Procedure for RPA

From September 2013 all schools and colleges are under a new duty to inform the local authority if any young person post 16 is going off roll. Below describes Merton's process



Approved by Governors: 18th November 2013