



## St Giles C of E (Aided) Infant School

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

#### **AIM**

**St Giles C of E Infant School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. In order to achieve this we aim to encourage all pupils to attend regularly.**

#### **Rationale**

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

#### **Legal Requirements**

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

#### **School Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

#### **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.55am. If a child arrives before 9am they will be registered as being present. A child arriving between 9:00 and 9:15am will be recorded as being 'late' and any child arriving after 9:15am will be registered as having an unauthorised absence as they will be deemed to have arrived too late to access the whole of the school day. In cases where the absence at registration was due to attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Children will also be registered during the afternoon session.

#### **First Day Absence**

On the first day of any absence parents are asked to contact the school by telephone to report the absence. This is recorded in the school office for staff to know how to classify the absence in the register. Where children are absent and there has been no contact with the school, the office will telephone home to ascertain the reason for absence.

#### **Continuing Absence**

Where there is an extended absence, further contact will be made with the parents to ensure pastoral care is exercised and to determine if there are any absence issues that need to be addressed

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 5 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.



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#### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the administrator with responsibility for attendance to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's Education Welfare Officer.

#### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

#### **Absence Notes**

Parents are requested to write a note explaining absence, which are kept in the child's file. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, the notes will be referred to.

#### **Promoting Attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education, e.g., through regular reminders in newsletters.

#### **Parental Requests for Holidays in Term Time**

Holidays during term time are actively discouraged. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during school holiday periods.

Permission for family holidays in term time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances where:

- The holiday is important for the well-being and cohesion of the family following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events
- Evidence is provided by an employer that leave cannot be accommodated during school holidays without significant consequence
- At the discretion of the Headteacher

If a family needs to request absence in term time, then an application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances Form must be completed prior to the leave date and preferably 2 weeks before. This form can be obtained from the school office.

Any appeal related to the above decision will be heard by the Governing Body, whose decision will be final.

Where holidays are taken which do not fall into the 'exceptional circumstances' category, these will be recorded on a child's attendance record as 'unauthorised absence'. As per Surrey County Council policy, the school reserves the right to issue a penalty notice if a child's absence figure total more than 5 unauthorised absences (5 days) in one academic year.



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### Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare 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, which becomes 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** 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 attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 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.**

### Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year and the annual absence figures will be reported regularly to Governors.

This Policy was approved by the Governing Body on: 7<sup>TH</sup> October 2014

Signed by Head Teacher: .....

Chair of Governors: .....

Date of next review: .....