



GILLINGSTOOL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Inspire ~ Believe ~ Achieve



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Signed ... 

Name: Dave Llewellyn

Chair of Governors

Date: May 2023

Signed 

Name: Caroline Carter

Headteacher

Date: May 2023

Rationale

Regular attendance and excellent punctuality are the foundations for academic achievement and personal development. They establish a responsible attitude towards the opportunities available at school and underpin the basis for the world of work. Attendance and punctuality are strongly linked to students' well-being and safety. Regular attendance demonstrates a commitment to learning and the school community. Please ensure that you and your child/children support our school rules about attendance.

Guiding Principles

We are committed to ensuring that all students benefit from the opportunities available at Gillingstool Primary School. Our expectation is that students arrive on time and attend regularly every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so. We explain about different types of absence in this policy and we will actively promote this ethos throughout the school community and encourage our students to achieve this. Where this expectation is not met, we will identify and address the barriers that prevent this.

See Appendix A Procedures for following up absence concerns.

Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered students of school age attend school regularly and punctually and that they receive an education suitable for their aptitude and ability.

The school have a legal responsibility for maintaining school registers and taking the register twice a day. The school also has a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority. We also have safeguarding responsibility and duty of care to all our students.

Student responsibilities – we encourage our students to become independent young people including taking responsibility for their attendance and punctuality when this is age appropriate.

Attendance

- We expect our students to attend school on time every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so for example - Illness.
- We will celebrate and reward students who achieve our expectations of a high level of attendance and those who have shown sustained improvement.
- We will share attendance information with parents/carers and students focusing on the link between attendance and achievement.
- We will promote high attendance and punctuality through assemblies, class discussion; reinforcing the link between attendance and achievement.

- The school will communicate attendance matters to parents/carers via text; telephone; email; letter, newsletter and through the school website. Discussion about attendance will also take place at parent/carer consultation events

Absence from school

There are only two categories of absence from school:

- Authorised – approved**
- Unauthorised – not approved**

Only the Headteacher (or their delegate) can approve an absence from school. That is the law.

Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department for Education Guidance on School Attendance.

See Appendix B for link to School Attendance Guidance.

Requests for absence in term time must be submitted in writing in advance to the Head teacher who will treat every request on an individual basis and respond accordingly. The rules about what type of absence is acceptable is set out below

Authorised (approved) absence – types of authorised absence that may be approved: -

- Leave of absence - for bereavement, funeral, wedding.
- Medical absence for appointments – at Hospital or Orthodontic appointments. (Non- urgent routine check-up appointments should be made for after school hours or during the school holidays.) Students are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day.
- Illness.
- Religious observance - one day to participate in an organised religious event.
- If a student is excluded from school for a behaviour related incident, this is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised (not approved) absence – types of absence that will not be approved

- Absence due to birthday, shopping for uniform, looking after family members.
- Holiday in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed to by the Headteacher – in line with changes to the law implemented in 2013.
- Late arrival to school after the register has closed has to be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there is an exceptional reason.

Unauthorised absence can lead to parents /carers being fined by the Local Authority

All absence – authorised and unauthorised – will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

Safeguarding

All unexplained absence from school will be followed up each day by contacting parents/carers. If no response is obtained, contact will be made with people listed as emergency contact numbers to ascertain a student's whereabouts and safety. Parents/Carers are required to provide the school with two emergency contact numbers. Where no response is received a referral may be made to the Access and Response Team or the Police.

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when a school may remove a student from the admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the school must notify the Local Authority.

See Appendix B - link to South Glos Children Missing Education Procedures.

How our policy works in practice

Punctuality

- **Registration takes place at 8.45am. Students should be in school for the start of registration at 8.45am.**
- Our policy is that we will allow a pupil who is late arriving by up to 10 minutes from the start of registration to be marked as 'Late' in the attendance register. We believe that a pupil arriving late will not receive the best outcomes. Arriving late can be unsettling for the pupil and may cause classroom disruption.
- Students who arrive late to registration (**up until 8.55am**) are recorded as L (late before the register closes).
- The parent of any pupil who arrives late for school after **8.50am** must sign in at the school office. This allows late attendance to be monitored and is necessary in case of a fire or emergency evacuation of the school.
- If a student arrives after the register has closed at **8.55am** will be marked as **U** (unauthorised late arrival) in the register).
- A pattern of unauthorised absence (U code) **can result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.**
- Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the school and letters sent to parents.
- Persistent late arrival will result in parents and students being asked to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher/Education Welfare Officer/or delegate.

Medical appointments

- We monitor the amount of time missed due to medical appointments carefully.
- We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a student having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from parents where a whole day is missed for this reason.
- Routine, non-urgent appointments must be made after school time and during the 12-week school holiday.
- Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school. This can be in the form of appt card/text message or prescription note.

Illness

- Students are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some students will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We have a duty to support students in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on education.
- When a student is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, a meeting will be arranged to discuss this with the Head teacher/Education Welfare Officer /or delegate to consider whether an individual health care plan is appropriate.
- See Appendix B -South Glos Medical Needs Policy.

Holiday absence in term time

- If a parent feels there are exceptional circumstances that support a request for leave of absence in term time; they must put the request in writing to the Headteacher **in advance of the absence.**
- Each case will be considered **on an individual basis** and the decision communicated to the parents. **Only the Headteacher can agree to absence in term time.**

Appendix A

Concerns about absence from school and the likely impact on a students' progress will be communicated to both students and parents through our attendance procedures: -

- Unexplained absence from school will be followed up daily – (see Safeguarding)
- Where an explanation for absence is not specific ie 'unwell' we will seek to ascertain a definitive reason, so we can record absence precisely using the correct code
- Attendance of all students will be monitored regularly, and patterns of Broken Weeks /Incomplete weeks and low levels of attendance will be investigated.

For a full explanation -please see below: -

Stage 1	Year to date broken weeks greater than 5%	Letter 1 Offering support
Stage 2	Two terms or more > 5% broken weeks	Letter 2 More challenging letter, offering support put pointing out a need for change
Stage 3	Continued broken weeks > 5%	Meeting with school attendance clerk to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss impact of missed learning • investigate reasons for absence and solutions • set attendance targets
Stage 4	Previous year attendance <95% Repeated termly attendance > 5% broken weeks	Meeting with Headteacher and/or EWO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss impact of missed learning • investigate reasons for absence and solutions • set attendance targets • fining or Individual Health Care Plan creation discussed • Set review period
Stage 5	Previous year attendance < 95% 5 or more broken weeks (over two terms) Repeated termly attendance continues to be of concern and School Attendance Meetings have not brought about improvement	Following School Attendance Meeting review, meeting held with Head Teacher and/or EWO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise parent/carer that a panel meeting will take place. • School Attendance Panel meeting takes place (Letter sent to arrange) • If no improvement after 4 weeks, school completes a request for an Attendance Panel review chaired by LA representative.

Appendix B

Formal guidance informing this policy

- ❖ Education Act **1996** which states if any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.
- ❖ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 amended DFE **April 2013**
- ❖ Parental Responsibility Measures – regarding Penalty Notices (Fines) DFE **January 2017**
- ❖ Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE **July 2018**
- ❖ Keeping Children Safe in Education. DFE **Sept 2022**
- ❖ Educating Children with Health Needs – DFE **May 2013** – Ensuring children with health needs do not miss out
- ❖ Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – DFE **August 2017**
- ❖ Children Missing Education – DFE **September 2016**
- ❖ School Attendance Guidance – DFE **Sept 2018**
- ❖ **SOUTH GLOS COUNCIL** local code of conduct with regards to issuing of Education Penalty Notices
- ❖ www.southglos.gov.uk- medical needs policy - **December 2016**