



ST GILBERT'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT:

St Gilbert's Church of England Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The school believes that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the school will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Law states:

'The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient, full-time education, suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and any special needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of **compulsory school age** who are on the school's admission roll. The school will comply with the most up to date statutory guidance and departmental advice from the DfE for all aspects of attendance whether mentioned in this policy or not.

St Gilbert's CE Primary School

- Is committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies in order to achieve the best outcomes for pupils
- Provides a welcoming and caring environment where all members of the school community feel secure and valued
- Has an effective system of communication with pupils and parents/carers to support good attendance and punctuality and to provide appropriate information and advice.
- Will use an appropriate system of rewards and incentives to recognise the effort students make in achieving good attendance and punctuality.
- Follows Department of Education (DfE) guidance and best practice in the use of Penalty Notices as a deterrent to the removal of a pupil during term time. In line with current protocol, the Local Authority (LA) has the statutory duty to issue Penalty Notices and /or legal action.

Terms used

Within academy documentation the term 'parent/carer' is used to address those with responsibilities for children. For the purposes of attendance matters and identifying those with legal responsibilities for attendance, 'Parents' are determined as per Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 which defines a parent as:

*the natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not;
anyone who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child;
any person, who although not a natural parent, has care of a child;*

Expectations

We expect all pupils to attend school regularly. If the school has any concerns over absence we will initially invite parents to meetings about attendance discreetly, perhaps by telephone call or letter. In some circumstances this may mean discussing with them the reasons why a referral is being made to the Education Welfare Service or another agency and the expectation that this is to support and assist the family. If there are Child Protection concerns then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures will be followed immediately.

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- That all pupils attend school regularly.
- That all pupils will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents: (cf. Appendix 3)

- It is the responsibility of parents and carers to be fully aware of our School Attendance Policy.
- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend by no later than 9:05 am and then confirm it in writing.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.
- To provide appointment information for any medical or exam appointments as soon as is possible ahead of the absence request date. It is the parents' responsibility to provide evidence of absence to support their request.
- To apply in writing to the Head Teacher for all requests for absence no less than 14 days in advance of the absence. Applications made after this time will automatically be unauthorised unless they meet the threshold of 'exceptional circumstances' which must be detailed in the letter and this will be at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Information regarding procedures for notification of absence to be issued to parents annually.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown and unauthorised.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance.
- Reporting of attendance statistics.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- Registration will be undertaken by the class teacher twice daily. This will be done for morning sessions at 8:50 and for afternoon sessions at 1:15pm.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.

Registration

Pupils are allowed onto the school site from 8:40am unless they are attending Gilberts Gang which begins at 8am.

Registers opens at 8:50 for morning sessions and 1:15pm afternoon sessions. Pupils arriving after these times will be marked as late. Any pupils arriving after 9:05 or 1:30pm will be deemed as unauthorised absence.

Legal action can be taken for continued unauthorised absence

How the school will deal with concerns relating to poor attendance

The school actively discourages absence of pupils during term time in order that their learning is not disrupted and they can maximise their educational achievement.

Lateness

- If your child arrives after the close of register they will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Action the school will take:

- If your child continues to be late we will invite you into school to discuss our concerns at a School Review Meeting. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, parent and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school.
- Attendance will then be monitored; if there is no improvement and there is a regular pattern of lateness/unauthorised absence over the following 10 days the school will conduct a further School Review Meeting at which an action plan will be put into place.
- Attendance will be monitored for a further 10 days.
- If there is no improvement and there is a regular pattern of lateness/unauthorised absence in these 10 days the school may choose to issue you with a fixed penalty warning letter
- If there is no improvement following this, the school may request the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

Categorising Absence:

- All absences are classed as **unauthorised** until a satisfactory reason for the absence is given.
- **Only the Headteacher**, in the context of the law **can approve an absence, not parents**.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Headteacher.
- Reasons for absence will be entered into the register using the statutory code symbol
- Class Teachers who experience difficulty in receiving a parental note will inform the Headteacher.

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **Unauthorised** including holidays, shopping trips, birthdays, visiting or being visited by friends.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences.

- Illness
- Music or dance exams
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or reinstated.
- Off-site education

Parents and carers are required to notify the school of their child's absence every morning of absence, giving the reason by calling 01780 762400. This expectation is in line with safeguarding as non-attendance is considered a safeguarding matter. Parents must then follow this up with a written letter on the child's return. If the school does not hear by the close of registration, the absence will be followed up accordingly. The school reserves the right to determine whether an absence is authorised or not. Although a reason may be provided, it does not mean that the absence will be authorised as the reason may not be deemed appropriate, reasonable or if there are on-going attendance concerns. Unauthorised absences can lead to legal action;

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states: *The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*

Unauthorised Absence

From 1st September 2013, absences **may only** be authorised under 'exceptional circumstances' and the changes make it clear that family holidays **do not** count as exceptional circumstances. Children removed from school for the purposes of family holidays will have to be recorded as 'unauthorised absence'. Unauthorised absences will be recorded on a child's school report and feature among the information passed on to secondary schools at Y7.

Unauthorised absences also have a wider impact on the school. From September 2013 the rate of Unauthorised absence carries greater weight as part of Ofsted inspections and an attendance rate below 97% could be judged 'requires improvement'.

Parents should ensure that requests for authorised absence are reserved for genuinely exceptional domestic circumstances.

Absences will also not be authorised under the following circumstances.

- Holidays
- Shopping trips
- Birthdays
- Visits to and from friends
- Minding the house or looking after siblings.
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
- No reason given.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Headteacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable.

Persistent Absence (See Appendix 3)

Persistent absence has a huge impact on learners, their potential and their success in school. For guidance please see Appendix 3

Fixed Penalty Notices:

If a child has unauthorised absences recorded (through non-attendance or lateness), it could lead to the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 enables Local Authorities to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice where a parent has failed to ensure the regular school attendance of their child at school that they are a registered pupil at or other education provision provided for them.

- Fixed penalty notices are issued per parent, per child, where there is unauthorised absence from school.
- The penalty is £60 and if unpaid within 21 days this rises to £120.00
- If the penalty remains unpaid after 28 days the Local Authority can choose to prosecute under Section 444 of the Education Act, unless the penalty has been issued in error.
- Prosecutions are dealt with in the Magistrates court and could result in a criminal record if upheld.

- A Fixed Penalty Notice can also be applied for where a pupil is found in a public place when they should be in school or during a period of exclusion from school.

As a School, we aim for above 97% attendance and above for all our pupils in the school.

If attendance falls to or below 90%, the child is considered to be a persistent absentee (as above) and action by the school will be taken in line with this policy (See Appendix 2).

Safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. St Gilbert's CE Primary School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. Every member of staff recognises that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability in today's society. Our 'Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation' Policy sets out our beliefs, strategies and procedures to protect vulnerable individuals from being radicalised or exposed to extremist views, by identifying who they are and promptly providing them with support.

Please refer to our Extremism and Radicalisation and safeguarding policies to understand the schools position on safeguarding all our pupils in relation to attendance.

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

REVIEW

The Headteacher and staff will review this policy annually and present any suggested amendments or updates required to the next Committee Meeting.

ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS

Attendance will be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks each week.
- An annual certificate for 100% attendance achieved throughout the year. (Attendance is 100% if there has been no absence).
- An 'improved attendance' certificate for any pupil achieving a greater than 10% improvement in attendance in any on short term when attendance has been below expectations.
- Weekly recognition of classes achieving 100% attendance.
- All awards to be awarded by the Head Teacher and/or a school Governor as appropriate.
- Parents to be advised if their child has received 100% attendance in any short term.
- Identifying, targeting and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3. This should include the sharing of relevant information with the destination school.
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school. E.g. holding a Parents Consultation Meeting.

Appendix 2

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:

When a pupil does not attend, the school will respond as follows:

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone or by letter if parents are not on the telephone.
- Where there is no response, a second letter will be sent after three days of unexplained absence, or there may be a visit from a member of the school staff. The school will phone the appropriate bodies for advice on the way forwards.
- Where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with an Inclusion and Attendance Officer (EWO) and further action planned.
- After 10 days, unless other action is planned, the parents will be invited to attend a meeting in School review Meeting in school which the EWO may attend. This meeting will also include the appropriate staff, parent and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school.
- Attendance will then be monitored; if there is no improvement and the unauthorised non-attendance continues over the following 10 days the school will conduct a further School Review Meeting at which an action plan will be put into place.
- Attendance will be monitored for a further 10 days.
- If there is no improvement and there is a regular pattern of unauthorised non-attendance the school may choose to issue you with a fixed penalty warning letter
- If there is no improvement following this over the next 10 days, the school may request the issue of a fixed penalty notice from the Inclusion and Attendance Team at Lincolnshire County Council
- The Headteacher will be informed of any absence which:
 - (a) appears irregular (below 90%)
 - (b) shows regular patterns e.g. repeated absence on the same day(s) of each week (c)
 - (d) is unexplained e.g. unauthorised

Following referral of any matter to the EWS the school will take part fully in monitoring the situation and work fully with the relevant parties and agencies in the interest of the individual child. Such monitoring and co-operation may well concern matters other than those directly relating to attendance issues.

Reintegration:

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning.
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required.

The success of a Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Appendix 3

Commencement of section 155 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

From 3 September 2012, the criminal offence for parents who fail to secure their children's regular attendance at school will be extended to include failure to attend at alternative provision. Parents will be legally responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age attend the alternative provision arranged for them.

This could be in circumstances where the child has been excluded for a fixed period from school or where the child has been asked to attend for educational purposes. Parents must be notified of the arrangements by the appropriate authority and informed of the consequence of non-attendance.

This legislation puts attendance at any alternative provision on the same footing as attendance at a school or pupil referral unit (PRU), and supports the Government's focus on improving attendance for all pupils.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE and HOLIDAYS DURING TERM-TIME

At St Gilbert's CE Primary School the highest possible attendance rate for every child is a school priority and we are constantly monitoring attendance and punctuality to ensure that each individual can achieve their best.

The school is *will not authorise any absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.*

Should parents or carers choose to take their child on holiday during term-time they must accept that unless there are 'exceptional' circumstances outlined in writing then a code 'G' is entered in the register which indicates a holiday that is not authorised by the school and therefore is against the law.

The information below demonstrates a summary of how school attendance can affect a child's future progress and we would ask that parents bear this in mind before considering to allow their child to remain absent from school for any avoidable reason including holidays.

Above 97%	Fewer than 6 days absence <i>in one academic year</i> Very good attendance. Pupils with this level of attendance have the best chance of achieving the grades of which they are capable and this leads to the best prospects for work, college or university.
95%	Fewer than 10 days' absence <i>in one academic year</i> Pupils are likely to achieve their target grades, and have good opportunities for work, college and university, but will need to invest time in catching up any work missed.
90%	19 days absent from school <i>in one academic year</i> Pupils with this level of attendance are missing a month of school per year and this is likely to have a detrimental effect on their achievement; it will be difficult for them to achieve of their best.
85%	29 days absent from school <i>in one academic year</i> These pupils are missing six weeks of their education and will find it extremely difficult to keep up and achieve of their best.
80%	<i>Pupils with this level of attendance are missing a year of school over five years that they attend school.</i> It will be almost impossible to keep up with their work and these pupils are at risk of serious underachievement. Parents of students with this level of attendance could be issued with a penalty notice.

Appendix 5

LIAISING WITH VARIOUS AGENCIES WHEREVER APPROPRIATE

Good relations and working practices are essential. Agencies have difficult roles in that they endeavour to support both the school in meeting its legal obligations as well as the home and pupil in ensuring that the latter's educational opportunities are maximised. Some parents need the support of these agencies so that they can fulfil their legal obligations to their children.

Inclusion and Attendance Service:

- The Inclusion and Attendance Officer will continue to work closely with teachers, pupils and their families, whilst the priority will relate to attendance matters, other activities may include behaviour problems, exclusions, special educational needs, child protection, child employment and children in entertainment and any other problems that prevent a young person benefiting fully from the educational opportunities available to them.

In accordance with the Inclusion and Attendance Service Remit and Procedures can support schools in a variety of ways:

- Liaise with identified school staff
- Where necessary, instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court.
- Accept referrals that meet the referral criteria
- We will support schools in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

Other Agencies are to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

Good partnerships between schools and the appropriate agencies can ensure a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone.

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police

Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date

Schools should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is effective and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.'

