



St Gilbert's R.C. Primary School

Policy-Attendance and Punctuality-Sep 2017

OVERVIEW

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards learning. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

The governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is absent without the permission of the school and parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Persistent Absenteeism

- This is defined as any child with below 90% attendance. Persistent Absenteeism can lead to intervention, and even prosecution, by the Local Education Authority.

MANAGING ATTENDANCE

- School opens the doors to the children at 8:45am. School officially starts at 8:55am with the closing of external doors and this is when the register is taken by the class teachers. Any child who arrives after this bell is marked as late.
- A register is taken in the afternoon at 1:00pm to update the attendance information.
- Attendance is monitored regularly by a member of school senior management and a report is given termly to Governors.
- The school has a service level agreement with a Salford City Council Education Welfare Officer whose role is to ensure that we meet our attendance target.
- Each term parents are notified of their child's current attendance figure for the year using the Red/Amber/Green letter system. Where concerns arise the Education Welfare Officer may call a meeting with parents to discuss the attendance figure.

Revised and adopted by the Governing Body Spring 2017

To be reviewed Sep 2018



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PUNCTUALITY

- Children who arrive in school after the doors have closed are to be brought by the adult who has brought them to school, to the Main Office where they can be signed in – this is so that the electronic registers can be updated automatically.
- Children who arrive after the register is completed by the teacher at 8:55am will be marked as late. If they arrive after registers close at 9:15am they may be given an unauthorised absence marks.
- In cases where there is a high number of late marks, the school will notify parents and the Education Welfare Officer may be involved in the case.

ABSENCES

- **If a child is absent: Parents must contact the school before 8.55am to report any absence. School phones open at 8:00am**
- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office. In line with our safeguarding procedures, the administration staff will make every effort to contact a parent or family member to establish the specific reason for the absence.
- If a child is absent for a number of days the school will make daily checks to establish how the child is progressing and when they anticipate a return to school.
- When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence in full (i.e. in the case of illness, the nature of the condition) and where possible a medical note. A template is found on the school website.
- If a child is absent due to an unavoidable medical appointment a copy of the medical appointment letter must be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. School expects that children who are taken from school for appointments attempt to make these at either end of the day, over break times. Should this be unavoidable, we expect parents will return children to school as soon as possible after the appointment. All appointments will be logged on the register with the correct code.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the welfare and safety of the child. Staff should be vigilant of any changes in attendance patterns as this can be an indicator as a Safeguarding issue. We may relay any concerns to our Education Welfare Officer.

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence (for example for a child to attend a special event). We expect parents to contact the school at least two weeks in advance by completing the relevant forms to request an absence which is then considered by a member of the Senior Management Team. School will issue a letter in advance of the absence stating the outcome and this will be dependent on current and past attendance records.



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- According to current Government guidelines on attendance, school will not authorise family holidays in term time. We naturally prefer parents to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods to avoid gaps in a child's education. School will not provide work or catch up sessions for children taking a holiday during term time.
- Activities for children working at an elite level will be considered for approved absence. In this case, the school has to be confident that the child is well-safeguarded while absent from school and we request notification from the club/team to confirm this. School Governors will only consider applications for absences for **once** in an academic year and there is no guarantee this will be approved. When a child is in Year 6 all requests until after KS2 SATs will be refused. Weekly programmes for gifted children will be treated in the same manner. All applications will be based upon the child's current attendance, effort in lessons and the nature of the request being made. We highly recommend that applications are made well in advance in order for consideration at the next available Governor meeting. The school's absence request form as well as letters from the club/team must be submitted.
- Applications for children to attend other extra-curricular activities are done on a case-by-case basis. Where there is educational value (i.e. it would take the place of a timetabled school subject) we may grant exceptional approval.
- Requests for children to be absent from school for paid work (e.g. modelling) will be refused and in some cases a meeting with the Head Teacher may be requested. Activities of this nature need to be arranged out of school hours.

LONG-TERM ABSENCE

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work upon parent request.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

- The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Educational Welfare Officer, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The governors, supported by the LEA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

- The school is set an attendance target each year. The attendance targets are agreed with the LEA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar



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schools when setting its own targets. As an outstanding school we have to have a target that is reflective of this status.

REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE

- Each week the classes in EYFS/KS1 and KS2 can win a class mascot by having the best attendance in their key stage.
- Termly Green Award letters are sent to children with high attendance.
- Annual awards are given to children with 100% attendance at the end of the summer term.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.
- Administration staff will be responsible for monitoring attendance with the support of Senior Management, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If a class teacher has a concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every year, or earlier if considered necessary.