



St Mark and All Saints Church of England Primary School
The Good Shepherd Trust

Academies in partnership with the Guildford Diocese Education Trust
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date adopted: 27th September 2020

Last reviewed: 28.9.22

Review cycle: Every 2 years or earlier

Is this policy statutory? No

Approval: Headteacher

Author: Caroline Mallett

Revision record

Minor revisions should be recorded here when the policy is amended in light of changes to legislation or to correct errors. Significant changes or at the point of review should be recorded below and approved at the level indicated above.

Revision No.	Date	Revised by	Approved date	Comments
1	28/11/21	C Mallett	n/a	Amended times of lateness and changed EWO to Inclusion Officer
2	29/11/21	C. Palmer	n/a	Removed the out of date literature provided by EWO
3	26/9/22	J.Mills	n/a	Added in revision record
4	28/9/22	C Palmer with IO	28/9/22	Added Deletion from Registers section & added attendance lead

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Rationale

Regular attendance at school is essential for the continuity of the learning experience. Therefore, we expect all children to attend school unless they are ill or there is some unavoidable reason or cause for absence.

Procedures:

1. **Absence** If a child is absent, the parent must contact the school by making a telephone call EVERY day the child is absent. If parents do not call the school with a reason, the school will call home after 09:30 each day of absence. All reasons for absence will be recorded and monitored by the school. A letter or email must be sent in when the child returns to school to authorise the absence.
2. **Lateness** is defined as arrival in school between 08.55 - 9.30am (KS2) 08:55 – 09:30 (KS1). The registers will be closed at 09.30am. Therefore, arrival after this time is recorded as an absence. Children who arrive between 09.30 - 12.00 noon may have their lateness authorised depending on the reason. Similarly, for the afternoon registration, lateness is defined as arrival in school between 1.00 -1.30pm. Arrival after this time is recorded as an absence. Children who arrive between 1.00 - 3.10pm may have their lateness authorised, depending on the reason. Late children must be signed in by an adult, with an explanation for the lateness; these reasons will be monitored by the school.

Monitoring Lateness School will closely monitor the latenesses recorded for individual children and take into consideration the reasons. Regular lateness will prompt the following stages:

Stage 1 Three lates or more over a six week period will prompt the action of an initial letter from the school requesting parents' co-operation for improvement.

Stage 2 If there is no improvement, parents will be invited in to discuss the issues causing the lateness and be offered support to improve punctuality.

Stage 3 If lateness is still causing an issue, a third letter will be sent to parents stating that due to lack of improvement, the Inclusion Officer will need to be involved. The Inclusion Officer will either make a home visit, write to the family or request a meeting with the family. The monitoring of lateness will then be the shared responsibility of the Inclusion Officer and the school.

Monitoring Absence

The school will closely monitor the attendance of individual children and take into consideration the reasons. Regular absence will prompt the following stages:

Stage 1 School will monitor the registers half termly. This will trigger questions regarding regular absences of individual children. Class teachers may speak to parents to talk to them about their child's attendance. If a child has missed more than three separate days of schools in a six week period, a letter will be sent out identifying the number of sessions missed, explaining their legal responsibility and invite parents for a meeting with the school and Inclusion Officer to discuss any support

Stage 2 After a formal meeting with the school, the child's attendance will be monitored regularly. If no improvement is made, parents will be invited to attend a further meeting with the Inclusion Officer and the school to discuss an improvement.

Stage 3 If there is still no improvement, the school will formally refer to the Inclusion Officer. Continued tighter monitoring will then be undertaken by the IO and a legal process begins. Potential fine could be £2,500 and a custodial sentence.

Authorised Absence. The following are the occasions when an absence will be authorised:

- ◆ When a child is ill
- ◆ Medical or dental appointments which cannot be made during the holidays or after school
- ◆ Family bereavements
- ◆ Days of religious observance
- ◆ Offsite educational activities which occur on an occasional basis, i.e. school trips, sporting events, music examinations or public performances in which children are participating.
- ◆ Attendance at other educational establishments

Unauthorised Absence The following are occasions when an absence will not be authorised:

- ◆ No reason is given
- ◆ No written letter received explaining the absence
- ◆ When there is reason to doubt the explanation
- ◆ Shopping trips during school hours
- ◆ Birthdays
- ◆ Early removal from school – unless agreed by the HT/DH

Holidays During Term Time

Leave of absence during term time will only be granted under exceptional circumstances. The school cannot condone holidays taken during term time and would request that wherever possible parents arrange holiday absences that do not result in children missing learning opportunities. Permission for absences in term time may only be granted for exceptional circumstances and approved educational experiences at the Headteacher's discretion. If the holiday absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the Inclusion Service may look into the specifics of the case. Surrey Educational Inclusion Officer monitors attendance regularly of all schools and their children.

Penalty Notices

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

- Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- 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. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued

Referral to the Inclusion Officer

- ◆ Unexplained absences may be referred
- ◆ All pupils who fail to attend regularly
- ◆ Any absence where the school experiences difficulty in determining whether or not the absence is authorised or unauthorised
- ◆ Repeated lateness will be referred.
- ◆ Repeated early removal from school.

No child is to be removed from the school premises during school hours without parental authority.

Children removed from school during the day

There is an “absence during school hours” record book at the office. Entries need to be made for every child that leaves/returns to school during the school day

School Organisation

In order for the school’s Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education. In addition to this, the school has the following responsibilities:

Head / Assistant Headteacher, local committee and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- adopt the whole policy
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence
- Key staff will liaise and follow-up work with IO and appropriate access to attendance data
- consult and liaise closely with IO on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay
- to work in close collaboration with IO during their termly/half termly register analysis
- set whole school attendance targets
- monitor and evaluate attendance with IO

Office Staff:

- to oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- to liaise with Inclusion Service regularly
- to reinforce good practice

- to share the class teacher's concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the Inclusion Officer

Class Teachers:

- to complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily
- to record all reasons for absences in the register
- to contact parents/carers to discuss concerns about attendance
- to inform the Head Teacher of concerns
- to be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Head Teacher.

Deletions From Registers

Schools to be aware there is legislation around taking children off roll (Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and 2013).

- If a child moves schools during the year, they come off roll on the day they start the new provision.
- If the parent puts in writing that they intend to home educate, the matter should be referred to the Elective Home Education Team (EHE) and a copy of the letter attached. If the case is open to Inclusion a copy of the letter should be provided to the Inclusion Officer. The child can only be taken off roll if the parent specifies in writing that they intend to home educate.
- If the parent advises that they are moving abroad and the school has any reason to suppose that this might not be true, they should refer the matter to the Inclusion Service to investigate. Otherwise it is good practice to request this advice in writing from the parent so that this letter can be placed on the school file in explanation for taking the child off roll.

Deletions After Continuous Absence Of Not Less Than 20 School Days

When taking children off roll due to twenty days absence and in order to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the Education Act 1996, guidance states that schools **must** ensure that the following applies:

That the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised

(ii) the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

(iii) both the school **and** the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.

If any parts of this are not complied with, the pupil cannot be taken off roll and this may result in the school being vulnerable to legal action and having to put the pupil back on roll.

In the case of a pupil where the parent has requested a leave of absence of over twenty school days, it is important that the school notifies the parent in writing that failure to return within the twenty days could result in the pupil being taken off roll. Once the absence begins, and within the twenty days, even if the school believe that the family are not at home, they must endeavour to make enquiries with the family and are advised to write to the home address stating that if the pupil does not return by a specified date, they will be taken off roll. At the same time, a referral should be made to the Inclusion Officer, as representative of the LA, for enquiries to be made.

If the pupil does not return by the specified date and enquiries have been made, the pupil can be taken off roll and the parents should be notified. It is not enough just to warn parents that the pupil may be taken off roll, enquiries must be made by school and the LA.

It is recommended that an entry is made in the School Attendance Policy to state that pupils may be at risk of losing a school place in cases of unauthorised absence.

For further information regarding when children can be taken off school's roll please contact your IO or the SW Inclusion Service on 01483 518187.

Non-starters

In DfE Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice on School Attendance (August 2013), it advises that if a school is expecting a child to arrive at the beginning of term, the child **MUST** be put on the Admissions and Attendance register.

In the event of the child not arriving, the child must be marked as absent and enquiries made with Admissions. If Admissions confirm that the child has started at another school, the child can be taken off roll. However, if there is no record of the child starting anywhere else, school must refer to the Inclusion Service for a visit to be made and appropriate action can be taken to enforce attendance or establish what provision is being made