

# GILLINGSTOOL PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Signed *Cat Davi*

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Chair of Governors

Date: 26.6.17

Signed *CR*

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Headteacher

Date: 26.6.17



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## GILLINGSTOOL PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Striving for excellence*

### Attendance policy statement

#### Principles

- Regular and full time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life
- It is the parents responsibility to contact the school on the first day of an absence
- The school and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality

#### Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school and to clarify the role of the parents/carer

#### The School will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other communications to parents
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc)
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs
- Attempt to contact parents on the first morning of absence if no notification has been given.

#### Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

- All new parents are made aware of the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus
- All parents issued with an Attendance Leaflet outlining current regulations and good practice
- Newsletters will be used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality

- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for work

### **We expect the parent to:**

- Provide up-to-date-contact numbers and changes of address
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence
- Contact the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return
- Provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen
- If notification has not already been given, a note needs to be provided when the child returns from an absence due to sickness. This should be on the first day of the child's return to school
- Any notes provided should be initialled and dated by the receiving member of staff. Notification given by telephone should be recorded on the appropriate slip.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child

### **Registers**

Registers close at 9.05 a.m. Lateness after 30 minutes of this time is classed an unauthorised absence unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

Absences can be authorised if they are for certain reasons e.g. sickness, religious observance, approved holiday, absence following the death of a close member of the family.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

An absence will be classified as unauthorised when:

- A child is kept off school because a parent is ill
- A child is absent because a sibling is ill
- The parent cannot get the child to school
- The child is taken on a shopping trip
- The child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat
- A child is absent due to family work patterns
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
- A child is more than half an hour late without a satisfactory explanation
- The child is taken on a holiday

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents.

The school will telephone the child's home to enquire about an absence if the parent has not contacted the school on the first day of absence.

If a child has been absent for 3 days without an explanation, parents will be sent a letter. If no satisfactory response is received, a follow up reminder will be sent. Should this still result in a nil response, the Headteacher will write informing the parent of the Policy and the school's duty to inform the Education Welfare Officer about the child's lack of attendance.

Attendance will be reviewed during each term and where there is cause for concern, i.e. attendance falls below 90%, the reasons will be investigated and either a letter outlining the school's concerns sent to parents if deemed appropriate or the case is referred to the EWO and an Initial Attendance meeting held. Concern can arise not only from headline attendance levels but also from the number of broken weeks or odd patterns of attendance occurring involving specific days etc.

## **Holidays**

Parents are not allowed to take their children away on holiday during term time and should this happen, then it will be deemed to be unauthorised absence. The regulations for penalty notices as set out by Government and South Glos Council will apply.

- If the holiday involves more than 10 school sessions (unauthorised absence) then a penalty notice will be issued
- If there are more than 10 unauthorised absences with a seven week period (70 school sessions) then a penalty notice will be issued

If time out of school cannot be avoided then the appropriate form, '**ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**' may be obtained from the school office and must be completed well before the holiday commences. Holiday can be authorised in very exceptional circumstances and parents will need to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the proposed holiday before it can be authorised.

Parents are asked to reflect on the affect that this time out of school will have on their child's learning when requesting such authorisation. Parents have no right to demand that absences are authorised.

Parents of children in Years 2 and 6 are particularly requested to avoid any absence in the first half of the Summer Term when the end of KS1 and 2 statutory tests take place and specifically during the KS2 SATs week, the dates of which will be provided for parents at the earliest possible opportunity.

All other requests for absences due to other circumstances must be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance, using the 'Absence from School' form.

Should a penalty notice request be issued by the school then this request must be sent to South Glos Council no later than 15 school days following the return to school of the child.

Please see APPENDIX A for the South Glos Penalty Notice flow chart

## **Punctuality**

The school day begins at 8.55 a.m. when the register will be taken. Children may come in and undertake 'Early Morning Activities' or 'Bell Work' in their classroom after 8.45 a.m. Children arriving after 9.05 a.m. should report to the school office.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education but also that of others in the class.

If a child arrives after the register has closed then that session is deemed to be an unauthorised absence, except in exceptional circumstances. If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances where the school is made aware of a situation, an arrangement allowing a degree of flexibility can be agreed with the Headteacher.

Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and/or Social Services where relevant.

### **Medical Appointments**

Parents must inform the school office when collecting or returning a child following attendance at an appointment during the school day.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

### **Monitoring**

The Headteacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.

All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

The Headteacher has a termly meeting with the EWO to discuss concerns and review absence data.

The Headteacher will formally review individual attendances at the end of each term (6x per year) though attendance is continually monitored on an informal basis. If appropriate, parents are informed of poor attendance by letter – this may be as a result of attendance of less than 90% or due to unacceptable level of broken weeks.

### **Pupil Premium/Disadvantaged Pupils**

The attendance and impact on learning of PP pupils' attendance is monitored alongside whole school attendance and forms part reporting on PP issues.

APPENDIX A – SOUTH GLOS COUNCIL PENALTY NOTICE FLOW CHART

