



Gallions Primary School Attendance Policy

Autumn 2018

Academic Year 2020-21 Addendum: September 2020

The changes outlined below apply only to attendance linked to COVID-19. For all other attendance guidance please refer to the main body of the school Attendance Policy.

Legislation on School Attendance during the Pandemic

After a period of school closure, all schools fully opened from September 2020, with full attendance compulsory for all children. At Gallions Primary School we are committed to ensuring all children attend school, on time, every day. We all have duty to safeguard children's access to education as any absence from school is detrimental to children's learning and emotional well-being.

During the academic year 2020-21 we have made some temporary changes to our Attendance Policy in line with government guidelines. This addendum to the Attendance Policy outlines the processes that will be followed in managing attendance in line with the recent government requirements set out in the following documents from the Department for Education (DfE) in response to COVID-19:

[School Attendance & Behaviour, Parental Responsibility for Attendance](#)

[Attendance in Relation to Coronavirus in the Academic Year 2020-21](#)

Necessary Absence: COVID-19

Although school attendance is once again mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine
- Pupils who are displaying symptoms
- Pupils who have been in contact with householders displaying Covid-19 symptoms and are awaiting a test result or with someone tested positive for Covid-19 and require a self-isolation period

Please refer to the school ***Attendance Policy: Coronavirus Guidance for Parents*** which outlines a number of scenarios affecting attendance and how to respond.

The school will record any absence related to the above reasons as attendance *Code x* for every session of absence until the quarantine period is complete or tests are returned negative. After this point if a child is well they should return to school. If they can continue to be unwell, their absence will be recorded by usual illness code.

Home learning will be arranged for any child who is quarantining for reasons other than coronavirus symptoms – either via on-line learning or home learning packs for children who cannot access on-learning. Further information about distance learning is outlined in the **Distance Learning Policy 2020-21**.

Absence relating to Health and Safety Concerns

We understand that some parents and families continue to be concerned about the coronavirus pandemic. Any parent who is concerned about their child attending school should liaise with the school

Family Support Officer who will work with them to address any issues, including contacting other agencies and signposting other services that can provide support.

Stage 1 (Absence Day 1):

The family Support Officer will call home and discuss and address parental concerns

Stage 2:

Based on the outcomes of Stage 1, we will write to the parent reiterating our offer of support while highlighting the need to return to school.

Stage 3:

We will continue to work with parents and monitor pupil absence closely. In some cases we may need to refer to external agencies for support, including the New Vision Trust Attendance Panel.

Managing Absence related to COVID-19

Any COVID-related absence should be reported to school on the first day of symptoms, via telephone. If a child has a temperature, parents will be asked to confirm the exact temperature reading which should be taken with a home thermometer (available to buy from pharmacies and supermarkets).

If a child develops symptoms in school, they will be immediately be isolated within the school. Parents will be called to collect them and should arrange for a test to be taken as soon as possible.

The changes outlined above will be in operation until further notice and will be reviewed in response to any change to government legislation guidelines for managing attendance within educational settings.

Introduction

High levels of attendance and punctuality are vital in ensuring all children are able to achieve to the best of their abilities. In line with this, for children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is important that they attend school regularly and on time, every day, unless their absence is unavoidable.

Attendance and the Law

Educational is compulsory and our policy is written to reflect national laws and up to date guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE). Ensuring regular attendance at school is a legal parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

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.

The importance of Attendance and Punctuality

Gallions Primary School is committed to providing each pupil with a full and effective education. 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.

Impact on Learning - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. In addition, all pupil absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Safeguarding - Children 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 school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for all children encompasses several areas, including attendance and punctuality. 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 parents 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
- 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.

When recording absence, every half-day absence from school is classified by the school based on set criteria and is either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. In accordance with national guidelines, absences are deemed as follows:

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 causes.

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.

Approved Educational Activities involve children undertaking extra-curricular activities considered to benefit their personal and educational development. As we are responsible for ensuring children receive efficient full-time education, any request for absence is carefully considered against the benefits of full time education at school. In line with this, 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.

Holidays during Term-Time

Requests for holidays must be done via a request form which can be collected 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 at a cost of £60, per parent, per child.

Taking holidays in term time affects children's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by **not** taking children away in school time. We would urge parents to keep in mind that any savings made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a child's education.

Persistence 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 will actively work with parents in addressing persistence absence and ensuring improved levels of attendance through planned actions careful monitoring and tracking.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Each year the school will review its attendance record and set attendance/absence targets, reviewing these on an on-going basis. The school will also review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure they continue to be effective in raising attendance levels.

Categories of School Absence: Information to Parents

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
- Send Letter 1 to parents if attendance becomes a concern
- 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%.

Acceptable Levels for School Attendance

The **minimum** level of attendance for the school is **96%** 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, reflecting the importance of high levels of attendance to learning.

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.

School Absence Procedures: Information to Parents

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 late. 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.

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.

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

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 until the child returns to school. If the pupil is still unwell/absent on the third day, medical proof must be brought into school in order 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, the Attendance Officer and Safeguarding Lead will carry out a home visit (where appropriate).

In accordance with the law, any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the LA. This is a legal requirement and will be done via a referral to the school's locality EIAA or CME Officer. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.