

# Guildford Grove Primary School

## Attendance Policy

It is our task as teachers at Guildford Grove School to promote and support our children's learning and enable each one of them to achieve their full potential. We endeavour to provide a school day that excites, challenges and motivates each child, and allows them to develop as independent learners. Our organisation of their learning promotes enjoyment, perseverance and self-discipline. We encourage the children to achieve personal excellence in all aspects of work and behaviour.

The school staff firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on children's attainment and overall progress in school. As a staff we do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in our care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to attend 100% of the time, unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher (or delegated person in the school).

### Key Objectives

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the school day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school;
- discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or senior staff, any problems that deter their child from attending school;
- not take holidays in term time.

We expect that the school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every child's attendance using SIMS;

Date of policy: September 2019

Date of review: September 2020

- contact parents as soon as possible when unexplained and/or prolonged absence occurs and obtain notes authorising the absence;
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming and safe learning environment for children;
- meet with the school's Inclusion Officer regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases;
- meet with the parents of children whose attendance causes concern;
- liaise with the IO weekly, to monitor whole school attendance;
- refer children whose attendance is an on-going concern, despite their best efforts to resolve the situation, to the IO for additional support and guidance;
- Work with the IO and follow his/her advice once cases are referred to ensure that the legal process to address attendance concerns can be implemented if necessary.

#### Request for Leave of Absence

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance on the Surrey County Council website and parents/carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence will not be granted for holidays to be taken in term time.

In exceptional circumstance, when leave in term times is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The leave of Absence Request Form can be obtained from the school office or on the school website.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

The Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional.

Should absence be taken without the Headteacher's authorisation the case will be referred to the Inclusion Service and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

#### **Dental and Medical Treatments**

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing. Evidence of the appointment may be requested. Parents are asked to remove the child only for the duration of the appointment.

#### Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

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- on the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer, the school will endeavour to contact them that day via Truancy Call;
- if there is no response to truancy call or the absence remains unexplained or still a concern, the office will inform the Home School Link Worker and Deputy Head Teacher and further investigation and action will be made accordingly;
- if there is persistent non-attendance, the school's Home School Link Worker will keep records of the contact with home during the period of absence and this will be discussed with the IO when a formal referral may be made
- if a child has persistent absence and meets the criteria for a Penalty Notice to be issued; or has been taken out of school without the school's permission for 5 or more days; the school will liaise with the IO to decide whether a Penalty Notice should be issued;
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS may result in further action, an application for an Educational Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

### Responding to lateness

When a pupil is late for school they should enter the building via the front office so that they can be recorded as being present. Registers open at 8.40am and are taken promptly. Children will be recorded as being late if they arrive after 8.50am but before 9.20am when the registers close. Any child arriving after close of register time (9.20am) will be recorded as late after close of register (U coded) and this denotes an unauthorised absence. A monthly late report is compiled by the office staff and given to the Deputy and HSLW to analyse.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Inclusion Service.

### Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address (if appropriate and known).

The pupils' school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

## 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 Penalty Notices may be issued**

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 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 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** may be 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 may 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 no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer 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.**