



We can and we will

GLEBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

At Glebe School we believe in an ethos that values the whole child.

We strive to enable all children to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally.

Introduction

The policy has been informed by either statutory requirements, as referred in the Education Acts and Regulations, or by government advice, Council policy and Ofsted expectations.

Attendance at school is clearly an important pre-requisite for a successful and fulfilling school career. Prolonged absence, irregular attendance and lack of punctuality can all serve to undermine educational achievement and result in considerable long-term disadvantage to children and young people. Pupils who do not attend regularly may be placed at considerable risk and, in some cases, may be drawn into patterns of antisocial or criminal behaviour.

It is recognised that pupils may have difficulties attending regularly for a variety of complex and often inter-related reasons. These may include:

- The pupils' educational, social and emotional development
- The pupils' medical history
- Social, economic and cultural considerations within the family and community
- Factors operating within the school
- Availability of appropriate support from statutory and voluntary agencies within the community

It follows that the Local Authority, schools, parents/carers, pupil and the community at large need to work collaboratively in order to maximise attendance. A positive approach is needed which promotes access to education within an ethos which values learners, promotes equal opportunities and encourages the involvement of pupils and their parents/carers.

Legal Framework

Glebe School works with the KPW (Key Participation Worker) and the local authority to support in enforcing the legal framework as defined in The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5) and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. There are responsibilities on:

- Parents to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on roll at a school.
- The LA to provide education and to enforce attendance.
- Schools to register attendance and notify the LA of irregular attendance, unauthorised absence or any pupil who has unauthorised attendance of 10 days or more.

Pupil Attendance at Glebe School

Parental Support:

The role of the parent/carer in supporting the school's efforts in securing high levels of attendance is critical. At Glebe School we maintain close, effective and positive links with our parents and ensure that they are contacted at an early stage to deal with unexplained absences of their child. Parents/carers are expected to contact Glebe on the first day of absence to inform the school the reason for the non attendance of their child.

Pupils:

We expect pupils of all ages to contribute to securing good attendance. We ask pupils to:

- Listen to their parents/carers and the school
- Communicate with parents/carers and the school about any worries or anxieties
- Go to bed at an appropriate time and come to school on time and be ready to learn

Unauthorised Absence and First Day Call Procedure:

On the first day of absence, we expect parents to make contact. As a school, we have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils, therefore a phone call will be made by the office staff if there has been no communication from parents/carers.

1. Class registers are completed on SIMS by teachers and saved by 9am.
2. Absent pupils are marked
3. Pupils arriving late must enter through the front door and sign in at the school office. The pupil's attendance is updated on SIMS by the office staff and given code 'L' (arriving after 9am) or 'U' (arriving after 9:30am).
4. Voicemail and emails are checked for communication from parents regarding absence.
5. Office staff check with teachers that those marked as absent have not since arrived.
6. Office staff check if any siblings of the absent pupil are present.
7. After 9:30am, the office staff, along with the welfare assistant will attempt to telephone those on the pupil's contact list, starting with the home phone and working

down the list. If no answer, a message is left if an answer phone/voice mail facility is available.

8. If no response has been received, check with present siblings (if applicable) if reason of absence is known.

10. Office staff will then inform the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of absence.

11. SLT carries out a risk assessment (see appendix 1)

12. If no contact is made after all steps are completed, and staff have suitable reason for concern, the appropriate outside agencies will be contacted (e.g. Services working with the family, such as a Key Worker; MASH team or police).

If pupils are persistently absent with no satisfactory explanation then this matter will be passed to the Local Authority through the Key Participation Worker.

Punctuality:

Regular lateness can have a detrimental effect on:

- The child's learning
- The learning of others
- The child's sense of belonging
- The child's behaviour

Children are expected to be in class at 8.50am each morning. If a child has not registered by 9am they are deemed to be late and this will be recorded in the register. Children will also need to sign the late book which is kept in the school office which is where they should report to if they are late for school.

The close of the register is 9.30am and after this time it is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Lateness tends not to be a particular problem in the afternoon however children who arrive at school after 1.10pm in KS1 and 1.20pm in KS2 are deemed to be late and the register is closed (meaning pupils arriving after this time are deemed to be absent without authorisation) at 1.40pm.

Punctuality is monitored by the school and the parents of children who are persistently late will:

- Receive a series of letters from the Headteacher confirming the school's concerns
- A formal meeting with the Headteacher as necessary
- If no improvement is made the matter will be reported to the KPW

Home School Links:

Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the class teacher's role along with the Headteacher, Deputy and office staff. When concerns about attendance are identified (through regular monitoring by the school) parents will be contacted initially by letter and then, if attendance has still not improved, parents will be asked to meet the Head teacher or Deputy to discuss the concerns and strategies to resolve the problems. If it is felt to be useful the KPW may be invited to this meeting. Similarly parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school to resolve difficulties with attendance and punctuality.

Strategies to be used when tackling the early signs of absenteeism:

Glebe School aims to adopt early intervention strategies when dealing with poor attendance or punctuality. The primary strategy is to develop a regular dialogue with parents/carers and pupils to ensure the school is fully aware of the issues that may be contributing to poor attendance and punctuality. The school with the help of the KPW will aim to put strategies in place to address these issues.

Specific procedures used by the school to identify patterns of poor attendance:

- Monitoring authorised absences – excessive numbers of authorised absences such as illness may need following up with the Welfare Assistant
- Monitoring patterns of lateness – are parents/guardians aware that the child is regularly late?
- Identifying patterns of absence – are children absent on particular days e.g P.E. or swimming days.

Monitoring Procedures:

- 1) The Headteacher will have overall responsibility for monitoring attendance registers.
- 2) The Participation Key Worker will visit the school at least twice a year to monitor the attendance policy and marking of registers.
- 3) The school's Local Authority link officer receives a copy of information relating to authorised and unauthorised absence and this is included in the Annual School Review process.
- 4) Attendance figures are submitted to the LA and DfE as part of the national and local monitoring of attendance.

Marking the attendance register:

Each register must, by law, be marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. Registers should be filled in on the class computer using the class log in details at 9am in the morning and 1.15pm for EYFS or 1.25pm for KS2. The register is then saved. Class teachers are responsible for marking the register accurately and on time. Children are required to sign the late book in the office if they arrive after 9a.m. or 1.20pm.

Termly and annual totals have to be reported to the DfE, the LA and in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents. Our school website also gives information about the percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences in each year.

Recording reasons for absence in the registers:

All reasons for absence must be recorded in the register. All letters from parents should be initialled by class teachers, put in the paper folder and then sent to the

school office. Administrative staff can then ensure that other relevant staff see the letters and they can then be filed.

Fast Track:

Glebe and the LA follow the DfE guidelines for Fast Track Panels and fixed penalty notices for parents of children who have continuing poor attendance.

Attendance Targets:

The DfE expect children to attend at least 96% of the time. Glebe is set, each year, its own attendance target. This will be monitored and reported upon. The Headteacher and KPW will meet regularly to monitor data, discuss individuals and agree action.

The school positively reinforces good attendance and punctuality by:

- Having a weekly class competition, with the award of a shield, to identify the class with the best weekly attendance (by percentage).
- Annual competition with a reward of a visit to the cinema or golf etc. for the class who has the best average attendance through the year including a gold certificate award for children achieving 100% attendance over the whole academic year.
- Dealing with bullying immediately and firmly (see anti bullying policy).
- Providing SEN Support Plans for those children with special educational needs or medical needs.
- Liaising with appropriate agencies where support for parents is needed.
- Providing Pastoral Support Programmes for those children at risk of exclusion.
- Regular newsletter items on good attendance.

Extended leave from school:

Amendments to the 2006 regulations (which came in to force on the 1st September 2013) now removes references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Therefore holidays will not be permitted during term time and, should parents take their children out of school for a holiday, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Such absences will be reported to the school's KPW who may, in consultation with the school, decide to issue a fixed penalty notice.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (updated in September 2013) levy penalty payments of £60 per parent per child which should be paid within 21 days. This sum doubles to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay this sum may lead to a summons from a magistrate's court.

However we recognise there may be exceptional circumstances which can be considered by the Head teacher for leave during term time. For example a family illness or bereavement necessitating time away.

Statutory regulations demand that parents must make this request in writing to the Head teacher. The letter must contain the reason for the request and the dates, including the return date.

Each request will be considered individually and various factors will be taken into account such as:

- The child's attendance history
- Efforts have been made to minimise the number of school days taken

Please note that exceptional leave will NOT be granted:

- Those with poor attendance
- During school examination and assessment periods
- When the cost of leave is cited as a reason

Short periods of absence may be permitted for compassionate reasons. As the school has a large number of service family children we may consider authorising a short period of absence particularly for children of service personnel who have been or about to be deployed overseas. The criteria for authorising any such requests will be as noted above.

If the children do not return by the agreed date (contained in the letter of request and the Head teacher's authorisation) then following a further 10 days period **the child can be removed from the school role and referred to the school's education welfare service.**

If there are extenuating circumstances which prevent return on the planned date it is essential that parents/carers make every effort to contact school and explain the reason for the continued absence.

Persistent Absence

When children's attendance falls below 90% they are regarded as having persistent absence. As a school we aim to keep this level as low as possible and certainly not above 2% of our pupil population. The school monitors the children who are at risk of having persistent absence in liaison with the Key Participation Worker. The parents of children whose attendance falls below or close to 90% are written to by the Head teacher. If the attendance rate fails to rise over the next 4 to 6 weeks then the KPW will contact the parents to offer advice.

Children who are already below 90% attendance will also be contacted (normally by the school at first but in some cases directly by the KPW). Again their attendance will be closely monitored to ensure it is improving over each 4 week period. All pupils will have a first day absence call from school to ascertain why they are not in school. In consultation with the KPW parents may also be asked to provide medical evidence for each absence. When pupil attendance does not improve sufficiently (in consultation with the KPW) then an attendance panel will be arranged.

Attendance and punctuality forms part of the school's ongoing pupil progress tracking. Teachers will report attendance concerns to senior leaders particularly when it is having an impact on achievement. Senior leaders will take this matter up with the parents involved including pupils who are in receipt of the pupil premium.

School Refusal

When a pupil first presents with school refusal, the school will work with the child and parents to put the following strategies into place:

- Taking early action on non-attendance (e.g. meeting and sharing information with parents)
- Providing extra support from staff, e.g. Pastoral Support Worker
- Looking into factors that could contribute to absence (e.g. bullying, SEND issues) and making reasonable adjustments where needed (such as extra support in class; intervention programmes, social skills groups and allocating a buddy to provide peer support)

If, after trialling these strategies, the child's attendance continues to be a problem, then the school will make a referral to the Key Participation Worker, who will provide further support for the family. Ultimately it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child attends school and the school is obliged to follow persistence absence procedures, as outlined earlier in this document.

The role of the Local Authority:

The Local Authority supports schools and parents in the area of attendance by means of the Early Intervention and Prevention Service. Key Participation Workers may follow up referrals by:

- Communicating with parents/carers by letter or phone
- Seeing a pupil in school
- Seeing pupil and parent/carers in school
- Arranging home visits
- Liaison/referral to other professionals/agencies

The outcome of any intervention is communicated back to school. KPWs may, in extreme cases, consider the use of legal action in relation to school non-attendance.

This policy will be reviewed by staff and governors on a regular basis.

Review Date: Feb 2018 (D.Joyce)

To be Reviewed : Feb 2019

Appendix 1

Risk Assessment of Emergency Contact in Unexpected Absences

No apparent risk: There is no apparent risk of danger to either the child. This may be appropriate for children who we have reason to believe are absent from the provision but not at harm due to previous patterns of behaviour or information from other people e.g. a child who often goes on holiday at this time of year and parents always fail to inform you. Continue to make enquiries but it would not be proportionate to contact police at this stage.

Low or medium risk: The risk of harm to the child is assessed as a possible but minimal risk **OR** the risk of harm to child is assessed as likely but not serious. This may be relevant for those children where there are no additional vulnerabilities, however, you have minimal contact information and making parental contact is always difficult.

High risk: The risk of serious harm to the child is assessed as very likely. This would be relevant for children already considered vulnerable. This may be due to risk of neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Also consider child sexual exploitation and Prevent, in addition to protected characteristics; mental health, forced marriage, honour based violence, trafficking, and female genital mutilation. This may also be relevant for those children where the absence and lack of ability to make parental contact is highly unusual.

- 1) If this is assessed as 'No Apparent Risk' or 'Low/ Medium Risk' the Headteacher, along with SLT can make the decision to continue to make enquires and not contact the police if they do not feel that this is necessary or proportionate. These cases should not be ignored and must be monitored over time and consideration given to escalation if there is a change to the circumstances that has increased the level of risk.
- 2) If assessed as 'High Risk' the school will consider contacting the appropriate services, such as Hillingdon MASH team. Where there is a need for an immediate response then contact the Police.
- 3) School enquiries continue and any further information shared with appropriate services/Police
- 4) Follow safeguarding procedures to record concerns, actions and decisions.

Appendix 2 – Unexplained absence procedure letter for parents



'We can and we will'

GLEBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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February 2018

Dear Parents,

Unexplained Attendance Procedures

We are incredibly fortunate at Glebe to work alongside so many parents that support the school with attendance and punctuality; we know that those with good attendance have a better chance of doing well in school.

Most parents at Glebe already follow the procedure of notifying us on the first day of their child's absence; we need this information as soon as possible, as we have a duty of care to ensure that our pupils are safe and well. There have been public cases recently where schools have not chased up the reasons as to why children are off of school. It has then transpired that there have been tragic circumstances around these absences, e.g. illness of a parent and a child unable to seek help. We will do everything we can to prevent such situations occurring as I am sure you would agree that your child's safety is paramount to us all.

Therefore, I would like to make you aware of the new school procedure for children who have unexplained absences from school.

If your child is not going to be in school please call the office on 01895 462385 (leave a voice message if necessary) to report their absence. Please do this before 9am on the first day of the absence. If we have not heard from you by 9.30am then we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe. Please let us know in good time why your child is absent from school.

Thank you in advance for your support,
Mrs Penney
Headteacher

