



Glenthorne Community Primary School

Attendance Policy

Attendance and Behaviour Links

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised and rewarded appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Children's poor behaviour can, at times, be directly linked to poor attendance. Children who are intermittently absent, for example, miss important areas of learning and may exhibit disruptive behaviour to avoid lessons altogether, in order to cope with their feelings of inadequacy / lack of confidence.

Attendance and Welfare Links

The school has a duty in law to:-

- refer any absence of 10 days or more where we have been unable to make contact with the parent/child, or have general concerns about the absence, to the Local Support Team.
- make first day of absence contact with regard to vulnerable children, such as looked after children or children on the Child Protection Register.
- alert the Local Support Team (LST) immediately to missing or removed children.

There are times when children can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved quickly between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, parents should never cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. To do so gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Utilising the services of the Family Services may be a useful tool in situations such as this. This deployment could be instigated by either the family or the school. To action this school will complete a multi agency referral form.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is usually successful, however, if difficulties persist, the school or the parent may refer the child to the LST from the County Council. The LST will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the LST themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the County Council's Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate.

Fines

In 2014, the Department for Education (DfE) introduced changes to the law regarding parents taking their children out of school during term time. These changes meant that parents risk receiving a penalty notice (fine) issued by the Local Authority for taking their child out of school in term time without permission from the head teacher.

In Staffordshire, the Local Authority has consulted with schools and reviewed the county's criteria for issuing these penalty notices, for those pupils who miss out on school without permission, and where the Local Authority is, therefore, required by law to take appropriate action.

Penalty Notices for leave of absence (holiday) in term time may be considered appropriate if the following criteria is met:

- For unauthorised leave of absence, there must be a minimum of 20 sessions (10 school days) of unauthorised absence from school during the period of two consecutive half terms.
- This absence must include at least 10 sessions of unauthorised leave (G code) in the specified time period, however, the remaining 10 sessions may relate to other unauthorised absences. The absences do not have to be consecutive.

Therefore, with immediate effect, if a child's unauthorised absence for leave meets the above criteria the school should refer the case to the Local Support Team (LST), as they have previously done, with the supporting evidence.

Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website:

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. In the event of a child's absence, parents should inform the office by telephone, preferably at the start of the absence, giving details of the reason and predicted time the child will be off school. If this is not possible, then a note covering the absence, with reasons, should be sent into school as soon as possible. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, and the school office staff will chase up such information if it is not provided, to enable the absence to be "authorised". In a long-term absence alternative methods of education can be provided, as necessary, and will be arranged by an appropriate staff member such as; the class teacher.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause, for example emergencies, medical appointments unavoidably in school time. A family bereavement will be considered at the discretion of the Head teacher.

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

- *Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily*
- *Truancy before or during the school day*
- *Absences which have never been properly explained*
- *Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark and without a reason*

Penalty Notices for persistent unauthorised absence may also be considered. Persistent absence of approximately 14 sessions (7 school days) will result in school making contact to resolve any issues affecting the child's attendance. Persistent absence of 20 sessions (10 school days) will then result

in a referral to the Local Authority, who will issuing a warning letter. If the child then fails to be present for the following 20 days, school should refer the case to the Local Support Team (LST), with supporting evidence.

Attendance and Holidays

A child cannot be granted "Leave of Absence" holiday in any school year.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 85% in any term without good reason, a referral to the Local Support Team will always be made by the school. Following a period of monitoring, any lack of improvement or unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or, ultimately, a prosecution under the Education Act, 1996, S. 444.

School Attendance Targets

Each year we aim to achieve a whole school attendance figure of at least 96%. We are also aiming to increase all individual pupil attendance to above 96%.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs. L. Warner (Admin team)
Mrs. L. Bridgwood (Head Teacher)

Attendance figures for individual children are included on the child's report and attendance summary letters are sent out three times per academic year.

Attendance Procedures

Every child's name must be on both the Admissions Register and the Attendance Register. The convention is that once a child has attended a full session (1/2 a day) they are a registered pupil, even if the parent has failed to complete the necessary paperwork. Both registers must be written in ink with corrections distinguishable from the original and kept for 3 years. Registers must be made available for inspection by "any officer of the County Council's Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate authorised for the purpose".

Admission Register

This must contain details about the child and "the name and address of every person known to the proprietor of the school to be a parent of the pupil".

Attendance Register

This must be marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Each absence mark must distinguish authorised absence from unauthorised, and can be made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence is established. Parents must inform school of the reasons for their child's absence. As soon as children are absent from school and the school has not received notification from the parents or guardians, the school will telephone them to ascertain the reason for absence. If notification is not received, a letter is sent requesting a reason for the absence.

All information should be entered as requested (dates, totals etc.) Children's names may be entered in any order, but alphabetical by surname is recommended.

Attendance Register Symbols

There are FOUR registration categories:

Present / or \

Approved Educational Activity Letter with no O (see below) - Counts as present

Authorised Absent O with appropriate letter inserted (see below)

Unauthorised Absent O with no letter inserted (except late after registration)

Approved Educational Activity (Present - no O)

Approved sporting activity	P
Educational Visits	V
Work experience	W

Authorised Absence (O with the appropriate letter inserted)

Absent for "performance" licensed by LA	A
Educated off site and marked there	B
Special circumstances not covered elsewhere	C
Exclusion - fixed term and permanent awaiting confirmation	E
Attending interview	I
Illness/medical (absent for whole session)	M
Day of religious observance	R
Study leave (Y11 pupils only)	S
Traveller absence (children expected to return to school)	T

Unauthorised Absence

No satisfactory explanation received **O with NO code**

Lateness

Late WITHIN the registration period or for an acceptable reason (**present**) **O overmarked with / \ or L**

Late AFTER the registration period or without acceptable reason (**unauthorised absent**) **O with L inserted or U**

In line with DFE recommendations there is a "reasonable period" for arrival depending upon local circumstances, but this should not normally exceed 30 minutes. Late within this time is an attendance, lateness outside this time constitutes unauthorised absence and can be the basis of an offence. At Glenthorne we believe every second counts and our reasonable period is 15 minutes.

Attendance Register Procedure

1. The Registration period is between 8.55 a.m. and 9.05 a.m. but Registers should not be closed until 9.15 a.m.
2. Alternative methods of education can be provided, as necessary, in the event of prolonged absence, and will be arranged by the Headteacher or Class Teacher. Dual registration can be applied in necessary circumstances such as a traveller child who agrees to attend another establishment whilst travelling.
3. Registers are completed electronically through Sims and checked by the office as soon as they are completed. In this way attendance across the whole school can be monitored and checks made.
4. Staff who have a concern about the pattern of attendance relating to any pupils are to make this known to the Headteacher.
5. Late Arrivals Children arriving after 9.15 a.m. are classed as a late arrival. Late arrivals will be monitored by clerical staff and the Headteacher and evidence of persistent "lateness" acted upon by the Headteacher who will inform parents by letter and then, if necessary, follow up with a phone call or request a meeting. Late five or more times in any four week period is notified to parents. Further lateness is notified to the LST.
6. Telephone calls from the school to the home are made on the first day of absence in all cases
7. During his or her visit, the LST will examine the Attendance Registers to confirm that no cases of concern have been overlooked.
8. These arrangements do not preclude the need to take emergency action in exceptional cases.

Removal from the registers may take place:-

- a) after 4 weeks continuous absence only if both the school and County Council's Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate have "failed to locate the pupil".
- b) when another school informs us that they have admitted the child.
- c) upon written notification that parents intend to educate the child "otherwise" than at school (School to inform County Council's Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate).

SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This Policy was agreed by *Governors* on:

Chair of Govs: Mrs. D. Martin
Date: 18.10.16

Headteacher: Mrs L. Bridgwood
Date: 18.10.16

This Policy will be reviewed by: Date 18.10.18