



# **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Autumn 2018**

## INTRODUCTION

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school on time every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this:

### **School policy statement:**

Gallions Primary School is committed to providing each pupil with a full and effective education. 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 in the school. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

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.

**Learning** - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding** - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety, access to the curriculum and anti-bullying. Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments

- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing:

Authorised absences are mornings/afternoons away from school for a reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. If a child is reluctant to attend, we advise parents to make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the child's class teacher.

### **PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is may cause considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

We aim for all our PA pupils and their parents to be subject to an Action Plan, which may include: allocation of support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the School Attendance Officer/Head Teacher.

## **SCHOOL ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

**The Gallions School Attendance Officer is: Mrs Nicky Harman.**

The telephone number of the School Attendance Officer is: 0207 476 1252 option 1

**If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day that your child returns to school with an explanation of the absence - please do this even if you have already telephoned the school.
- Alternatively, you can call into the school reception, and a member of staff will speak with you.

**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Invite you into school for a discussion with our Attendance Officer if absences persist
- Refer the matter further if your child's attendance drops below 90%.

**School Attendance Targets etc.**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our aim is to achieve even better attendance because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Newsletters and we ask for your full support.

**Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to assist pupils to attain high levels of attendance.

## **APPENDIX 1 - The Law**

**The Law relating to attendance:**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
  - (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

**Categorisation of Absence**

**Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories:**

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. **Unauthorised absence** - This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.
2. **Authorised absence** - This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.
3. **Approved Educational Activity** - This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Gallions Primary School fully supports children in undertaking extra-curricular activities and sees these as beneficial to their personal and educational development. However, our duty as a school is to ensure that children receive efficient full-time education, so we cannot normally authorise absence for extra-curricular activity during school hours.

In exceptional circumstances, and where the child's overall attendance is good, the Head teacher may approve a short absence during school hours to take part in an activity which cannot be timetabled outside of school hours and which is judged to be of significant benefit to the child's learning. Examples of the type of absence which could be approved would include:

- Undertaking a national music examination
- Auditioning for a theatre production
- Participating in a national or regional sporting or debating competition

This is not an exhaustive list; every request will be considered carefully.

If the child's attendance has fallen below the national average for primary schools (currently 96% attendance), or if the child's attendance has resulted in a penalty notice, we would not normally be able to support such a request for absence.

### **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 Head teacher or designated member(s) 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 8.45am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation, e.g. school transport was delayed. In cases, for instance, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered as long as the school has received proof of the appointment.

The afternoon registration will be at:-

12.40pm for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

1pm for Years 3 and 4

1.15pm for Years 5 and 6

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before 9.15am will be coded as late before registers close. Any pupil arriving after 9.15am will be coded as late after registers close which will lead to an unauthorised code. This will be recorded on SIMs with time of arrival and reason for the lateness.

## **First Day Absence**

When a pupil is unwell/going to be absent from school the parent/carer must call the schools absence line and explain the reason for their absence. The parent/carer must continue to call each day. If the pupil is still unwell/absent on the third day then medical proof must be brought into school to enable the attendance office to authorise the absence. We may also ask for consent to write to your GP for further information. (Please note: - if your child's attendance is below 93% medical evidence will be requested for all absences).

## **Continuing Absence**

If a child continues to be absent and the parent/carer has not communicated with the school then the Attendance Officer and Safeguarding Lead will carry out a home visit (where appropriate).

*Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the school's locality EIAA or CME Officer. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.*

## **Holidays in term time**

If you wish to request leave for your child(ren) please complete the leave of absence request form. You can collect this at the reception desk. The request will be passed to the head teacher for consideration. General holidays during term time will **not** be authorised. Parents that take their child (ren) out of school without consent may be liable for a Penalty Notice. This is an amount of £60, per parent, per child.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by **not** taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

### **Attendance Awards**

All children that have 100% attendance and punctuality for the whole academic year will receive a certificate and prize at the end of term.

Children that have previously been an attendance concern but have made a big improvement will receive a certificate and prize for their achievement.

### **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

**Our schools targets are:**

**2018/2019 = 96%**

### **Strategies for promoting attendance in 2018/19**

- Regular communication with parents
- Send out school's procedure at regular intervals
- Continue with weekly and monthly attendance winners awards